

for use with the video

GETTING OUT OF THE GAME:

The Trap Of Drug Dealing

Facilitators's Guide
and Client Worksheets



800-214-5680
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WHY THIS VIDEO IS SO IMPORTANT

So often, recovering addicts spend weeks and months in drug treatment programs and never address the one behavior most likely to pull them back into drug use and illegal activities: *involvement in the drug trade*.

While few figures are available, anecdotally we believe that a considerable number (perhaps as many as 33%) of those in substance abuse treatment programs also had some involvement in drug sales. While in drug treatment, they may explore childhood traumas, anger problems, family issues, even relapse triggers, but somehow never address the central issue of their past involvement in drug dealing.

When asked (confidentially) whether they would be “tempted” to return to drug dealing in the future, many former dealers in drug treatment will admit that this is a distinct possibility. After all, many have little legal work history, few marketable skills, and live in neighborhoods where the prospects of getting hired are not great. Further, coming out of rehab or prison, they will yearn to have all the things they think make them adequate in the eyes of others: nice clothes, cars, jewelry, etc. The notion of working for minimum wage at entry level jobs is tough to swallow when the illusion of “quick, easy money” still exists in their minds—unchallenged during treatment.

For an addict, a return to drug dealing is a virtual guarantee of relapse to drug use as well, not to mention the high risk of eventual arrest, injury or even death. But unless specific work is done during treatment to help the client anticipate this pull back to dealing and identify actions he can take to counter that pull, those likely long-term consequences of dealing again will probably be suppressed in favor of the immediate gratification of its “payoffs.”

Drug dealing itself can be an addiction, akin in some ways to gambling. The lure of “quick, easy money” and some past experience that reinforces this belief is almost too much to resist. In addition, it is accompanied by a habit-forming adrenaline rush of excitement, and by some increased access (however short-lived) to status, material pleasures, sex, a kind of power and respect, and an ability perhaps to contribute to family income. Given the

meager job prospects many former inmates and drug rehab clients returning to the drug-infested areas of central cities and even suburbs, it is easy to imagine the powerful pull that dealing exerts.

This ground-breaking video, ***GETTING OUT OF THE GAME: The Trap of Drug Dealing*** attempts to close that existing gap in our treatment of addiction, by addressing this very important subject. It consists of:

- Interviews with two former drug dealers who successfully made the break and “got out of the game,” detailing the strategies they used to counter the inevitable pull back to the streets and dealing;
- Excerpts from a self-help group made up of a dozen recovering drug dealers sharing their experience in making this change (and highlighting some of their toughest struggles);
- Commentary by Curtis Potter, CASAC, professional in the field of drug treatment and former drug dealer.

To maximize the effectiveness of showing this video, the following suggestions are made:

1. *If possible, show the video only to those for whom it is relevant.*

Target inmates or rehab clients who have a history of drug sales charges or say that they were involved in dealing at some level. Placing people in the group to watch this video to whom it doesn't apply will dilute the power of the discussion. It is usually possible to ascertain who was involved in drug dealing by simply reminding them of confidentiality and asking the question: “How many people here, if you were completely honest, were involved in drug dealing at some level?” Follow that question with: “How many people, again being completely honest, *might* be tempted to return to drug dealing when back on the street if you find yourselves in need of money?”

2. *Allow ample time for discussion following the showing of the video.*

Lifestyle change of this sort comes from a **process** of considering the topics raised in the video. A good discussion often evolves in the group and can help shift the more closed members.

3. *Follow up viewing and discussion with the specific group activities found in this guide.* You will need at least two group sessions to accomplish this: One group to show and discuss the video; another group to complete some of the activities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Begin discussion with an open-ended question, such as “Well, what did you think? Did you identify with anything that was said? Did anything you heard in the video make you think?”

Once a few members have shared generally, you can draw from the following questions to delve deeper into the group’s responses:

1. In the opening, Curtis said that dealing “is an addiction in itself.” Do you agree? How is it addictive?
2. Hector said his older brother was a dealer, so he started following in his brother’s footsteps as a young boy. Curtis said he grew up with an addicted mom and felt deprived of material things he saw others having. Are there circumstances in *your* lives that may have drawn you to dealing?
3. Curtis talked about being attracted to the “power and respect” he got from dealing. Can anybody here relate to that? Is it part of *your* pull back to dealing? How else can you get that sense of power and respect in your lives? What are the other things that “pull” you back to dealing? (SEE ACTIVITY 2)
4. Curtis talked about the “shock” of being arrested. Have you ever been arrested for dealing? Did it come as a shock? Looking back, were there warning signs? How did you feel when you were taken to jail or prison?
5. Many people go back to dealing with the idea that they can “do it smarter now, and not get caught.” How real is this? Do *you* sometimes think that *you* can deal again in such a way that you’ll not get caught this time? People in the group said that it’s an illusion, that someone will usually “snitch” on you, and that arrest is all but inevitable. What do you think?
6. Hector said his old dealing associates gave him money and drugs when he got out of prison to set him back up “in the game.” When you return to the street, will your old dealing buddies try to pull you back in? How can you avoid that? How will you respond to their tempting you?

ACTIVITY 1 (client worksheet)

RELAPSING TO DRUG DEALING

Most clients who have dealt drugs for awhile have tried to stop at some time or other, but relapsed back to dealing. Have clients use Worksheet #1 to describe one of their own relapses to drug dealing in as much detail as they can remember. What was going on in their lives when they went back to dealing that time? What kinds of thoughts were running through their minds? What kind of support for making such a major lifestyle change did they have or use? Did someone offer to “set them up” in dealing again? Did they relapse to drugs first? Or did they relapse to drug use *after* they began dealing again?

After everyone is done with the worksheet, have a “go-round” in the group so that each person can share about a past relapse to drug dealing, and what they can now learn from it.

Worksheet for Activity 1

RELAPSING TO DRUG DEALING

If you ever tried to stop dealing drugs in the past (like when coming out of rehab or prison), but relapsed back to it, write the story of that relapse below:

- What led up to your dealing again?
- What were you going through at the time?
- What stresses did you have in your life?
- Did you have much support to stay positive?
- Did you go back to the old “spot” or to old drug-dealing friends or relatives?
- Did someone offer to set you back up?
- What rationalizations did you use to make it “OK” in your mind?

What was the outcome for you of going back to drug dealing? What consequences did you have that time?

- Arrest? Jail time? Probation?
- Relapse to active drug use yourself?
- Physical injuries (shot, stabbed, etc.)?
- Guilt (hurting others as a result)?
- Negative affects on family?
- Lost relationships?
- Lost dreams of “legit” goals?

ACTIVITY 5 (client worksheet)

CHANGING VALUES

It's virtually impossible to get out of drug dealing—and stay out—without changing one's values. Many people in the video referred to this necessary shift they made in the process of “getting out of the game.”

Activity 5 is designed to help your clients reflect upon the values they lived by in the street, and identify the values they would like to live by now that they are in recovery.

Following the viewing and discussion of the video, pass out worksheets to every group member and ask them to complete it. Note that there are places for the client to write-in “other” values that were overlooked in making the list, but which may be especially relevant to him or her.

After everyone in the group has privately completed their worksheets, ask for volunteers who would like to share what they discovered in doing this activity.