

Meeting-by-Meeting Instructions for Friendship Ministers



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*And do not forget to do good and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

(Hebrews 13:16)

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Take This Manual into Meetings

It is recommended to take these *Meeting-by-Meeting Instructions* into meetings with members.

- At the discretion of the Friendship Minister—if it seems that it would be appropriate or helpful—show and explain the contents of the *Meeting-by-Meeting Instructions Manual*.

Have Paper Available to Take Notes

These instructions will be used for all meetings with members. It is recommended that Friendship Ministers not write on these manuals directly.

Instead, it is recommended to have paper available to take notes during meetings. Date and initial notes, but do not put full names on them. The notes should be kept secure (such as in a locked cabinet in the meeting room) to ensure confidentiality and protect privacy.

Regarding “Scripts”

⇒ *This is the script font.*

“Scripts” are possible language to use, and they are indicated by *italicized font* and an arrow bullet point. All scripts are suggestions, not directives. Initially, Friendship Ministers might rely on scripts for how to say something. Over time, Friendship Ministers can use their own preferred way of saying things.

Regarding Time

The various parts of the meetings are denoted with a time suggestion, such as: **(5–10 minutes)**.

These are intended to help the Friendship Minister understand approximately how long each part is expected to take. They should not be taken as strict instructions, but are intended to help the Friendship Minister keep meetings moving along.

In the first meeting, the Friendship Minister and member preview the approximate length of meetings (probably 45–60 minutes), which is up to the Friendship Ministry Team. It is okay to end a bit early, so long as the material in the meeting has been covered. It is strongly recommended that meetings not go beyond the prescribed time limit, however. Instead, end on time with the statement that the material will be covered in the subsequent meeting.

OVERVIEW

PREVIEW OF MEETINGS

Meeting #1

There are two goals for Meeting #1. First, the Friendship Minister provides an overview of the Friendship Ministry program to the member. Second, through active listening, the Friendship Minister learns the reason the member is seeking assistance.

Meeting #2

The primary goal of Meeting #2 is to identify a specific problem to improve or resolve. You will use the *Problem Identification Worksheet* to do this.

Meeting #3

During Meeting #3, the problem-solving strategy is briefly reviewed, and then the strategy formally begins by completing the two *Problem-Solving Worksheets*.

Meetings #4–6

During Meetings #4–6, the Friendship Minister and member review progress made in changing thinking and behavior.

Meeting #7 (Final Meeting)

During Meeting #7, the final meeting, the Friendship Minister and member review what happened during the previous meetings, including progress and changes in thinking and behavior.

PROCEDURES AND CONTENT IN ALL MEETINGS

Utilize Active Listening and Empathy

Active listening to demonstrate understanding and empathy is used in all meetings.

Time

Start and stop meetings on time. It is useful at the beginning of the meeting to declare to the person how long the meeting will last and, therefore, when it will end.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *We will meet for 60 minutes. It is 5:00 now, so we will end by 6:00.*
- ⇒ *I will keep track of the time for us.*

General Considerations

These “General Considerations” are repeated from Part 3 of the *Procedures Manual*.

- Members seeking assistance are approved as appropriate by the Pastor and matched to a Friendship Minister, who calls to arrange the first meeting.
- Friendship Ministers and members are matched by gender.
- Meetings occur at the church in a private room.

- Meetings occur only when others are present in the building. The member should be told that there is another person present in the building.
- Friendship Ministers should arrive early to ensure that the room is clean and set up appropriately (furniture properly arranged, a clock viewable, etc.).
- The Friendship Minister indicates where the member should sit in the meeting room.
 - Leave the door unlocked.
 - Invite the member to sit in the chair nearest to the door.
 - Consider some version of a “Do Not Disturb” sign.

STARTING AND ENDING MEETINGS

Start Meetings with Welcome (and Prayer)

Start all meetings by welcoming the member back. This can take as much as 5 to 10 minutes, and is important to help the member be comfortable. Some Pastors will want meetings to begin with a prayer provided by the Pastor. There are seven meetings at most, so this welcome should not take too much time. End this welcoming period with a declaration of “getting to work.”

Possible language:

⇒ *Thanks for coming back.*

⇒ *It is nice to see you again.*

⇒ *Pastor provided us with a prayer to start our work together. If it is okay, I would like to read it before we begin.*

⇒ *Why don't we get to work.*

Check-In

Check in with how the member is doing to make the member feel welcome and comfortable. Solicit any comments or questions about the previous meeting.

Possible language:

⇒ *How have you been since we last met? OR How has the week been?*

⇒ *Do you have any thoughts about our previous meeting together?*

⇒ *Do you have any questions about what we discussed?*

Ending Meetings

End on time. With about 10 minutes left, declare that things need to be wrapped up. Thank the member for coming in. Compliment their hard work. Review what was discussed in the meeting.

Possible language:

⇒ *I'm aware of the time. We have about 10 minutes left. So, let's start to wrap up.*

⇒ *Thank you for coming in today.*

⇒ *You worked hard today.*

⇒ Today we talked about ...

Preview the Next Meeting

Note the meeting number and preview the number of meetings left. Arrange or confirm the time and date for the next meeting. If appropriate, preview the purpose of the next meeting. Review what, if anything, the member is to do for the next meeting. Clarify and answer questions.

Possible language:

⇒ *This was our X meeting, which means we have Y meetings left.*

⇒ *Does this time work for you next week?*

⇒ *For next meeting, we talked about having you ...*

⇒ *Next meeting, we will ...*

MEETING #1: INTRODUCTIONS AND THE INITIAL CONVERSATION

Outline

- I. Introduce the Friendship Ministry
 - 1. Settle into the room and introduce yourself
 - 2. Describe the Friendship Ministry
 - 3. Preview today's meeting
 - 4. Discuss issues of privacy and confidentiality
 - 5. Explain confidentiality and the Friendship Ministry Team
 - 6. Discuss disclosures of crisis situations
 - 7. Answer questions
- II. Start the Conversation and Gather Information
 - 8. Start the conversation
 - 9. Gather other Information
 - 10. Wrap up by summarizing
- III. Invite to Return OR Indicate Need to Consult FM Team
 - 11-A. Encourage and invite to return
 - 11-B. Indicate need to consult FM Team
- IV. Prepare to Meet with FM Team

I. INTRODUCE THE FRIENDSHIP MINISTRY (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

1. Settle into the room and introduce yourself

After settling in, look up, smile, and re-introduce yourself. If provided with a prayer to start the meeting, do so.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Hello. It is nice to meet you in person. We talked on the phone, but I wanted to introduce myself again.*
- ⇒ *My name is Steve and I'm trained as a Friendship Minister.*
- ⇒ *Pastor provided us with a prayer to start our work together. If it is okay, I would like to read it before we begin.*

2. Describe the Friendship Ministry

The member should have some basic understanding of the Friendship Ministry, but use your own words to explain the following.

- (1) The Friendship Ministry is part of Pastor's ministry.
 - (a) The Friendship Ministry is a part of Pastor's ministry.
 - (b) Friendship Ministers are supervised closely by the Pastor.
 - (c) Relevant information is shared with the Pastor as part of supervision.

- (2) The Friendship Ministry is short-term assistance, entailing at most seven meetings.
- (3) There is a Friendship Ministry Team (FM Team).
 - (a) The FM Team includes the Pastor, a Co-Leader, and the Friendship Ministers.
 - (b) All members of the FM Team have been through extensive training.
 - (c) The FM Team meets regularly so that the Pastor and Co-Leader can consult with and supervise the Friendship Ministers on how best to help.
 - (d) No one attends meetings unless they are on the FM Team.

3. Preview today's meeting

Preview today's meeting by explaining that all meetings will be about one hour in duration. Indicate that you will keep track of time. Say that you and the member will talk and get acquainted during this meeting and, by the end, you will have a better idea about what is going on and how to help. You will then consult with the FM Team about how to proceed.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Today, we will talk and get to know each other a bit better.*
- ⇒ *We started today at (time), which means we will wrap up at about (time).*
- ⇒ *I'll keep track of the time.*
- ⇒ *After we are done talking, I will have a better idea about how to help.*

4. Discuss issues of privacy and confidentiality

Explain that everything discussed is private and will be protected by maintaining confidentiality. You will not disclose anything to anyone else, except for the Pastor and the FM Team. Finally, explain what will happen if you and member see each other at church.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Everything we talk about in here is private, and I will keep it confidential.*
- ⇒ *I will not say anything to anyone regarding what we discuss, except for Pastor and the Friendship Ministry Team.*
- ⇒ *Chances are we will see each other at church. I will recognize you, but I will not say anything.*

5. Explain confidentiality and the Friendship Ministry Team

Explain that you will regularly consult with the FM Team. Explain that everyone on the FM Team is bound by confidentiality. Explain the composition of the FM Team (Pastor, Co-Leader, and the Friendship Ministers). List members by name. State that any FM Team member who knows the individual will recuse themselves from meetings. Also explain that the individual may request the recusal of any FM Team member from meetings.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *As part of our work together, I will regularly consult with the Friendship Ministry Team.*
- ⇒ *We have all been through extensive training.*

- ⇒ *Just like me, everyone on the FM Team will keep everything confidential.*
- ⇒ *The Friendship Ministry Team includes ... (list members of FM Team).*
- ⇒ *If anyone on the FM Team knows you personally, they will not be part of the meetings. Anyone who knows you will recuse themselves from the meetings.*
- ⇒ *Do you have any concerns or questions about that?*
- ⇒ *If you need, I can ask anyone on the Friendship Ministry Team to recuse himself or herself.*

6. Discuss disclosures of crisis situations

Explain that, if the member discloses information about a crisis situation (i.e., abuse, dangerousness), then you will need to inform the Pastor as soon as possible.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *There are two instances where I would have to tell Pastor what you have said. These are instances of crises, so I would need to do so immediately.*
- ⇒ *If you disclose information about any abuse, neglect, or other maltreatment of children.*
- ⇒ *If there is any suggestion that you are a danger to yourself or others.*

7. Answer questions

Ask if the member has any questions, such as:

- ⇒ *Do you have any questions about any of that?*
- ⇒ *If not, why don't we begin?*

II. START THE CONVERSATION AND GATHER INFORMATION (35–40 MINUTES)

8. Start the conversation

Start the conversation with a gentle command. Then use active listening while the member talks. Do not offer any advice, just listen. After 15–20 minutes, you will likely understand what is causing them distress. Before moving on to the next section, summarize what they have said to confirm your understanding.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Please tell me what led you to call the Friendship Ministry.*
- ⇒ *It seems it is very distressing.*
- ⇒ *Can you tell me more about that?*
- ⇒ *What is it like? How bad is it? Where does this happen?*
- ⇒ (After summarizing what has been said, ask) *Does that sound about right?*

9. Gather other information

Ask permission to change topics and ask about other things in their life that have not been

discussed. Cover the most relevant topics, but it is not necessary to cover all topics. If curious about something, gently and politely ask.

Possible language:

⇒ *I'd like to talk about some other things in your life. Would that be okay?*

- **Current family** (spouse; children; others)

⇒ *In a relationship?*

⇒ *Do you have children?*

- **Childhood Family** (parents; siblings; other important relatives)

⇒ *How would you describe your childhood?*

⇒ *What did your parents do for work?*

- **Social Life** (friendships, activities)

⇒ *Do you have many friends? Are there any issues with friends?*

⇒ *What do you do for fun?*

- **School** (previous schooling; current school)

⇒ *How much school did you get through?*

⇒ *Are you going to school now?*

⇒ *Did/Do you enjoy school?*

- **Work** (employer; position)

⇒ *Do you work outside of the home?*

⇒ *Where do you work? What do you do?*

⇒ *Do you enjoy work?*

- **Relevant Health Issues**

⇒ *Is there anything important going on with your health?*

10. Wrap up by summarizing

As the time approaches, inform the member that the meeting is coming to an end. Thank them for coming in, summarize what was discussed, and ask if the summary is correct.

Possible language:

⇒ *I'm aware that our time is almost up.*

⇒ *Thank you for coming in and talking to me. It has been a pleasure to get to know you.*

⇒ *There is a lot going on in your life.*

⇒ *From what we talked about, it seems the reason you are here is ...*

III. INVITE TO RETURN OR INDICATE NEED TO CONSULT FM TEAM (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

11-A. Encourage and invite to return

In most instances, the member will be appropriate for the Friendship Ministry and should be encouraged to return. Remind them of the need to consult with the FM Team.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *From what we've talked about, I think the Friendship Ministry could be helpful to you.*
- ⇒ *I'd like to invite you to come back and work with me. Can we meet next week at this time?*
- ⇒ *As you know, I will consult the FM Team about how best to help you.*

11-B. Indicate need to consult FM Team

If you are not certain that the member is appropriate for the Friendship Ministry, do NOT invite them to return. Instead, state that you will consult with the Pastor and the FM Team, and that someone will call them about another meeting.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *As you know, I will talk to Pastor and the FM Team about what we talked about.*
- ⇒ *We will discuss how best to help you.*
- ⇒ *Someone will be in touch about meeting again.*

IV. PREPARE TO MEET WITH FM TEAM

The next step for the Friendship Minister is to meet with the FM Team and consult about the member.

In preparation for the meeting, the Friendship Minister should do these things:

1. Talk with Pastor or the Co-Leader about any FM Team Member that the member requested be recused from meetings.
2. Prepare a summary of the issues discussed, perhaps using the *First Meeting Summary* form found in the Appendix A.
3. Be prepared to give an opinion and recommendation regarding whether the member seems appropriate for the Friendship Ministry.

MEETING #2: EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGY AND IDENTIFY A SPECIFIC PROBLEM

Outline

- I. Welcome and Check-In
- II. Review FM Team Meeting
- III. Preview Future Work Together
- IV. Explain the Problem-Solving Strategy
 - 1. The strategy focuses on thinking and behavior
 - 2. Summarize the strategy and answer any questions
 - 3. If necessary, clarify “no blame”
- V. Identify a Particular Problem
 - 4. Explain the *Problem Identification Worksheet*
 - 5. Complete the *Problem Identification Worksheet*
- VI. Wrapping Up Meeting 2

I. WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (5–10 MINUTES)

Start by welcoming the member back and checking in. (See Overview.)

II. REVIEW FM MEETING (2 MINUTES)

Remind the member of the FM Team meeting. As appropriate, tell them of any FM Team member that was recused. Such as:

- ⇒ *As I mentioned would happen, after we met last week, I consulted with the FM Team about how best to help you.*
- ⇒ *Also, as we discussed, (NAME) recused himself/herself from the discussion.*

III. PREVIEW FUTURE WORK TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)

Preview what will happen in your work together. Explain that the problem-solving strategy entails focusing on a specific problem and applying problem-solving strategies to it. By doing this, the member learns the strategy and can use it on other problems as well.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *We will use a strategy called “problem-solving.” It has been used extensively around the world because it is effective in improving problems.*
- ⇒ *To use the strategy, we will identify one problem distressing you and apply the strategy to it.*
- ⇒ *Once you learn the strategy, you can apply it to other problems as well.*
- ⇒ *We’ll identify the problem in a bit. But first, let’s talk about the strategy.*

IV. EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGY (15–20 MINUTES)

1. The strategy focuses on thinking and behavior

Explain the problem-solving strategy, which holds that thoughts and behaviors: (1) affect how we feel and how well we do; (2) are sometimes inaccurate and unhelpful; and (3) can be changed to be more accurate and helpful. You can use the examples provided and you can generate others.

- **Overview**

- ⇒ *Thinking and behavior are essential to the problem-solving strategy.*

- ⇒ *Our thinking and our behavior affect how we feel about something and how well we do in trying to resolve a problem.*

- **Thinking and emotions**

- ⇒ *Let's start with thinking.*

- ⇒ *The way someone thinks affects how they feel.*

- ⇒ *For example, if someone thinks, "I am not going to do well at this," they will feel anxious.*

- ⇒ *For example, if someone thinks, "This is difficult, but I'll get through it," they will feel hopeful.*

- ⇒ *Suppose someone thinks, "No one likes me." How would that make them feel?*

- **Thinking and behavior**

- ⇒ *The way someone thinks also affects their behavior.*

- ⇒ *If someone thinks, "There is no solution to this problem," then he or she might not even try to solve or improve the problem.*

- ⇒ *If someone thinks that it would be helpful to talk with someone about something they are struggling with, they are likely to do that. If they don't think it would be helpful, they won't.*

- **Behavior and emotions**

- ⇒ *Let's talk about behavior.*

- ⇒ *The way someone behaves affects how someone feels.*

- ⇒ *If someone isolates from others, they will feel lonely and depressed.*

- ⇒ *In contrast, after spending time with friends, most people feel pretty good.*

- ⇒ *Suppose a person is confronting a big task at work. But he procrastinates, which makes him feel increasingly anxious about it.*

- **Behavior and problem-solving**

- ⇒ *The way someone behaves affects how well he or she handles a problem.*

- ⇒ *For example, some persons avoid addressing a problem. That will not help.*

⇒ *For example, suppose I am confronting a problem I have never faced before. It would be good for me to consult with someone who knows what to do.*

2. Summarize the strategy and answer any questions

Summarize the problem-solving strategy and ask if the member has any questions.

Possible language:

⇒ *In summary, the way we think about a problem affects how we feel about it and how well we do in handling it. And some behaviors are more effective at resolving problems than are other behaviors.*

⇒ *As we work on problem-solving, we will focus on thinking and behavior about the problem.*

3. If necessary, clarify “no blame”

Some members may think they are being blamed when the problem-solving strategy is presented. As needed, correct such thinking, such as:

⇒ *The goal is not to blame anyone for their thoughts, emotions, or behaviors.*

⇒ *We all face difficulties that we don’t know quite how to handle.*

V. IDENTIFY A PARTICULAR PROBLEM (20–30 MINUTES)

(These instructions are on the *Problem Identification Worksheet*.)

4. Explain the *Problem Identification Worksheet*

Explain that the problem-solving strategy will be started using this worksheet, which will guide you in identifying one problem on which to focus. The goal is to describe it in one sentence. Explain that more than one problem may exist, but only one will be identified. As appropriate, explain that the problem-solving strategy will focus on this one problem, but it will generalize to other problems. The collaborative nature of the work is emphasized by having the member review and approve anything that is written on the worksheets.

5. Complete the *Problem Identification Worksheet*

You and the member will use the *Problem Identification Worksheet* to identify and explore one particular problem over a four-step process. Show the worksheet and follow the instructions on it. The instructions are repeated here.

Introduce the *Problem Identification Worksheet*.

You and the member will use the worksheet to identify one problem on which to focus. Several concerns may exist, but the goal is to identify one and to describe it in one sentence.

Step 1: Identify the problem.

Do not suggest a particular problem, but you can remind the member of things that were discussed in the initial meeting. If the previous meeting was about mostly one main problem, you can remind them of that. If the previous meeting was a discussion of several problems, you can remind them of

those problems and ask, “which one?” would be worth future focus. Summarize the problem in one sentence. Read the sentence and revise until it is satisfactory to the member.

Step 2. Explore, define and describe the problem.

Explore with the member the problem in terms of distress, duration, and circumstance.

- The member rates current and past *distress* associated with the problem on a scale from 1 to 100 (1 = “no distress” and 100 = “intolerable distress”).
- The member estimates the *duration* of the problem.
- The member describes any *triggers* to the problem.
- The member describes distinctive *circumstances* in which the problem arises.

Step 3. Describe what “better would look like”.

To complete the *Problem Identification Worksheet*, you and the member try to describe what “better” would look like. It can be difficult for someone in distress to imagine something better. (Active listening, empathy, and patience might be needed.)

Note that the phrase ‘would look like’ is preferable to ‘would be like’ because it encourages the member to imagine a better situation concretely. The words “would be like” might lead the member to say, “It would be so nice” or “It would be great if it were better.”

As with the entire worksheet, confirm what you write down with the member. Here are some examples of problems and a better situation.

- Problem: *I am in conflict with my supervisor at work.*
- A better situation: *I talk to my supervisor, and we reduce our conflict. Or I get another job.*
- Problem: *I have been depressed since my friend moved away.*
- A better situation: *I feel less depressed.*
- Problem: *My child is struggling at school.*
- A better situation: *My child does better. Or we change schools.*

Step 4. Wrap up

After completing the worksheet, review it with the member. Indicate that it will be used throughout the rest of the meetings.

VI. WRAPPING UP MEETING 2 (3–5 MINUTES)

To wrap up meeting 2, ask if there are any questions about the *Problem Identification Worksheet*. Ask if there are any questions about the problem-solving strategy.

Preview the next meeting with the member. Indicate that the focus will be on how they think about the problem just identified, as well as on how they have tried to resolve it.

Thank them for coming in, confirm the date and time of the next meeting, and say goodbye.

MEETING #3: EXPLORE THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS WITH *PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEETS*

Outline

I. Welcome and Check-In

II. Review Problem-Solving Strategy

1. Remind of problem-solving strategy
2. Review information on *Problem Identification Worksheet*

III. Problem Solving

3. Introduce *Problem-Solving Worksheets*
4. Complete the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Thinking*
5. Complete the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Behavior*

IV. Wrapping Up Meeting 3

I. WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (5–10 MINUTES)

Start by welcoming the member back and checking in. (See Overview.)

II. REVIEW PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGY (5 MINUTES)

1. Remind of problem-solving strategy

Quickly review the problem-solving strategy, such as:

- ⇒ *Let's review the problem-solving strategy we will be using.*
- ⇒ *Last meeting, we completed the task of identifying a particular problem.*
- ⇒ *To try to solve that problem, we will focus on your thinking about it and how that thinking affects you emotionally. That is one of our tasks for today.*
- ⇒ *We will also examine your behavior towards the problem, including how effective it has been. That is our second task for today.*
- ⇒ *Starting next meeting, we will evaluate whether what you are thinking is accurate and perhaps consider ways for you to change thinking, so you feel better and do better. In the same way, we will consider whether there are different, more effective behaviors that you can use.*

2. Review information on *Problem Identification Worksheet*

Quickly review the information on the *Problem Identification Worksheet* from the previous meeting.

- ⇒ *First, let's look at what we did last meeting. This will be the problem on which we focus.*
 - Review the sentence describing the problem.
 - Review ratings of distress, duration, triggers, and circumstances.
 - Review what better would look like.

⇒ *Does that sound familiar?*

⇒ *Is there anything to talk about? Or is there anything we should change?*

III. PROBLEM SOLVING (5–10 MINUTES)

The problem-solving strategy is implemented using the *Problem-Solving Worksheets*. Often, both worksheets will not be completed in a single meeting, and that is perfectly acceptable. The thoughts worksheet is completed first.

3. Introduce *Problem-Solving Worksheets*

Show both *Problem-Solving Worksheets*. Explain that there are two worksheets, one focusing on thinking and the other on behavior. Indicate that you will fill them in based on discussions, and explain that the process might take time. The collaborative nature of the work is emphasized by having the member review and approve anything that is written on the worksheets.

Possible language:

⇒ *Throughout the rest of the meetings, we will use these worksheets in the problem-solving strategy.*

⇒ *One focuses on your thinking about the problem. The other focuses on your behavior toward it.*

4. Complete the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Thinking*

(These instructions are on the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Thinking*.)

Introduce the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Thinking*

Explain that this worksheet examines how the member thinks about the problem. Explain that you will fill it out, but that you will review it with them to make sure it is fair and accurate. As it may prove challenging, at least at first, explain that “*we will take our time*” and “*think about things carefully.*”

Step 1: Identify thoughts about the problem.

Read aloud the sentence describing the problem from the *Problem Identification Worksheet*. In Table 1, write down 2-4 thoughts the member has about the problem.

Only complete the first column. After documenting a thought, ask for an additional thought. Using reflections, you can help the member articulate their thinking, such as “*It sounds like you think*” or “*It looks like this is what is going on in the way you think about this.*”

Step 2. Effects of thought on emotions and behavior

After finishing the first column, one thought at a time, complete the remaining columns (“*Resulting emotion*” and “*Influence on behavior*”). For each thought, explore and document how it affects their feelings about the problem (anxious, sad, hopeless, etc.). Then explore and document how the thought influences their behavior towards the problem.

Step 3. Review table

One thought at a time, review what was written down. Encourage them to recognize that their thinking affects their emotional and behavioral reactions.

(At this point, you might switch to working on Steps 1-4 of the *Problem-Solving*

Worksheet: Focus on Behavior.)

Step 4. Thinking about the thoughts

Remind the member that the way we think affects how we feel, but sometimes thinking is not entirely accurate. Then complete Table 2. One thought at a time, ask the member to “think about the thought” and to rate its accuracy on a scale of 1 (not at all accurate) to 10 (completely accurate). If helpful, ask the member for “evidence” of the accuracy of the thought. If the thought is not rated completely accurate, ask how the member would revise it to be accurate. Finally, ask how their emotional reaction might change if they started to think the revised thought.

Step 5. Encourage to think more accurately

Review the completed table and encourage the member to practice the more accurate way of thinking, as documented in the tables, over the week to come. Discuss ways they could remind themselves to think more accurately. Encourage them that this sort of change can be difficult, but it is worth doing.

5. Complete the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Behavior*

(These instructions are on the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Behavior.*)

Introduce the *Problem-Solving Worksheet: Focus on Behavior*

Explain that this worksheet is like the one that focused on thinking. Explain that it examines the member’s behavior toward the problem. Explain that, as before, you will fill it out and will review it with them to make sure it is fair and accurate.

Step 1: Identify behaviors toward the problem.

Read aloud the sentence describing the problem from the *Problem Identification Worksheet*. Write down anything (i.e., behaviors) that the member has tried to solve or improve the problem. Only complete the first column. After documenting a behavior, ask if there is anything else they tried. (It is okay if they mention no behaviors or only one behavior.)

Step 2. Compliment any behavior OR Empathize with no behavior

If the member has made any effort to resolve the problem, compliment them on doing so, regardless of effectiveness.

If the member has not made any efforts, be aware that the question may make them feel bad about this. Reassure them that this is understandable, as the problem may be complicated or they may have never confronted a problem like this.

Step 3. Details of behavior

If the member has described any behaviors to address the problem, ask them to provide details about when and how often they tried it. Document these in the appropriate column.

Step 4. Effectiveness of behavior

If the member has described behaviors, ask them to indicate how effective they were on a scale from 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (completely effective). Document this in the table.

(At this point, you might switch back to the *Focus on Thinking Worksheet.*)

Step 5. Brainstorm new behaviors

Discuss with the member different or new behavioral strategies to address the problem. Invite the member to brainstorm new ideas. (To “brainstorm” means to say aloud any idea, regardless of whether it is feasible or realistic, and without considering whether it would work.) Keep track of all ideas. You can assist the member in coming up with ideas.

Step 6. Commit to one or two behaviors

From the list of ideas, discuss which of them would seem most likely to be both feasible (possible to do) and effective. As with creating the list via brainstorming, you can assist the member in evaluating likely effectiveness and in choosing the behaviors to implement.

Select one or two behaviors that the member is willing to try before the next meeting. Encourage the member to commit to engaging in a certain behavior or behaviors. Write down those behaviors.

Step 7. Discuss how to implement behaviors

Discuss with the member how they can engage in the behaviors. Encourage them to be both optimistic and realistic about what they can do.

IV. WRAPPING UP MEETING 3 (3–5 MINUTES)

(Also see Overview.) To wrap up Meeting #3, review the worksheets. If both were not completed, indicate that the other worksheet will be completed during the next meeting. Encourage the member to work on the changes discussed. Explain that future meetings will entail continuing to work on these changes.

Thank them for coming in, confirm the date and time of the next meeting, and say goodbye.

MEETINGS #4–6: DISCUSS, EXPLORE, AND ENCOURAGE PROBLEM-SOLVING EFFORTS

Outline

- I. Welcome and Extended Check-In
- II. Review Problem-Solving Efforts
 - 1. General Recommendations
 - 2. Progress in Changing Thinking
 - 3. Progress on Changing Behavior
- III. If Appropriate, Explore and Encourage Self-Care Behavior
- IV. Wrapping Up Meetings

I. WELCOME AND EXTENDED CHECK-IN (5–10 MINUTES)

As with all the meetings, these meetings should start with a welcome and general check-in. (See Overview.) The check-in can be extended by easily transitioning to a check-in about the problem, which leads to a shift to the problem-solving strategies.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *It is nice to see you again. How have you been?*
- ⇒ *How has the problem which we have been discussing been going? Anything new or different? Anything better or worse?*
- ⇒ *Let's focus on the strategies we have been talking about.*

II. REVIEW PROBLEM-SOLVING EFFORTS (10–40 MINUTES)

1. General Recommendations

- Have available and refer often to the *Problem-Solving Worksheets*.
- Be patient. Changing habits of thinking and behavior is difficult. Expect some but not much progress.
- Compliment any effort to change thinking or behavior. Encourage ongoing effort.
- Listen actively and to empathize while reviewing the sheets.
- Be flexible. Adjust, adapt, or change as needed. Make modifications in the *Problem-Solving Worksheets* according to the discussion.

2. Progress in Changing Thinking

Beginning the fourth meeting and every meeting thereafter, including the final meeting, review any progress the member has made regarding changing thinking. Review the tables as appropriate to remind them of the strategy. Empathize with difficulties. Encourage ongoing effort. Identify, discuss at length, and compliment any progress.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Let's look at the "Thinking" worksheet.*
- ⇒ *This is the thought you habitually have about the problem. This is a new thought that you were going to try. How did that go?*
- ⇒ *Did you notice that different thinking is leading to a different emotional response?*
- ⇒ *Do we need to make any changes to what we talked about?*
- ⇒ *How can we help you keep working at this?*

3. Progress on Changing Behavior

Do the same with the behavior worksheet. Ask if the member was able to engage any of the behaviors that were identified as potentially more useful or effective than previous behaviors. Review the tables to remind them of the behavior(s) that they agreed to try. Empathize with difficulties and help develop plans to get themselves to engage in them.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Now let's look at the "Behavior" worksheet.*
- ⇒ *This is what we talked about having you possibly do.*
- ⇒ *Were you able to do that? How did that go?*
- ⇒ *Do you think this idea for a new behavior is still a good idea? Do we need to make any changes to what we talked about?*
- ⇒ *How can we help you keep working at this?*

III. IF APPROPRIATE, EXPLORE AND ENCOURAGE SELF-CARE BEHAVIOR

If appropriate, explore the member's self-care behavior. Appendix B contains information that can be shared with the member, including sleep hygiene, eating better, and physical activity.

For members who are especially distressed, focus especially on socializing with others and doing enjoyable things. For all members, strongly encourage regular church attendance.

IV. WRAPPING UP MEETINGS #4–6 (3–5 MINUTES)

To wrap up Meetings #4 - 6, compliment their efforts so far. Encourage them to keep working. You might emphasize that they work either on their thinking or on their behavior in particular.

Encourage the member to realize that these strategies work, and that they can expect progress soon, if they have not seen it already.

Remind them that future meetings will entail continuing to work on these changes.

Thank them for coming in, confirm the date and time of the next meeting, and say goodbye.

MEETING #7: THE LAST MEETING

Outline

- I. Welcome and Check-In
- II. Introduce the Last Meeting
- III. Review Overall Progress and Encourage Continued Effort
- IV. Remind of Confidentiality
- V. Thank and Say Goodbye

I. WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (5–10 minutes)

Start by welcoming the member back and checking in. (See Overview.)

II. INTRODUCE THE LAST MEETING (about 10 minutes)

Remind member that this is the last meeting. Such as:

- ⇒ *This is our last meeting.*
- ⇒ *This is our last time together.*

III. REVIEW PROGRESS AND ENCOURAGE CONTINUED EFFORT (about 30 minutes)

Review the progress the member has made, even if minimal.

Remind them that changing thinking and trying new behaviors has enabled the progress, reviewing the *Problem-Solving Worksheets*. Emphasize how the member has changed their thinking. Emphasize how the member has changed their behavior. Encourage the member to keep working on new thinking and new behavior until they become habits.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Let's review what we have done during our work together.*
- ⇒ *Let's review what you have been doing over the course of our work.*
- ⇒ *You have worked very hard. Keep working at it, and it will become a new habit.*
- ⇒ *You have made a lot of progress.*

IV. REMIND THEM OF CONFIDENTIALITY (about 5 minutes)

Remind the member of the confidentiality of everything you have done together.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Everything we have talked about is confidential.*
- ⇒ *If I see you at church (which is likely), I will be friendly, but I will never disclose that you have been seen in the Friendship Ministry.*

V. THANK AND SAY GOODBYE (about 5 minutes)

Thank the member for coming to the Friendship Ministry. Indicate your pleasure at meeting them.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *I thank you for coming in and sharing these things with me.*
- ⇒ *It has been an honor to try to help you.*
- ⇒ *I know this was not easy, and I thank you for sharing with me.*
- ⇒ *It has been very nice meeting with you.*
- ⇒ *I have had a real pleasure meeting you.*

Appendix A: First Meeting Summary

Member initials:

Meeting date:

Meeting Time and Duration:

Summary of Presenting Issue

Behavioral Observations (such as attitude; mood; openness; understanding)

Marriage/Relationship (Current and Past)

Education (Current and Past)

Work/School (Current and Past)

Friendships

Family History

Relevant Medical Problems

Other Comments

Recommendation: Does member seem appropriate for the Friendship Ministry?

Does member seem to need professional help?

APPENDIX B: SELF-CARE BEHAVIORS

Self-Care Overview

Self-care is not on either worksheet as it might not be something to bring up with all members. But it might be important with some members.

Both health and mental health are affected by behaviors of self-care. Some persons have never engaged in proper self-care, whereas others might neglect self-care when in distress. They might forget or overlook the importance of self-care behavior. Or they might put others' welfare before their own.

It is important to recognize that taking care of others or working to resolve a problem requires that a person first take care of themselves.

Therefore, as appropriate to what you know about the member, discuss and strongly encourage self-care behavior. In particular, encourage the behavior of socialization, which is most easily accomplished by attending church services and other events.

There are four additional pages that include important self-care behavior. Use as needed.

Possible language:

- ⇒ *Let's talk about how you take care of yourself.*
- ⇒ *How well do you think you are caring for yourself right now?*
- ⇒ *Taking care of ourselves helps us care for others. How do you do in that regard?*
- ⇒ *Let's discuss one more important category of behavior, which is taking care of ourselves.*
- ⇒ *It is important for us to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of others and so that we can address problems we might be having.*
- ⇒ *Self-care means things like eating well, getting enough rest, and doing enjoyable things.*
- ⇒ *An especially important self-care behavior is socializing with other people. This is easy to do by going to church for services and for other events.*
- ⇒ *How well do you take care of yourself?*
- ⇒ *What are one or two simple ways you could take better care of yourself this week*

Tips for Good Sleep (“Sleep Hygiene”)

Some people naturally sleep great anywhere they find themselves. Other persons struggle to sleep.

A word about sleep medications.

Despite their widespread use and the ease with which they are prescribed, sleep medications have significant drawbacks. Many work by impairing memory formation, so individuals may believe they slept better than they actually did. Over time, these medications can become habit-forming. Their effects often persist into the next day, causing grogginess, slowed thinking, confusion, or dizziness. They are especially risky for older adults.

Sleep Hygiene

Much more healthy and much more effective is to engage in behaviors that encourage sleep. These behaviors are sometimes referred to as “sleep hygiene.” Here are the essentials of sleep hygiene.

- **Be regular.** Go to bed and get up at the same time every day (whether or not you have slept).
- **No clock-watching.** Some who struggle to sleep watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the time when struggling to sleep leads to increased anxiety and distress, which makes sleep less likely.
- **Get up & try again.** After you go to bed, if not asleep within 20 minutes or so, get up and go to a different room. Sit quietly with no bright lights (which tell your brain that it is time to wake up). Read something boring. Avoid doing anything that is stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more. No TV. When sleepy, go back to bed.
- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol.** Avoid consuming any caffeine (coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate) for at least 4-6 hours before bed. It is also best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but alcohol disrupts the quality of sleep.
- **Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex. Do not work, watch TV, or do anything else. This will get your body to associate bed with sleep.
- **No naps.** This is tough advice for someone with insomnia, but it is important. Avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime. If you can’t make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than 30 minutes and before 3pm.
- **Develop a sleep ritual.** A sleep ritual tells your brain and body that it is time to sleep. A common ritual is a small snack, some milk, brush teeth and hair, put on pajamas, and read quietly.
- **A hot bath.** A hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can help. It raises your body temperature, making you feel sleepy as it drops again. (Sleep is associated with a drop in body temperature.)

Five Tips for Healthier Eating

Healthy eating is important to mental and physical health. It is also important for weight. The key to a healthy diet is to eat the right number of calories for how active you are. If you eat or drink more than your body needs, you'll put on weight. If you eat and drink less than your body needs, you'll lose weight.

1. The foundation of meals should be high-fiber carbohydrates

Some people think starchy foods are fattening but, in fact, the carbohydrates they contain provides fewer than half the calories of fat. These include higher fiber or wholegrain varieties, such as wholewheat pasta, brown rice or potatoes with their skins on. Try to include at least one starchy food with each main meal.

2. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruits and vegetables every day, whether fresh, frozen, canned, dried or juiced.

3. Eat more fish, especially oily fish

Fish is a good source of protein and contains many vitamins and minerals. Eat at least 2 portions of fish a week, including at least 1 portion of oily fish (e.g., salmon, trout, herring).

4. Cut down on saturated fat, sugar, and salt

Fat: You need some fat in your diet, but it's important to pay attention to the amount and the type. Fat is high in energy, but too much will cause weight gain. Choose unsaturated over saturated fat. Saturated fat is less healthy and is typically found in more processed foods and meats, such as hard cheese, butter, cream, sausage, cakes, and biscuits. Choose foods that contain unsaturated fats, such as vegetable oils and spreads, oily fish and avocados. When you're having meat, choose lean cuts.

Sugar: Sugar is hard to avoid, as it is in many foods. It is easy, however, to avoid foods and drinks that are high in sugar, such as sodas and candy. This is the type of sugar you should cut down on, rather than the sugar found in fruit and milk.

Salt: Eating too much salt can raise blood pressure. Like sugar, it can be hard to avoid, as it is in so many foods. In fact, about three-fourths of the salt you eat is in the food you buy, such as cereals, soups, breads and sauces. Use food labels to help you cut down.

5. Do not get thirsty

If you are thirsty, you are dehydrated. Water is the purest thirst quencher, but non-alcoholic drinks count (such as low-fat milk, low sugar drinks, tea, coffee). You need more fluids during hot weather or while exercising.

Commit to Meaningful and Enjoyable Activities

Doing activities that are fun and meaningful greatly improves mood and helps reduce stress.

Which of these can you commit to doing?

- Walk outdoors
 - Engage in hobbies and crafts
 - Create music
 - Garden
 - Read
 - Attend church events
 - Exercise
 - Creative activities
 - Spend time in nature
 - Play with children or pets
-

Stay Socially Connected

Be with others every day. Isolation worsens sadness, anxiety, discouragement, and unhealthy thinking. Staying socially connected is free, easy, and extremely good for our mental health.

Which of these can you commit to doing?

- Attend church weekly
 - Spend time with family or friends
 - Talk with someone about fun things
 - Talk with someone when stressed
 - Write handwritten notes to loved ones
 - Join community events
 - Join group activities (e.g., book club)
 - Start or re-start a hobby
 - Take a painting class
 - Volunteer
-

Stay Physically Active

The body and mind strongly affect one another. Getting exercise does not mean hours of strenuous activity every day. It means to be physically active, preferably outdoors, for about 30 minutes a day.

Which of these can you commit to doing?

- Take walks daily
 - Take the stairs, if you can
 - Schedule outdoor time with a friend
 - Go bird-watching
 - Take a yoga class
 - Learn a stretching routine
 - Build something
 - Take dance lessons
 - Take a painting class
 - Set an exercise goal
-

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

(2 Corinthians 1: 3-5)



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