

# Session 1 *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW: Starting with Me*

## Key Points:

- We can't change the past, but we can make positive changes starting from the present.
- Develop a clear goal. Writing it down helps.

## My START NOW Personal Goal

*Please fill in this page and bring it to the next group meeting. Set one positive change goal that you would like to make for yourself. Make it specific so you'll be able to tell whether or not you meet your goal*



**This is my START NOW Personal Goal:**

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**Here are some reasons this goal is important to me:**

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## **Session 2** *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:*

### **Focusing**

*Please do this practice exercise before the next group meeting.*

Choose one of the following activities for your practice. Check the one you will try:

- Brushing your teeth
- Eating one food at a meal
- Looking at a picture

For about 2 to 3 minutes, do that activity and use the focusing skills from the session.

#### **Key Points for Focusing:**

- ✓ Decide to focus, and tell yourself to focus.
- ✓ Slow down and quiet down.
- ✓ Notice what is happening right now.
- ✓ When you lose focus, simply turn your attention back to the task at hand.

Write down your reactions to this-

What went well:

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What was difficult:

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Anything else you noticed:

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## **Session 2** Focusing Practice Exercise for START NOW:

### **Count Your Breaths- *Facilitator Instructions***

**Type of Focusing Exercise:** Breathing and/or Imagery

**Handout(s):** None needed.

**Materials Needed:** The facilitator will need a way to time the exercise (approx. 2 minutes)

#### **Facilitator Instructions:**

Tell the group:

*“Today I’d like you to practice the skill of focusing by focusing on your breathing. You focus on counting your breaths. When we start this exercise, just breathe normally. Each time you breathe out, silently say a number to yourself- “one”, “two”, “three”, “four”, “five”- then start back at “one”. When we start, please take 2 minutes to focus on your counting your breaths like this. When you notice that your focus has drifted, like if you forget to keep counting, or you start to count past the number five, simply turn your focus back to counting your breaths. Each time you notice that your focus has wandered, simply turn it back to your breaths.”*

*“Any questions?”* (Answer any questions raised. If the intervening discussion is more than just a sentence or two, it may be helpful to repeat the directions again.) *“Ok, begin.”*

After participants do the focusing exercise, ask them, *“How was this exercise for you?”*  
*What did you notice about your ability to focus while you did this?”*

## Session 3, page 1 *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:*

### Open & Balanced Attitudes

#### Key Points:

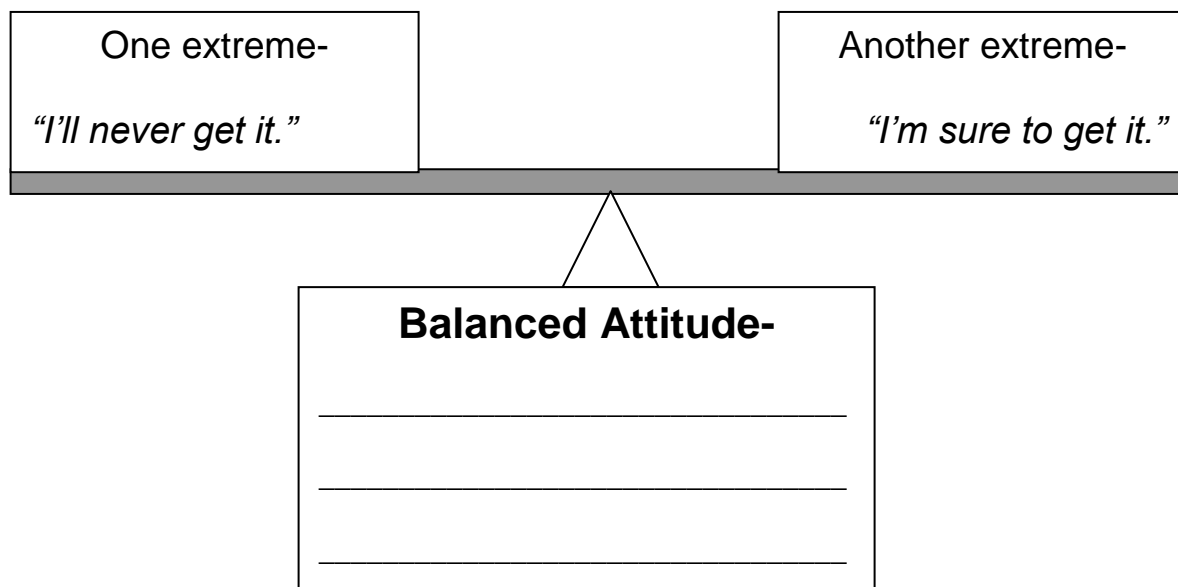
- You'll be more likely to succeed by having an open & balanced attitude
- A person with an **open & balanced attitude**:
  - is easy going,
  - listens to other people's ideas
  - will try a new approach
  - looks at the **whole** picture, not just one side of things
- Also, replace extreme words, like "always", "never", "no-one", etc, with less extreme, more realistic words.

Put an "X" on the line below, to show how you see yourself at this time in your life re: an open vs. closed attitude:

CLOSED \_\_\_\_\_ OPEN

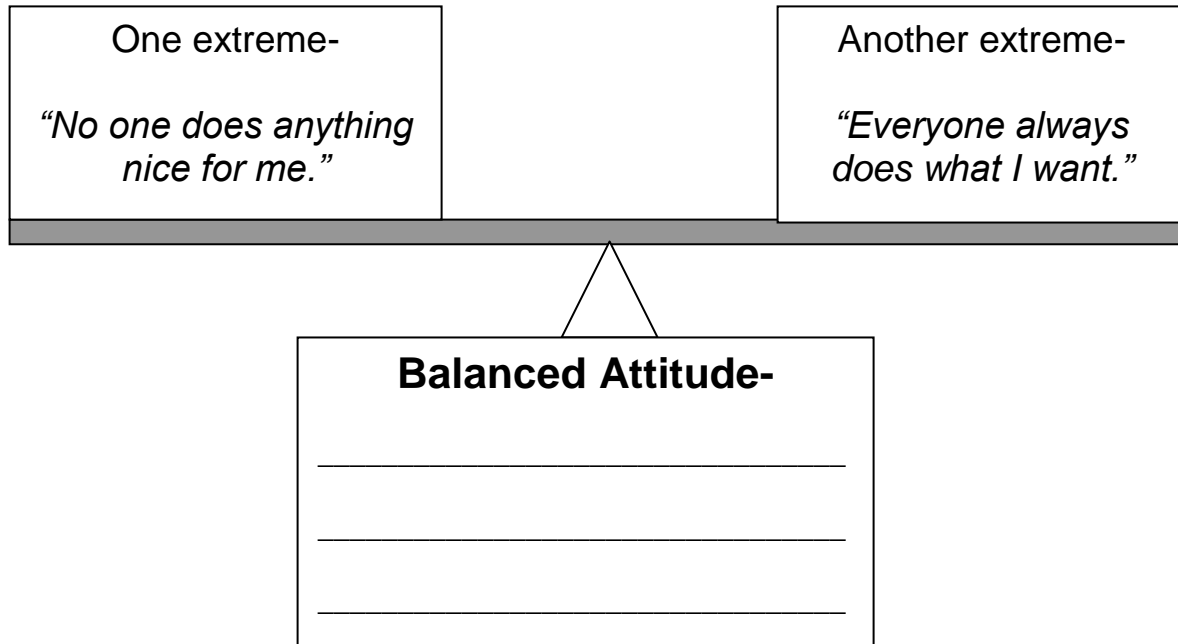
Also, read each of the examples and look at the two extremes shown underneath. Then fill in how you could deal with these situations using an open and balanced attitude. Today's exercise is two pages.

1. **Imagine that you apply for a job that a lot of people are trying for.**

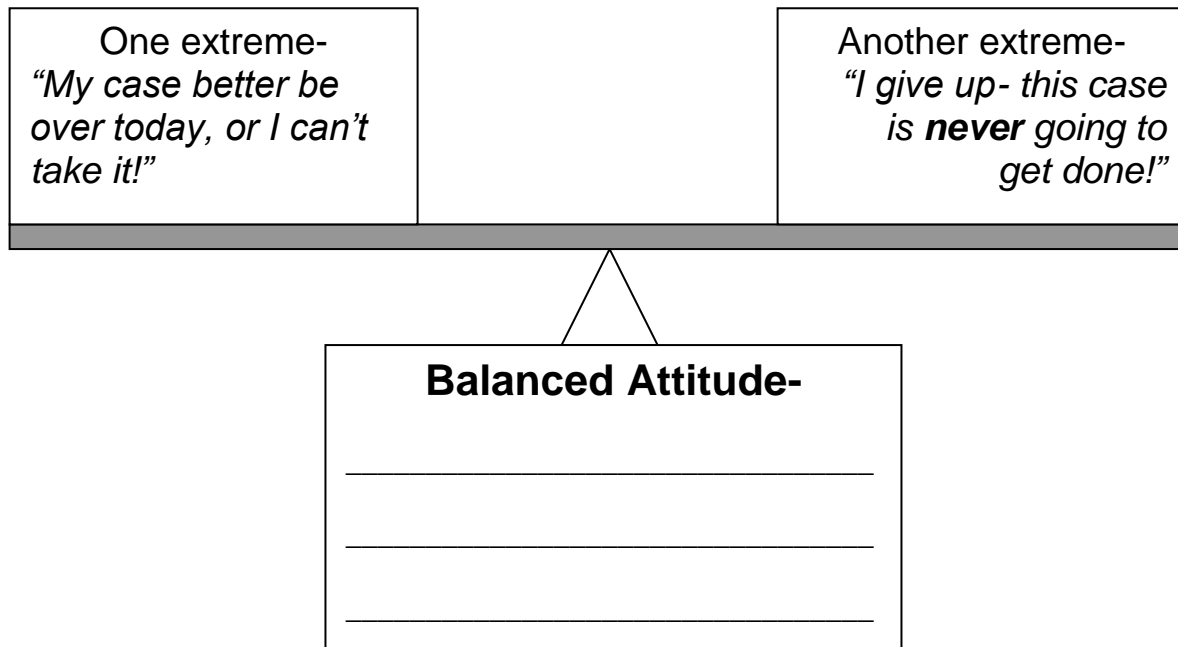


**Session 3, page 2** Real Life Practice Exercise for **START NOW:**

2. Imagine that your family member cancels a visit to see you at the last minute.



3. Imagine that you have a court case that is taking a long time to get through.



## **Session 3** Focusing Practice Exercise for START NOW:

### **Small Words from Long Words- *Facilitator Instructions***

**Type of Focusing Exercise:** Cognitive-Verbal

**Handout(s):** See attached

**Materials Needed:** Each participant will need a writing instrument. The facilitator will need a way to time the exercise (approx. 3 minutes)

#### **Facilitator Instructions:**

Give each participant a handout, and ask them not to begin the exercise until you go over all the instructions. Have one of the participants read the instructions on the handout, at both the top and the bottom of the page.

Also tell the group:

*“This exercise gives you a chance to practice your skill of focusing. When we start, please take 3 minutes to focus on doing this exercise. The idea of this is not to see who can find the most words, although sometimes people enjoy a spirit of competition. The main thing is to practice focusing while doing something that requires concentration.”*

*“Any questions?”* (Answer any questions raised.) *“Ok, begin.”*

After participants do the focusing exercise, ask them, *“How was this exercise for you?”*  
*What did you notice about your ability to focus while you did this?*

## Session 3 Focusing Practice Exercise for START NOW:

### Small Words from Long Words: CALENDAR

#### *Participant Handout*

Use the following exercise to practice focusing skills. See how many small words you can make using the letters in the word “calendar.” For example, the word “real” works.

## CALENDAR



_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

#### FAQ's:

- The words can be any length.
- Words can have two “a’s” in them, since that letter appears twice in the word “calendar.” Otherwise you can only use each other letter once per word.
- Proper names are ok.

# Session 4 Real Life Practice Exercise for: BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

Please complete the next page, about a stressful situation you recently faced. Here's an example below.

<b>A</b> CTIVATORS <i>What triggered me?</i>		<b>B</b> EHAVIOR  <i>What did I do?</i>	<b>C</b> ONSEQUENCES <i>What happened?</i>	
<b>Activators around me</b> <i>What? Where? When?</i>	<b>Activators inside me</b> <i>Thoughts? Feelings?</i>		<i>Positive Consequences</i>  +	<i>Negative Consequences</i>  -
				
Came back from my group & CO told me to pack up to move to a new cell.	“What the F? Why do I have to move?” Angry.	I threw some stuff around while I was packing up.	Got some anger out.	Could of gotten written up & sent to seg. Cellie’s gonna be mad that I made a mess. Still had to move.



For Behaviors above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar Activators.



<b>B</b> EHAVIOR  <i>What I can do instead-</i>	<b>C</b> ONSEQUENCES <i>What are the likely consequences?</i>	
	<i>Positive Consequences</i>  +	<i>Negative Consequences</i>  -
Tell myself that this happens a lot of times in jail, don't take it personally. Write to the unit manager.	<i>Maybe would feel better about it.</i> <i>Wouldn't have messed up my and cellie's stuff.</i>	Would still have to move and still be angry about that.



# Session 4 Real Life Practice Exercise for: BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

<b>A</b> CTIVATORS <i>What triggered me?</i>		<b>B</b> EHAVIOR  <i>What did I do?</i>	<b>C</b> ONSEQUENCES <i>What happened?</i>	
<i>Activators around me</i> <i>What? Where? When?</i>	<i>Activators inside me</i> <i>Thoughts? Feelings?</i>		<i>Positive Consequences</i> <b>+</b>	<i>Negative Consequences</i> <b>-</b>
				

For Behaviors above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar Activators.



<b>B</b> EHAVIOR <i>What I can do instead-</i>	<b>C</b> ONSEQUENCES <i>What are the likely consequences?</i>	
	<i>Positive Consequences</i> <b>+</b>	<i>Negative Consequences</i> <b>-</b>

## **Session 5** *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:*

### **Accepting Myself**

#### **Key Points:**

- It helps to treat yourself and others with kindness and acceptance.
- Self-acceptance is often reflected in the way you “talk” to yourself.

**Here are some ways I have not treated myself with self-acceptance:**

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**Here are some ways I am beginning to treat myself with self-acceptance:**

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**Fill in some examples of Negative Self-Talk that you have noticed in yourself, & Positive Self-Talk to replace it with (an example is shown).**

<b>Negative Self-Talk</b>	<b>Positive Self-Talk</b>
Example: <i>I'll never pass the GED test.</i>	Example: <i>Even though I failed it once, I'll study more and I <b>will</b> pass.</i>

## **Session 5** Focusing Practice Exercise for **START NOW:**

### **Tuning In- Facilitator Instructions**

**Type of Focusing Exercise:** Music/Sound

**Handout(s):** None needed for this exercise.

**Materials Needed:** Media equipment to play music or nature sounds (vary types, as long as appropriate for correctional setting)

**Facilitator Instructions:** Choose a piece of music and/or nature sounds to play for the group.

If a musical selection, tell the group:

*“I am going to play a song that’s \_\_\_ minutes long. While the music plays, focus on really listening to it. Notice the sounds of the different musical instruments, the mood of the music, the words of the music (if it’s a vocal selection), the tempo, the beat, and any images or feelings you notice related to the music. When you notice that your focus has drifted, simply turn your focus back to listening to this music. Each time you notice that your focus has wandered, simply turn it back to listening.”*

If nature sounds, tell the group:

*“I am going to play a selection of nature sounds that’s \_\_\_ minutes long. While it plays, focus on really listening to it. Notice the variety of sounds, imagine the setting, the mood and tempo of the sounds, and any images or feelings you notice related to these nature sounds. When you notice that your focus has drifted, simply turn your focus back to listening to the sounds. Each time you notice that your focus has wandered, simply turn it back to listening.”*

*“Any questions?”* (Answer any raised. If the intervening discussion is more than just a sentence or two, it may be helpful to repeat the directions again.)

Play the music/nature sounds selection.

After participants do the focusing exercise, ask them, *“How was this exercise for you?”* *What did you notice about your ability to focus while you did this?”*

## **Session 6** *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:* **Accepting My Situation**

### **Key Points:**

- We all have some situations we don't want to accept, because they're hard realities.
- Accepting what is real allows us to begin dealing with it.
- We can accept by:
  - Learning skills to cope with the feelings that come up.
  - Using focusing to just look at the situation with detachment.
  - Reminding ourselves that we can't control other people's actions.
  - Being patient with ourselves and others.
  - Saying the Serenity Prayer

*Grant me the courage- to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

### **Situations I've Accepted:**

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### **Situations I'm Having a Hard Time Accepting:**

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Pick one of the situations you're having a hard time accepting (if you listed more than one):\_\_\_\_\_.

### **What can you do to help yourself accept that situation?**

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## Session 7 Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW: Self-Care Skills

### Check Up!!!

Think about how you've been taking care of yourself in the past few months. How many checks do you give yourself in each of the following areas of wellness? See the box below for what each number of checks means.

Place checks below:	Area of Wellness
	Healthy Eating
	Physical Exercise
	Healthy Sleep
	Avoid Medical & Dental Problems
	Exercise your Mind
	Build your Self-Confidence
	Stick with the Winners
	Taking med's as prescribed ( <i>if applies</i> )

no checks = This is an area I don't do at all, or do hardly at all. There's a lot of room for me to get stronger in this area.

✓ = This is an area that I do a little bit- quite a bit of room for me to get stronger in this area.

✓✓ = This is an area I do a medium amount- fairly strong in this area.

✓✓✓ = This is an area I do quite a bit- I'm especially strong in this area.

My most important area of wellness right now is-  
Why?

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The area of wellness I struggle with is- \_\_\_\_\_  
What would you like to see yourself do differently?

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## Session 7 Focusing Practice Exercise for:

### Motorcycles Hidden Objects Puzzle- Facilitator Instructions

**Type of Focusing Exercise:** Cognitive-Visual

**Handout(s):** See attached handout, modified from <http://www.kids-puzzles.com/hiddenObjects16.html>

**Materials Needed:** Each participant will need a writing instrument and the attached handout. The facilitator will need a way to time the exercise (approx. 3 minutes)

#### **Facilitator Instructions:**

Give each participant a copy of the handout, and tell the group:

*“Today’s focus exercise is a hidden objects puzzle. When we start, please take three minutes, to focus on looking for the objects listed at the bottom of the puzzle (then read the list of hidden objects, particularly if you have participants in the group whose ability to read in English is limited). The idea of this is not to see who can do this puzzle and who can’t, or who does it best or faster, or anything like that. The idea is to practice focusing while doing something that requires concentration. Try to stay focused. Notice how you focus, and what difficulties you experience focusing. It is quite unlikely that any of us would be able to find all of the objects in the three minutes we are going to take now in group. You’ll have the opportunity to take this exercise with you after group, so that you can finish it then, if you’d like.”*

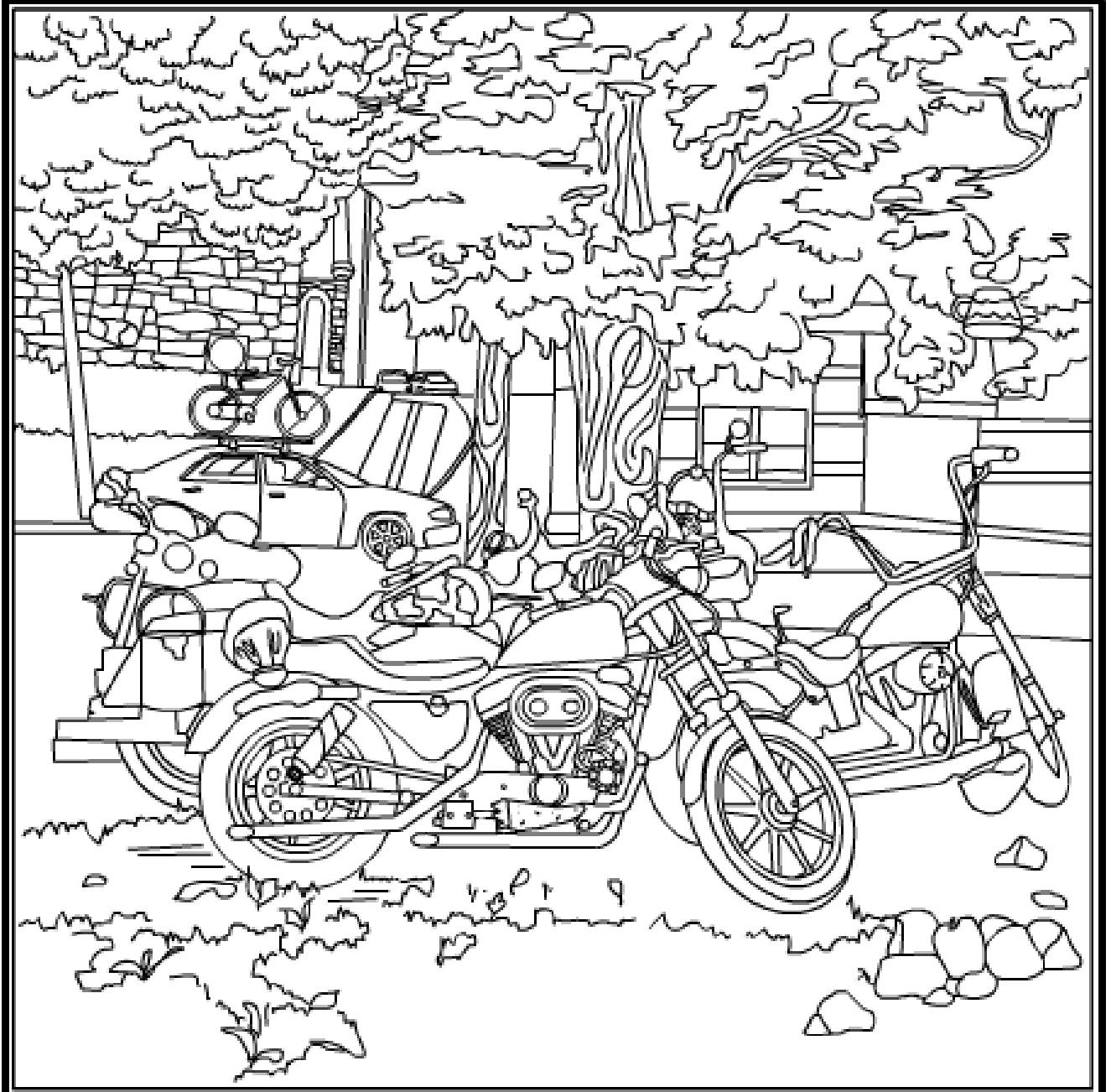
After participants do the focusing exercise, ask them, *“How was this exercise for you?”* *What did you notice about your ability to focus while you did this?”*

Optional: On the page after the participant handout is a Key/Solutions guide, which is best distributed at the next session to help participants who have been unable to locate certain hidden objects.

## Session 7 Focusing Practice Exercise for START NOW:

### Motorcycles Hidden Objects Puzzle

#### *Participant Handout*



Find the following objects:

Acorn Cake Ring Apple Paint Can Carrot Sock Pizza Bottle  
Bird Ladle Cup Feather Knit Hat Paintbrush

## Session 7 Focusing Practice Exercise for START NOW:

### *Optional Handout*

Clues/Solutions for Motorcycle Hidden Objects Puzzle:



acorn



ring



apple



sock



bottle



bird



feather



knit  
hat



cake



paint  
can



carrot



pizza



ladle



cup



paintbrush



**Session 8** *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:*

## My Spiritual Self

**Key Points:**

- Each person’s spiritual beliefs & practices are to be respected.
- Spirituality can be expressed & developed through:
  - Being focused & centered “in the moment”
  - Prayer & worship
  - Participating in a spiritual organization
  - Looking for meaning, seeing the good in a “bad” situation
  - Spiritual music or literature

**Ways I feel good about my spiritual self** (What are you doing spiritually that is working for you?):

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**Ways I’d like to develop my spiritual self** (What would you like to do to develop your spiritual self?):

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## **Session 9** *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:*

### **Identifying & Developing My Values**

#### **Key Points about Values:**

- No one can determine your values but you.
- When it comes to values, actions speak louder than words.
- Your values may change as you change.
- You may keep the same values as you change, but find new ways to express the same value. For example, you may value excitement, but find new ways to meet that need as you mature.

***Please use the space on this page to show your values. You can do so through drawing, writing, etc.***

# **My Values**

## **Session 9** Focusing Practice Exercise for:

### **STARTING WITH ME Word Search- *Facilitator Instructions***

**Type of Focusing Exercise:** Cognitive-Verbal

**Handout(s):** See attached

**Materials Needed:** Each participant will need a writing instrument and a copy of the attached handout. The facilitator will need a way to time the exercise (approx. 3 minutes)

#### **Facilitator Instructions:**

Give each participant a handout, and have one of the participants read the instructions on the handout. Ask them not to begin the exercise yet.

Tell the group:

*“Today’s focus exercise is a word search puzzle, using various key words from the START NOW unit we’re about to complete next week. When we start, please take three minutes, to focus on looking for the words listed at the bottom of the puzzle.*

*The idea of this is not to see who can do this puzzle and who can’t, or who does it best or faster, or anything like that. The idea is to practice focusing while doing something that requires concentration. Try to stay focused. Notice how you focus, and what difficulties you experience focusing. It is quite unlikely that any of us would be able to find all of the words in the three minutes we are going to take now in group. You’ll have the opportunity to take this exercise with you after group, so that you can finish it then, if you’d like.”*

After participants do the focusing exercise, ask them, *“How was this exercise for you?”* *What did you notice about your ability to focus while you did this?”*

## Session 9 Focusing Practice Exercise for START NOW:

### STARTING WITH ME Word Search *Participant Handout*

W Q Y G Z Q C Q Q J V U K F W  
L W S L A O G R O A E U B O J  
D B A R S V A E D L Y R S C N  
C J R M O O M D D T V P I U Y  
U O R V J T E I D E I K L S N  
X H N D A M A E V R H F I N T  
E R C S K L C V T N I W W Q S  
B F F F E N U U I A C T O Y L  
K Z F Z A Q A E Y T D K N N D  
O R O L Z L U H S I C W T C C  
Y D A S I K Z E H V Q A R N Y  
S B P T C E M H N E O S A O L  
B I Y M H R D G W C X A T E U  
S E I R A D N U O B E I S O L  
B E H A V I O R K M I S P X G

ACTIVATORS  
ALTERNATIVE  
BALANCED  
BEHAVIOR  
BOUNDARIES  
CONSEQUENCES  
FOCUS  
SPIRITUALITY  
STARTNOW  
VALUES

**Session10** *Real Life Practice Exercise for START NOW:*

**My Personal Boundaries**

**Key Points about Personal Boundaries:**

- People have the right to decide their own boundaries.
- Knowing & setting your boundaries can:
  - Feel strange & good at the same time, especially if you're not used to setting boundaries.
  - Helps you feel "safer" to connect with people.
- You need to know & set your boundaries about many areas of life, including:
  - Your time
  - Your belongings
  - Your values (honesty, criminal behaviors, sex, respect, etc.)

I know and respect personal boundaries in these ways:

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I'd like to develop clearer personal boundaries in this area:

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Here are some things that I can do to develop my boundaries in this area (check off all that apply):

- spend some time thinking about my boundaries
- talk to someone about this- who? \_\_\_\_\_
- read about this- read what? \_\_\_\_\_
- something else- what? \_\_\_\_\_