

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

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Self-Defeating Cycle

Rationale

Many people find themselves making choices that seem reasonable or rational in the moment but lead to long-term difficulty. Individuals may not be aware of a self-defeating pattern of choices, or they may make the same type of choice again and again, even though they seem to understand the consequences. This can happen for a variety of reasons. For example, perhaps self-defeating patterns were modeled to them in their upbringing; or they succumb to social, peer, or family pressure; or they simply lack available resources to assist them. Self-defeating choices often make sense in the moment and are seen as a way of coping.

Successful change will most likely not occur without self-awareness of self-defeating patterns. Most people would change a behavior if the results were only negative, so helping them identify the positive aspects of negative behavior can often be helpful (for example, a person may miss work to help a sick friend; this has negative work-related consequences but positive social ones). Remember, people make mistakes. Don't make them feel bad or ashamed in this process. Help them to see you as a friend and a resource with their best interest at heart, rather than someone who is always pointing out their mistakes.

Objective

Help the Deseret Industries associate to identify and change self-defeating patterns.

Potential Discussion Items

- Help the Deseret Industries associate to identify the choices he or she makes.
Discuss the reasons behind his or her choices.
Help him or her to identify the consequences, both positive and negative.
- Diagram a cycle of behaviors and consequences. (Drawing a visual might be helpful for some people.)
- Discuss ways in which the Deseret Industries associate wants his or her life to be different.
- Help the Deseret Industries associate to plan alternative choices for the next time the situation arises.
- Help the Deseret Industries associate to identify potentially beneficial community resources.
- With the Deseret Industries associate, create action steps (for example, counseling, setting firm boundaries, isolating and controlling triggers that lead to self-defeating behaviors, studying a self-help book, and so on) that address the problem.
- Follow up daily or weekly on what the Deseret Industries associate is learning or doing and how he or she is implementing what has been learned.
- Provide support and motivation to the Deseret Industries associate as he or she makes choices that lead to desirable differences.



MENTOR

Suggested Resources

- Bridges out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities by Ruby K. Payne, Philip E. DeVol, and Terie Dreussi Smith (2006).
- Facilitator Notes for Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World: Building Your Resources for a Better Life by Philip E. DeVol (2013).
- Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World: Building Your Resources for a Better Life by Philip E. DeVol (2013).
- The Right Questions: Ten Essential Questions to Guide You to an Extraordinary Life by Debbie Ford (2004).
- Counseling from a licensed professional.
- The Deseret Industries development counselor can assist the Deseret Industries associate with motivational interviewing, solution-focused strategies, cognitive behavioral instruction, or other strategies.

