

# Lesson 9 – Cognitive Self-Change: Step 3 – Use New Thinking



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## Summary and Rationale

Step 3 of cognitive self-change is to **use new thinking**. This lesson teaches group members to identify new thinking and use that thinking to reduce their risk of acting in a way that may be criminal or harmful to themselves or others. Remember that **Thinking for a Change** is an integrated program, so to ultimately apply the three steps of the skill of cognitive self-change, group members will incorporate social skills and problem solving skills.

## Concepts and Definitions

**Risk thinking:** Thinking that leads you to do something hurtful or criminal.

**New thinking:** New thoughts, or attitudes and beliefs that reduce the risk in your thinking.

**Objectives** – As a result of this lesson the group members will:

1. Identify new thoughts and attitudes and beliefs that will reduce the risk in their old ways of thinking.
2. Continue to develop their skill in observing their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs (step 1 – **pay attention to our thinking**), and in recognizing the risk in their thinking (step 2 – **recognize risk**).
3. Practice using new thinking to reduce the risk of getting into trouble or hurting themselves or others.

# Major Activities

**Activity 1:** Homework Review

**Activity 2 :** Overview of Lesson

**Activity 3:** Practice Step 3 with Sample Thinking Report (Jim's Thinking Report)

**Activity 4:** Model Using Step 3 with Jim's Situation (In Trouble for Being Out of the Area)

**Activity 5 :** Group Members practice Step 3

**Activity 6:** Group Members Use Step 3 with Their Situations

**Activity 7:** Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with All Group Members

**Activity 8:** Wrap-up and Review of Program Organizer

**Activity 9:** Assign Homework

# Supplements

**Charts** – Make before facilitating lesson. (See supplement section in each lesson for full text of chart page.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



C-7-1-Jim's Thinking Report

C-9-1- New Thinking

C-9-2- New Attitudes and Beliefs

Group Members' Thinking Reports from Lesson 8

Charts/Notes on Program Organizer from Lesson 1

**Handouts** – Make copies before lesson. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



H-9-1-Homework Sheet

**Presentation Slides** – Make transparencies if projector is not available. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



P-9-1-Lesson Title

P-9-2-Homework Review

P-9-3-Cognitive Self Change

P-9-4-Use New Thinking

P-9-5-Cognitive Self-Change Steps

P-9-6-Program Organizer

P-9-7-Homework

## Equipment

- Easel (chart stand)
- Projector to show presentation slides
- Projection screen or suitable surface

## Supplies

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Copies of handouts

## Activity 1 : Homework Review

In this lesson we are going to learn about step 3 of cognitive self-change – **use new thinking**.

Last time, we learned about step 2 of cognitive self-change – **recognize risk**. Then you practiced step 1 – **pay attention to our thinking** along with step 2.

Your homework was to write another thinking report about a recent or past time when you broke a rule or hurt someone and to circle one key thought, one key feeling, and one key belief that led you to do that behavior.

I am going to ask that each of you begin by describing the situation informally and briefly.

Then read your thinking report, without further comment or explanation.

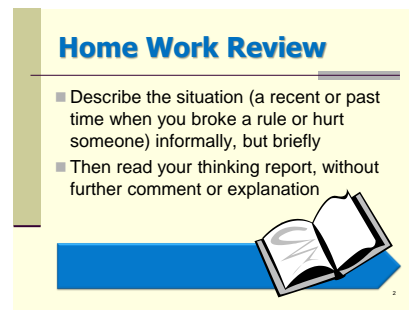
Who would like to start us off today?



P-9-1



P-9-2



This is an oral report.

Do not write reports on chart paper.

Provide coaching as needed to:

Clarify when necessary for understanding.

Ensure that group members report the 4 parts of a thinking report objectively.

## Activity 2: Overview of the Lesson

We have practiced the first two steps of cognitive self-change.

Who will volunteer to tell us what the first two steps are?

*(Answer: Pay attention to our thinking; and Recognize risk).*

And what is step 3?

*(Answer: Use new thinking).*

That's right; today we are going to learn about using new thinking to reduce our risk.

## Activity 3: Practice Step 3 with Sample Thinking Report (Jim's Thinking Report)

Today you are going to practice step 3 – **use**

Ask each group member to briefly explain why he/she circled the particular pieces.

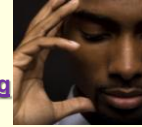
Help each group member consider how his/her thinking led to the behavior.



P-9-3

### Cognitive Self Change

1. Pay Attention to Our Thinking
2. Recognize Risk
- 3. Use New Thinking**



As you facilitate this activity keep in mind the applicable aspects of cognitive theory

**new thinking.** You will come up with new thinking to use in place of the thinking that got you into trouble. You'll practice with the situations and thinking reports you did in the last lesson.

You can't change what you did or thought in past situations. But you can imagine what thinking you could have used that might have helped you avoid getting into trouble. This will help prepare you for future situations.

Remember, during a thinking report you must be completely objective.

Who can summarize what "being objective" means?

*(Example answer: No judging good or bad, right or wrong; No telling anyone else how they should think.)*

When we do step 3 of cognitive self-change – **use new thinking**, we need to answer a couple of questions:

- What new ways of thinking can I use that will lead to different consequences?

outlined below:

We don't have direct, conscious control over our emotional response to any given situation, but ....

We have more control over the thoughts and beliefs we use to interpret a given situation, and ...

By choosing our thoughts and beliefs we are able indirectly to exercise control over our feelings.

This is why we teach group members to choose their thinking and by doing so to indirectly control their feelings.


We don't ask them "to choose" their feelings.



P-9-4

**Use New Thinking**

- What new ways of thinking can I use that will lead to different consequences?
- Will I feel okay about myself if I think this way?



- Will I feel okay about myself if I think this way?

Let's start with the example we used before, of Jim, who was in trouble for being out of the area.

Okay, so by creating this thinking report, Jim did step 1 of cognitive self-change – **pay attention to our thinking**. Then, in our



### C-7-1 – Jim's Thinking Report

Display the chart of Jim's Thinking Report (In trouble for being out of the area), from lesson 7, which was added to in lesson 8.

This chart sheet already includes thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs (step 1), and identified risk thinking has been circled (step 2).

Present the thinking report and review the circled thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs that the group members identified as leading this person to break the rules.

last lesson, we did step 2 – **recognize risk**. We accomplished this by identifying and circling the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs that we guessed most directly led Jim to breaking the rule. Good job.

Now we are going to practice step 3 – **use new thinking**, by coming up with some ideas about new thinking Jim could have used that would have reduced his risk of breaking the rule and getting in trouble.

We are going to do some brainstorming. Brainstorming helps us practice creative thinking. To brainstorm, we come up with as many ideas about an issue as we can.

We won't judge whether the ideas are good or bad; just come up with as many as we can.

### **Brainstorming New Thoughts**

Let's start with Jim's risk thoughts. Let's focus on the one we circled in lesson 8, identified as the thought with the highest risk – the one we thought most directly led Jim to breaking the rule.

Now comes the brainstorming. Try to think of thoughts that Jim *could* have had instead of this one, which may have reduced his risk of breaking the rule. I will list as many



C-9-1 – New Thinking



different new thoughts as you can think of. As you toss out ideas, I (or *co-facilitator*) will write them on the chart. You can see we've got 10 spaces up here for new thoughts, but we are not limited to that number – we'll write down as many new thoughts as you can think of!

*(Example answer: I only have a few weeks to go; I can handle this; It's not worth it...)*

**Brainstorming New Attitudes and Beliefs**

Now we will do the same thing with the risk attitudes and beliefs. We are not going to use this process with the risk feelings, because we can't just choose what we feel. However, as we've discussed, the way that we think about a situation directly impacts the way that we feel about it. So later we'll examine how new thinking might lead to new feelings, as well as new behavior.

Once again, we're going to focus on the

Risk Thought:
New Thoughts:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Facilitate a brainstorming session. Coach group if necessary, but try to let them do the work. Remember that at the brainstorming stage, we don't take time to evaluate suggestions – we just want to generate ideas.

circled attitude and belief – the one we decided was probably most influential in leading Jim to break the rule. Using the brainstorming process again, what new attitudes or beliefs could Jim have considered instead of these, which might have lowered his risk of breaking the rule?

Remember, attitudes and beliefs can be rules we live by, principles, or values, or opinions about a range of different kinds of people or events.

*(Example answers: I can handle short-term hassles; I'll be okay in the long run.)*

**Replacing Risk Thoughts**

Very good work. Now let's look at the lists we have developed. We'll start with the list of new thoughts. The first question we ask is: Will each of these thoughts help Jim to *not* break the rule?

But it won't work for Jim to try to think in a



C-9-2 – New Attitudes and Beliefs

Risk Attitude and Belief:
New Attitudes and Beliefs:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Facilitate a brainstorming session. Coach group if necessary, but try to let them do the work.

Remember that at the brainstorming stage, we don't take time to evaluate suggestions – we just want to generate ideas.

Cross off any thoughts that the group thinks might still lead Jim to break the rule.

Cross off the thoughts

new way if the new thoughts aren't realistic or practical for him personally, will it?

Remember, when we consider new thinking, we have to ask ourselves: Will I feel okay about myself if I think this way? Can you imagine Jim thinking this way? Can you imagine yourself thinking this way?

Now, of the thoughts that are left, which one or ones seem most practical, and at the same time which ones will most likely lead Jim to behave in a different way, helping him to not break the rule? And remember, he has to feel good about himself if he thinks this way.

Now let's consider something else: What new feelings might Jim have if he thinks this way?

Might those new feelings help reduce his risk of breaking the rule?

### **Replacing Risk Attitudes and Beliefs**

Now let's look at the list of new attitudes and beliefs. The first question we ask is: Will each of these attitudes and beliefs help Jim to *not* break the rule?

But it won't work for Jim to try to use attitudes and beliefs that aren't realistic or practical for him personally, will it?

that the group identifies as not realistic or practical for Jim, or thoughts that won't allow him to feel good about himself.

Circle the new thought or thoughts that group members feel is/are most realistic and practical, and will most likely help Jim to not break the rule.

It is important to always connect thoughts to feelings, and then both of those to behavior.

Cross off any attitudes and beliefs that the group thinks might still lead Jim to break the rule.

Cross off the attitudes and beliefs that the group identifies as not realistic

Remember, when we use new thinking, we still want to feel good about ourselves. That is true for attitudes and beliefs as well. So when considering new attitudes and beliefs, we need to ask ourselves: Will I feel okay about myself if I think this way? Can you imagine Jim having these attitudes and beliefs? Can you imagine yourself with those attitudes and beliefs?

Now, of the attitudes and beliefs that are left, which one or ones seem most practical, and at the same time which ones will most likely lead Jim to think and act in a different way, helping him to not break the rule?

Can we see a connection between how these new attitudes and beliefs might support the new thinking?

And as we know, the fundamental principle of **Thinking for a Change** is, *thinking controls behavior!*

or practical for Jim, or which won't allow him to feel good about himself.

Circle the new attitude(s) and belief(s) that group members feel is/are most realistic and practical, and will most likely help Jim to not break the rule.

It is important to always connect attitudes and beliefs to thinking.

In the end, make sure you have charts with circled thoughts and at least one circled attitude and belief that we can imagine Jim feeling strong and good about, and which will reduce his risk of breaking the rule.

### Summary and Transition

Good job. It is always possible to think of new ways to think that would have changed what you did in a given situation. Remember that we are emphasizing that you can choose how to think, as well as how to act.

Now, of course, the real test is whether or not we can use the new thinking to help us behave in a different way. The point of using new thinking is to reduce our risk. Reduce our risk of hurting ourselves or someone else. Reduce our risk of getting in trouble.

### Activity 4: Model Using Step 3 with Jim's Situation (In Trouble for Being Out of the Area)

Let's see what might have happened for Jim if he had used the three steps of cognitive-self change in his situation. (*Co-facilitator name*) and I are going to model this situation, using the work we have done together as a group. Remember that step 1 – **pay attention to our thinking**, was done for us when we presented Jim's thinking report. We did step 2 – **recognize risk**, in lesson 8 when we circled the key thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs that led Jim to leaving the area. And we have just done step



- Have all three of Jim's charts posted and visible: His Thinking Report with circled risk thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs; his New Thinking Chart; and his New Attitudes and Beliefs Chart.

3 – **use new thinking**, by listing new thoughts and attitudes and beliefs that could help Jim reduce the risk of getting in trouble.

Here's the situation: Jim is in his apartment and feeling a little stir crazy. His buddy Steve calls him up and invites him over to watch the big game with several of their friends. We know what happened – we know that Jim went over to Steve's house.

But in this scenario, Jim is going to use cognitive self-change. He will go through his risk thinking until he gets to the key, circled thought. At that point, he's going to "switch over" to his new thinking. He'll think the new thoughts until he gets to the circled thought on that chart. Then he'll reflect on the new, circled attitude and belief. We'll see what happens then.

Group facilitators should conduct a model where "Steve" calls "Jim" and invites him over to watch the big game with some of their friends. Steve should apply some appropriate peer pressure for a few seconds, and then be

quiet while Jim goes through the steps of cognitive self-change. “Jim” should put the phone down, and stand by the charts. One hand should point to your head to indicate that you are thinking, while the other hand points to each thought as you read it. Read through each of the thoughts in the thinking report until you get to the circled thought (identified as the key risk thought). When you get to this thought, switch over to the New Thinking Chart. Read through the thoughts on this chart (skipping the ones that were crossed out) until you get to the circled thought. (If desired, it might be helpful to read this thought twice.) At this point go to the New Attitude and Beliefs

How did things turn out for Jim? Did he reduce his risk of getting in trouble? How do you think he feels about himself right now? Remember that it is always our decision as to how we think and how we act.

### Activity 5: Group Members Practice

#### Step 3

Now let's practice step 3 with your thinking reports.

Okay, the first chart I've got here belongs to (*group member name*). Thank you for going first. Let's look at your thinking report.

I'd like you to quickly review your entire thinking report, then point out the key

Chart. Read the circled attitude and belief, and then pause to reflect for just a moment. Pick the phone back up and reply to "Steve" in a way that is congruent with the new thinking and attitude and belief, keeping in mind that we want Jim to feel good about himself for thinking and acting this way.

Debrief the model briefly.



– Facilitators should have saved thinking report charts for each group member from lesson 8, with key risk



**Content****Notes**

thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs you circled – the ones that were most important in leading you to do what you did.

thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs circled.

Post the first thinking report (leaving two chart sheets free to write new thoughts and new attitudes and beliefs).

First, have the person read the entire thinking report. Then take each circled thought, feeling, attitude and belief in turn and ask the person to relate how this thought or feeling worked in his/her mind at the time to lead him/her to do this behavior. Keep this as simple as possible, but take the time to get the person to connect his/her thinking with his/her behavior.

Remain completely objective and nonjudgmental. Coach group members to be

Good, now let's do step 3 – **use new thinking**.

Start with the circled thought(s). We agreed that this thought (these thoughts) most directly led you to doing what you did.

What are some new thoughts you could have used that might have helped you do something different?

And let's ask for help from the group. Group, what new thoughts can you think of that might have led (*group member name*) away from this behavior in this situation?

nonjudgmental as well.



C-9-1 – New Thinking  
(fresh chart)

Risk Thought:
New Thoughts:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Write down new thoughts on a fresh sheet of chart paper.

For every suggestion from the group, ask the group member giving the thinking report if this thought sounds realistic and practical to him/her. If the group member agrees, write it on the chart. If he/she doesn't agree, don't write it down. The reporting group member is the final

Now, let's look at the attitudes and beliefs. Do the new thoughts we've written down suggest a new attitude or belief that might work for you in this situation?

Group, what are some attitudes and beliefs that might have helped (*group member*) avoid this behavior?

authority.

Continue this process until you get at least a short list of plausible new thoughts.



C-9-2 – New Attitudes and Beliefs (fresh chart)  
(Okay to write this at the bottom of the “New Thinking” chart, if there is room)

Risk Attitude and Belief:
New Attitudes and Beliefs:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Write down any new attitudes and beliefs the group member comes up with on the chart.

Whether he/she does or does not think of any, go on to ask the group.

For every suggestion from

Good. Let's finish by checking in to see if these new thoughts and attitudes and beliefs meet the conditions we are looking for.

Could this new way of thinking help lead you to act differently?

Can you imagine yourself really thinking this way in this situation? Would you feel okay about yourself if you thought this way?

If you really thought and felt in this new

the group, ask the group member giving the thinking report if this attitude and belief sounds realistic and practical to him/her. If the group member agrees, write it on the chart. If he/she doesn't agree, don't write it down. The reporting group member is the final authority.

Continue until you list at least one or two new attitudes or beliefs. (One can be enough, if it is meaningful.)




P-9-4

**Use New Thinking**

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- What new ways of thinking can I use that will lead to different consequences?
- Will I feel okay about myself if I think this way?



way, what do you think you would do?

Let's create that scene and play it out.

### **Activity 6: Group Members Use Step 3 with Their Situations**

#### **Set Up the Role Play**

So where were you when this situation occurred? Who could help you in this role play by playing the other person?

Now what I want you to do (*main actor*), is to go through the role play right up until you did the behavior on your thinking report. At that point, I'm going to ask you to switch to "thinking mode." I want you to read through the thoughts on your thinking report until you get to the circled one, which you decided was the key thought leading you to do what you did. After you say that thought out loud, I want you to switch over to your new thinking. You'll read down that list until you reach the circled thought. Then I want you to read your circled attitude and belief.

After you've done that, I want you to decide

Set up the role play, duplicating the situation as much as possible. Have the main actor coach the co-actor on anything he/she needs to say or do.

what you want to do and do it in the role play.

### **Conduct the Role Play**

Let's give a try.

Coach the main actor, making sure he/she points to his/her head during the thinking process. Guide him/her to switch to new thinking and new attitudes and beliefs when appropriate. Keep the action in this role play to a minimum, emphasizing the steps of cognitive self-change.

### **Debrief the Role Play**

So, (*co-actor*), how did you feel about playing your part in this role play?

Group, can you see how (*main actor's*) new thoughts were related to his/her new attitude and belief, and how that new thinking was connected to his/her new behavior?

What do you think (*main actor*)? Can you see yourself thinking this way? How were your feelings and actions affected by your new

thinking?

If you actually thought and acted this way in real life, how do you think you would feel about yourself?

Good job! You are beginning to see that by choosing how you think, you can choose how you act and react in different situations, even very difficult situations. In step 3 of cognitive self-change we **use new thinking** to change the ways we act.

Who would like to go next?

### **Activity 7: Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with All Group Members**

Okay, now the next set of charts I've got here belong to (*group member name*). Let's get these posted and you can quickly brief us on the situation...

### **Activity 8: Wrap-up and Review of Program Organizer**

You've now learned all 3 steps of cognitive

Encourage the group member to recognize that the goal of feeling good about him/her self with new thinking is possible.

Repeat activities 5 and 6 until every group member has identified and then role played new thinking for the thinking reports they did in lesson 8.

self-change. Who can define these 3 steps?

(Answer:

**Step 1 – Pay Attention to Our Thinking.**

*Pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs by observing them without judgment.*

**Step 2 – Recognize Risk.**

*Recognize when there is risk of our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs leading us into trouble.*

**Step 3 – Use New thinking.**

*Use new thinking to reduce the risk and let us feel good about ourselves when we use it.)*

Excellent. It's not always easy to do these steps, especially in real life situations that you have strong feelings about. But the more you practice, the easier it will get.

Next time you will continue to practice the 3 steps using new situations.

**Program Organizer**

Before we talk about your specific homework assignment, I want to take a few minutes to show you our program organizer again.

As we look at the program organizer for the second time, here are some of the things you



P-9-5

**Cognitive Self Change Steps**

1. Pay Attention to Our Thinking
2. Recognize Risk
3. Use New Thinking



P-9-6

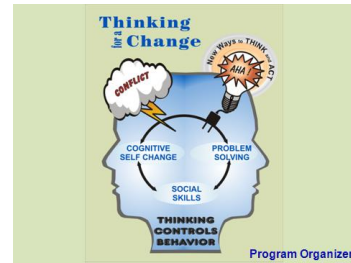
Display the program organizer and give the group a few moments to study it.



noted when we first introduced it.

Now looking at the program organizer this time:

- What kinds of new learning or observations do you have?
- What are some of your thoughts?
- Does the program organizer raise any particular feelings as a result of the thoughts you have or things you see?



Either display the chart paper with the comments from the first program organizer discussion (lesson 1, activity 6), or read some of the comments that were saved.



Display questions on a chart page.

Facilitate a discussion. If time allows, have group members pair up and discuss questions for a few minutes before hearing their ideas.

Post all comments on chart paper or record on paper for later use. **Save this chart/these notes for future use.**

## Activity 9: Assign Homework

- Watch for situations between now and the next session where you feel some degree of tension or stress or conflict.
- Do a thinking report on the situation.
- Identify and circle key thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs that might put you at risk for getting in trouble.
- Remember to focus on the thinking that *led you* to feeling stressed or tense or conflicted, as opposed to what you thought and felt afterward.


We will practice working with these situations in our next session.



P-9-7

### Homework

- Watch for situations between now and the next class where you feel some degree of tension or stress or conflict
- Do a Thinking Report on the situation
- Identify key thoughts, feelings and beliefs that put you at risk for getting into trouble





H-9-1-Homework

Handout

Completing the homework assignment is critical.

It is an opportunity for each group member to transfer the skills he/she has practiced in the session to real life situations.

As he/she completes the homework, the new skills begin to integrate into his/her thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs, and behavior.