



Thinking for a Change

Integrated Cognitive Behavior Change Program



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Thinking for a Change

Integrated Cognitive Behavior Change Program

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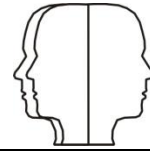
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THINKING FOR A CHANGE

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Foreword



Over the last six decades, cognitive behavioral theories and interventions have been introduced, researched, and applied in various human services fields, including corrections and juvenile justice. A clear body of evidence has emerged to show that these interventions positively impact individuals, helping to create change in both thinking and behavior. In the corrections field the targeted behavior is a reduction in reoffending, and cognitive behavioral interventions have been found to be an evidence-based practice for achieving this goal by researchers and practitioners alike.

In 1998, the National Institute of Corrections produced the first version of Thinking for a Change (T4C). This program combined cognitive restructuring theory with cognitive skills theory to create an innovative and integrated curriculum designed to help individuals in the juvenile and adult justice systems take control of their lives by taking control of their thinking. Since its inception, Thinking for a Change has gone through a number of revisions and has become the most requested document from the National Institute of Corrections Information Center. T4C has been the subject of many studies and has routinely proven to be effective in reducing recidivism when implemented with integrity.

T4C 3.1 reflects the collective wisdom and experience of facilitators, trainers, and the authors. NIC was pleased to bring together all three original authors to complete this project. Version 3.1 incorporates developments in the field of cognitive behavioral interventions, and it improves upon the original product in both format and content.

Two significant accomplishments of this revision are worthy of highlighting: T4C 3.1 presents a more user-friendly curriculum; and it is an even more decisively integrated program, where each component builds upon and supports the others, thus enhancing what was arguably the greatest strength of Thinking for a Change in the first place.

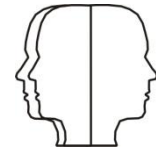
We hope this curriculum helps you and your agency create positive changes for those you serve and work with.

Morris L. Thigpen

Director

National Institute of Corrections

Preface



History and Background

It has been more than a decade since Thinking for a Change was first designed and introduced as a promising cognitive behavioral intervention for individuals involved with the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Cognitive behavioral programs have evolved over the last fifty years, impacted by a variety of theoreticians and practitioners. Much of the seminal work in cognitive interventions focused on cognitive restructuring aimed at addressing individuals' thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. This work is reflected by the contributions of Aaron Beck, Albert Ellis, Stanton Samenow, Samuel Yochelson, Robert Ross, Elizabeth Fabiano, and Jack Bush. Almost at the same time, and parallel to the development of the cognitive restructuring interventions, a number of social scientists were also exploring cognitive skills training as a form of psycho-social-educational intervention. Individuals such as Albert Bandura, Donald Meichenbaum, George Spivak, Myrna Shure, Arnold Goldstein, Barry Glick, and Juliana Taymans developed strategies and curricula to teach skills that support pro-social interactions. The work of these individuals set the foundation and benchmarks for many of the programs and cognitive behavioral curricula currently developed and implemented, including those used throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

The first edition of Thinking for a Change was the result of several factors. During the early to late 1990's, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) offered a training seminar, *Cognitive Approaches to Changing Offender Behavior*, both at their training academy and as cooperative training throughout the country. The curriculum, developed by a group of experts in cognitive behavioral interventions, presented cognitive restructuring and cognitive skills concepts in a generic, yet

practical manner. This was one of NIC's most highly subscribed seminars. The consistent feedback from seminar participants was that correctional professionals wanted NIC to support the development of an intervention program and that the seminar should focus on preparing individuals for program implementation. Additionally, there was a growing body of research indicating that cognitive behavioral interventions could positively impact high risk offenders. As a result, the authors of Thinking for a Change took on the ambitious task of synthesizing the concepts and tools from both cognitive restructuring and cognitive skills paradigms into an integrated intervention.

The Curriculum Format

While the format for this revision of Thinking for a Change is different and improved, the theoretical and philosophical foundation of the program as originally developed, designed, and implemented has not changed. Each component is still presented in a systematic, logical fashion using the standard procedures for cognitive behavioral interventions. The three components of Thinking for a Change are: cognitive self-change, social skills, and problem solving skills. Cognitive self-change teaches individuals a concrete process for self-reflection aimed at uncovering antisocial thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. Social skills instruction prepares group members to engage in pro-social interactions based on self-understanding and consideration of the impact of their actions on others. Problem solving skills integrates the two previous interventions to provide group members with an explicit step-by-step process for addressing challenging and stressful real life situations. The program integrates these three types of interventions in the following way:

- Lesson 1 begins the program with an overview and introduction.
- Lessons 2-5 and 11-15 teach social skills.
- Lessons 6-10 teach the cognitive self-change process.
- Lessons 16-24 teach problem solving skills.

- Lesson 25 provides a wrap up of the program with the option of extending the program based on the needs of group members. For example, groups may opt to meet for additional sessions to learn new social skills that they have negotiated with their group facilitators; along with further practice in applying cognitive self-change and problem solving skills to newly identified problem situations.

Lesson Format

Lessons follow a similar format. Each lesson begins with a cover sheet for the group facilitators to familiarize themselves with the summary and rationale of the lesson. Concepts and definitions are outlined along with the learning objectives for that session. The cover sheet ends with an outline of the major activities of the lesson and a table listing supplements such as charts, handouts, and presentation slides that will be used for that lesson. The lesson is in a two-column format, in which the content (the material that must be delivered to the group members) is in the wider left-hand column, and the (group facilitator) notes, which provide directions, are in the narrower right-hand column of the page.

Supplements

Examples and camera-ready copies of all necessary charts, handouts, and scripts are available at the end of each lesson. Presentation slides are available separately for download at the NIC website (www.nicic.gov) or on the NIC Thinking for a Change DVD, which can be ordered from the NIC website. That DVD contains several clips that can be used in class during lessons 17, 18, and 20. The DVD also contains important resources for facilitators. It is available free of charge from NIC.

The following icons outline when to use the lesson supplements:



= Use LCD or other projector to introduce and reinforce information



= Sample presentation slide to be used when presenting

material



= Present important information from the supplement section of the lesson or write what is being discussed on chart paper



= A prepared handout for group members' use

Curriculum Revision

Purpose of Revision Project

Learning is a continuous process; a curriculum is a living document. The changes we have made are the result of ten years of experiences during which the authors have expanded their base of knowledge and learning. Group facilitators and trainers also provided the redesign team input for curriculum revisions.

NIC has supported the production of this revised edition of Thinking for a Change. The authors, joined by Renee Bergeron, curriculum developer, and Steve Swisher, NIC Correctional Program Specialist, comprised the team who redesigned and produced this revision. The project was managed and the curriculum was edited by contributing author Michael Guevara, NIC Correctional Program Specialist.

One of the goals for this revision was to ensure that there was a seamless, interactive synthesis of the three components of Thinking for a Change: cognitive self-change, social skills, and problem solving. The newly designed program organizer exemplifies what the authors have accomplished through the modifications. All three components form an interlocking circle of activities and events, precipitated by a conflict, that results in an “aha” moment for the group member.

All of the components are defined as a set of skills that can readily be detailed by the various steps required to accomplish the skill. Some significant revisions include:

- Cognitive self-change is now one skill that has three steps.
- There are nine social skills included in this revision. “Active Listening” (lesson 2), “Asking Questions” (lesson 3), “Giving Feedback” (lesson 4), and “Knowing Your Feelings” (lesson 5) are core skills that group members must have to negotiate the components of Thinking for a Change successfully.
- The flow of the lessons in both social skills and cognitive self-change provide the foundation upon which problem solving skills successfully mediates stressful situations.
- Problem solving is now defined as a set of six skills and is delivered in nine lessons.
- The problem solving component includes two “review and practice” lessons. Lesson 20 provides group members opportunities to practice the first three skills of problem solving. Lesson 24 provides group members a summary and practice opportunity to demonstrate all six skills of problem solving.
- The program organizer allows group members to initiate discussions about their learning after completing each of the components and as a summary review after the entire program is completed.

Delivery

The curriculum has been redesigned so that individuals in a range of staff roles may facilitate groups. While no special level of education or professional credential is required to deliver the program, there is a credentialing process that is now available for those interested in becoming certified Thinking for a Change group facilitators. The Thinking for a Change Group Facilitator Certificate is offered and administered by the Center for Credentialing and Education. (See: <http://www.cce-global.org/credentials-offered/t4ccf>).

Group Facilitator Selection

The ideal skills for group facilitators include: empathy, facilitation/teaching techniques, understanding group processes and interpersonal interactions, and the ability to control a group of offenders, at-risk youth, or problem individuals through non-coercive means. It is strongly recommended that group facilitators be trained in the contents and process of Thinking for a Change. As such, the group facilitators should be included in any management implementation plan for this program. Training should be accomplished within a week-long format using at least two master trainers.

Group Member Selection

The group members (offenders, students, and at-risk youth) should be pre-screened and selected after a brief individual interview. Such a meeting need not take any more than five to ten minutes. It should set the tone of the learning sessions, direct and focus the group member to the usefulness of the program in their own lives, and set expectations that positive participation would greatly enhance their options. This applies to all settings: prison, jail or community.

Lessons/Sessions

For the purposes of this curriculum, lessons are defined as a unit of material comprised of activities and concepts that group members learn to apply to their daily life situations. This curriculum comprises 25 lessons, with the option of aftercare lessons left open. Sessions are defined as a unit of time in which groups meet to learn and practice the content taught in each lesson.

Sessions are usually one to two hours in duration, but are a function of the agency or system implementing Thinking for a Change and therefore may be longer or shorter in time. As such, *it may take more than one session to complete all of the activities in a lesson.* Group facilitators should take care to deliver each lesson competently and efficiently, but not hesitate to use a second session to complete its content, if necessary.

Group Size/Frequency

While the size of the group may be determined by agency policy, it is recommended that groups include between 8-12 members in order to preserve program integrity. More than 12 group members, given the activities and learning involved with each lesson, would require more time than is allotted per group session. Fewer than 8 group members would compromise the group process and decrease the effectiveness of the group member learning.

Most cognitive behavioral interventions recommend at least two sessions per week. The Thinking for a Change curriculum is best delivered two to three times per week. Facilitators are strongly encouraged to schedule a minimum of two sessions per week. The total number of sessions per week is a function of staff resources, schedules of group members and group facilitators, as well as policy direction from agency or jurisdiction executives.

Group Norms

The program should also have established group norms and expectations. While these may be based upon individual institutional or agency policy, the group norms should consider the learning environment and ensure the safety and security for all involved. As such, the group facilitator should consider the following as *minimal* group norms:

- **Confidentiality:** It is expected that all information shared in the group setting will be kept within the group, unless such information indicates possible harm to the individual or others. This norm is subject to agency guidelines for disclosure (which should be shared with group members as applicable).
- **Respect what is shared:** All statements should be accepted as information for learning purposes. As such, individuals should ensure that opinions and statements shared are constructive for the purpose of meeting the objectives of the lesson and content of the curriculum.
- **Take turns speaking and sharing:** Individuals need to speak one at a time, listening to what is being said, remaining focused on the topic and subject matter, and providing opportunities for others to respond should they disagree with something.
- **No aggression or violence:** Physical or verbal aggression and violence is not permitted and should not be tolerated.

Group Facilitator Preparation

- Minimally, group facilitators should have attended formal facilitator training in the Thinking for a Change curriculum before delivering the program.
- While group facilitators have different styles and approaches to content delivery, all must know the content that must be delivered to group

members. Group facilitators should review each lesson and prepare its contents *before* each session. This includes practicing modeling displays until they are well rehearsed.

- Have all materials duplicated, ensure that equipment works, and that the physical plant is ready for the group to begin.
- Ensure the room is well lit, ventilated, and arranged so that the chairs in a comfortable discussion type format (usually tables and chairs in a “u-shaped” format).
- Finally, group facilitators have the option to extend the curriculum as described in lesson 25. The decision to extend Thinking for a Change after completion of the program may be based upon such factors as: length of stay of the group members within the agency or system; needs of individual group members; agency or system mandates; availability of staff; and fiscal resources.

As you facilitate groups using this revised Thinking for a Change curriculum, keep in mind that the goal is to effect change in thinking so that behavior is positively impacted.

Good luck as you embark on this most challenging journey!

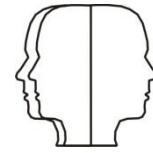
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Special note on version 3.1

Thinking for a Change 3.1 reflects edits and revisions to version 3.0, based on input from users and trainers. Thanks to all who contributed ideas and suggestions.

Thinking for a Change 3.1 December 2011

Thinking for a Change

