

THINKING ERROR PROGRAMS

Programs to address criminal thinking are designed to instill values, create pro-social empathetic thoughts and promote the participants' thinking about making positive changes in their behavior. (4-4442, 4-ACRS-60-01)

The chief administrator of Program Services will be responsible for the coordination of criminal thinking programs. For the purposes of this procedure, staff is defined as any person becoming a group facilitator conducting these cognitive behavioral groups for inmates addressing thinking distortions.

I. Staff Training

A. Training

1. Training for facilitators will be conducted through the Program Services Unit. The chief administrator of Program Services or designee will be responsible for coordinating this training and ensure qualified trainers are available to conduct the training.
2. At a minimum, two training sessions will be conducted per year for staff to become facilitators.
3. Staff that receives the training must facilitate a group or co-facilitate a functional treatment group within 30 days of completing the training.

B. Group Facilitator Criteria

The facility/district head will recommend facilitators to be trained. Skills of the potential cognitive behavioral group facilitators may be identified using the following criteria:

1. Above average verbal skills;
2. Ability to relate to inmates in a way that does not compromise the rules, regulations, and mission of the agency;
3. Sensitivity to group dynamics and ability to stimulate groups and promote interest and high activity levels while maintaining adequate discipline;
4. Ability to confront inmates without demeaning them;

5. Above average interpersonal skills and, in particular, the social/cognitive skills the inmate is to acquire, such as:
 - a. Empathy;
 - b. Effective problem solving;
 - c. Enthusiasm;
 - d. Rational and logical reasoning
 - e. Openness to new ideas; and
 - f. Well-developed values.
6. Successful experience in managing groups of poorly motivated individuals whom may be passive, aggressive, or critical.
7. Have an understanding of the cognitive model.

C. Certification Standards

The chief administrator of Program Services or designee prior to conducting groups must certify all facilitators. Certification requires completion of all mock assignments and passing of a written examination.

There are three levels of certification:

1. Facilitator Trainer
 - a. A staff member that has completed basic instructor development (training for trainers).
 - b. A staff member that has been trained specifically as a trainer in cognitive behavior curriculum.
2. Group Facilitator
 - a. A staff member selected by the facility head/designee that demonstrates the above listed qualities.
 - b. A staff member that has completed 40 hours of cognitive behavior training.
 - c. A staff member that demonstrates capabilities in all components of the cognitive behavior training.

3. Provisional

- a. A staff member that completed classroom facilitator training.
- b. A staff member that demonstrates some ability but must be paired with a facilitator until the skill level improves based on recommendations of the facilitator trainer.

II. Selecting Inmate Group Participants

Inmates identified in accordance with OP-060102 (M) (F) entitled "Initial Custody Assessment Procedures," with a "cognitive behavioral" or "criminal thinking" need on an inmate case plan, will be placed into a program to address criminal thinking. (4-4439) Staff will ensure that placement is not based on race, age, religion, gender, ethnic origin or any disabilities unless the disability cannot be reasonably accommodated. (4-4277, 4-ACRS-6B-01)

- A. Group participants will be interviewed individually by the facilitator. (4-ACRS-5A-07) During the interview the participant will be given information regarding the program i.e., the confidentiality, expectation of group participation, length of the program and proper attire, etc. The "Behavior Change Agreement" may be utilized.
- B. Group size should consist of a minimum of eight inmate participants, with no more than 12.

III. Program Length

In accordance with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), the "Thinking for a Change" curriculum may be presented at a maximum of three lessons per week, with adequate time during sessions for full participation by all group members and adequate time in between sessions for homework to be completed.

IV. Supplies

"Thinking for a Change" manuals are ordered annually through the Program Services Unit and sent directly to the facility. The order will be based on the number of participants from the previous year or request from the facility staff. Upon receipt of the manuals, a "Receiving Memorandum" is to be sent to the Program Services Unit for payment of the materials. Materials for other programs to address criminal thinking such as Moral Reconciliation Therapy, Reasoning and Rehabilitation, etc. will be purchased by the facility.

The facility is responsible for the purchase of additional materials needed to deliver services. These may include, but are not limited to flip charts,

markers overhead projector and transparencies. Included behind this attachment is an inmate Behavior Change Agreement and Thinking Error Questionnaire for facilitator use.

V. Reporting of Information

The group facilitator will maintain a "Program Attendance Record" for each group, and ensure the monthly program attendance information is submitted to the facility head or designee for reporting purposes as detailed in OP-090101 [Attachment A](#).

VI. Quality Assurance

The chief administrator of Program Services/designee will ensure that groups are monitored to ensure proper implementation procedures are followed, to ensure manuals are being ordered and received, monthly reports are being forwarded, and proper protocol is followed.

The chief administrator of Program Services/designee will develop a schedule for quality assurance (QA) visits. After a quality assurance visit is made a memorandum will be completed and forwarded to the facility/district head, group facilitator and the chief administrator of Program Services.

Inmates cannot facilitate groups for thinking error programs (Moral Reconciliation Therapy or Thinking for a Change).

Thinking Error Questionnaire

Name: _____ DOC Number: _____

Unit & Cell: _____

1. What is your age? _____

2. What was the last grade you completed in school? _____

3. Do you have a High School Diploma or GED? _____

4. What is your reading level? _____
This can be derived from current TABE assessment scores

5. Were you ordered by the court or assessed at LARC/MBARC with a need for cognitive behavioral programming? YES NO

6. Do you have a Parole stipulation requiring completion of this program? YES NO

7. Do you anticipate becoming minimum eligible within the next year? YES NO

8. Approximately how much time do you have remaining, including CS cases? _____

9. At what age were you first incarcerated? _____

10. Why do you want to take this program? _____

11. This program is primarily about changing your lifestyle. Are you ready to change your behavior if we can show you how? YES NO

12. Thinking for a Change is conducted in a group and you will be required to participate in group and individual activities, including role-plays. You will be assigned homework regularly and will be expected to attend all classes. You are subject to removal from the class if you miss or do not do assigned work. Do you agree to **participate as assigned and show up as scheduled**? YES NO

13. Here is the Program Organizer for *Thinking for a Change*. What do you see or what catches your eye? _____
(*Have a copy of the TFC Organizer available to show each interviewee)

14. Here is a list of all the lessons in *Thinking for a Change*. Which lessons seem most interesting to you or might help you? _____
(*Have copy of the TFC Table of Contents available)

**The purpose of these last two questions is to start peaking the interest of potential participants.*

Inmate answers to questions 1 through 12 should be verified by the inmate's case manager.

Behavior Change Agreement

Confidentiality – Everything said within the group will stay within the group. Concerns arising in the program will be discussed and handled in the group, not between participants outside of group meetings. Breaking the commitment to confidentiality is grounds for dismissal from group.

Active participation in program activities and completing reading and homework assignments is necessary. Bringing program materials to each group is required.

Being on time for group and returning from breaks on time is required.

Study books and related materials are normally the only items allowed into session rooms.

Proper attire and appearance are required.

Showing respect for staff, guest speakers, volunteers and other program participants is required.

Sleeping in groups is prohibited. If your eyes are closed, that is considered sleeping and will cause you to receive a warning regarding your behavior.

I have read the above and I am willing to follow these program rules. I understand that the facilitators have the authority to dismiss me from this program if I do not comply with these rules. I hereby request and volunteer to be admitted to the program.

Participant's Signature

Date

Facilitator's Signature

Date