

PART FOUR

HELPING CLIENTS DEVELOP PROGRAMS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE

In many ways Part Four, which includes Stages II and III, is the most important part of the helping model. It is here that counselors help clients develop and implement programs for constructive change. The payoff for identifying and clarifying both problem situations and unused opportunities lies in doing something about them. This skills that both helpers and clients use to do precisely this — engage in constructive change — are reviewed and illustrated in Stages II and III. Chapter Eleven in *The Skilled Helper*, Perspectives and Skills for Constructing a Better Future, is an introduction to Stages II and III of the helping model. Since no exercises are based on that chapter, there is no Section Eleven in this manual.

STAGE II HELPING CLIENTS CREATE A BETTER FUTURE

Stage II focuses on a better future, the client's preferred scenario. Problems can make clients feel hemmed in and closed off. To a greater or lesser extent they have no future, or the future they have looks troubled. The steps of Stage II outline three ways in which helpers can be with their clients at the service of exploring and developing this better future.

Step II-A: Helping clients identify *possibilities* for a better future.

Step II-B: Helping clients choose specific preferred-scenario *goals*.

Step II-C: Helping clients discover incentives for *commitment* to their goals.

The three steps of Stage II become clearer to clients when they are translated into everyday language. The questions below are asked, of course, against the background of some degree of understanding on the part of the client of the problem situation or of the unused opportunity.

Step II-A: What do you want? What do you need? What are some of the possibilities?

Step II-B: Given the possibilities, what do you really want? What are your choices?

Step II-C: What are you willing to pay for what you want?

Section 12

STEP II-A: A BETTER FUTURE

WHAT DO YOU WANT? — DISCOVERING POSSIBILITIES

Effective helping is related to the use of imagination. In this step you are asked to help yourself and clients develop a vision of a better future. Once clients understand the nature of the problem situation, they need to ask themselves, "What do I want? What would my situation look like if it were better, at least a little bit better?"

EXERCISE 40: DEVELOPING POSSIBILITIES FOR A BETTER FUTURE

In this exercise you are asked to use your imagination to build a better "future" for yourself as a way of preparing you to help others develop new scenarios.

Example: Since most students do not operate at 100% efficiency, there is usually room for improvement in the area of learning. Luisa, a junior beginning her third year of college, is dissatisfied with the way she goes about learning. She decides to use her imagination to invent a new study scenario. She brainstorms possibilities for a better study future, that is, goals that would constitute her new learning style. She says to herself: "In my role as student or learner, what do I want? Let me brainstorm the possibilities."

- I will not be studying for grades, but studying to learn. Paradoxically this might help my grades, but I will not be putting in extra effort just to raise a B to an A.
- I will be a better contributor in class, not in the sense that I will be trying to make a good impression on my teachers. I will do whatever I need to do to learn. This may mean placing more demands on teachers to clarify points, making more contributions, and involving myself in discussions with peers.
- I will have in place a more constructive approach to writing papers. For instance, once a paper is assigned, I will start a file on the topic and collect ideas, quotes, and data as I go along. Then, when it comes to writing the paper, I will not have to try to create something out of nothing at the last moment. I assume this will help me feel better about the paper and about myself.
- I will be reading more broadly in the area of my major, psychology, not just the articles and books assigned but also in the areas of my interest. I will let my desire to know drive my learning.

Luisa goes on to draw up a fairly extensive list of the patterns of behavior that might have a place in her new scenario, that is, her new approach to learning. Only when she has an extensive list does she address the task of evaluating and choosing the actual goals that will constitute her new learning style.

1. Read the material on brainstorming in Chapter Eleven.
2. Read Chapter Twelve in *The Skilled Helper*.
3. Choose two problem areas or undeveloped opportunities that you have been working on.
4. Like Luisa, brainstorm possibilities for a better future in these two areas.
5. Use probes such as the following to help yourself develop preferred-scenario possibilities:
 - Here's what I need
 - Here's what I want
 - Here are some items on my wish list
 - When I'm finished I will have
 - There will be
 - I will have in place
 - I will consistently be
 - There will be more of
 - There will be less of

a. Problem/opportunity area # 1.

b. Possibilities for a better future.

a. Problem/opportunity area # 2.

b. Possibilities for a better future.

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6. When you are finished, share the fruits of your brainstorming with a learning partner.
 7. Help each other add three more items to the list.

EXERCISE 41: HELPING ANOTHER DEVELOP POSSIBILITIES FOR A BETTER FUTURE

In this exercise, you are asked to help one of the other members of your group develop possibilities for a better future.

1. Choose a partner for this exercise.
2. One partner takes the role of client and the other the role of the helper.
3. The client gives a summary of one of the problem situations focused on in the previous exercise.
4. The client then shares his or her list of new-scenario possibilities (the ones developed in the previous exercise).
5. The helper, using empathy, probes, and challenges, helps the client clarify and add to the items already on the list. Overall, the helper helps the client tap into his or her imagination more fully.

Example: In the following example, Geraldo, a junior in college majoring in business studies, has given a summary of the problem situation and his list of preferred-scenario possibilities. Overall he wants a more balanced lifestyle. His uncle, who runs a small business, has offered him a kind of internship in the family business. While such an opportunity fits perfectly with Geraldo's career plans, he has done nothing to develop it. Other things such as studies, intramural sports, and a rather substantial social life have crowded it out. Given his ambitions, Geraldo's priorities are out of line. Trish, his helper, challenges his list.

Trish. "There seems to be a contradiction. Very few of the possibilities you have outlined for a more balanced lifestyle relate to your uncle's offer. Yet earlier you said you wanted to develop the serious side of things a bit more."

Geraldo. "I don't want work to consume my life. I want a balanced life, not like some of those guys who never come home from work."

Trish. "In what way is your life out of balance right now?"

Geraldo. "Well, there's a bit too much play, I suppose."

Trish. "If that's the case, let's brainstorm more work-related possibilities. You can take care of the balance when you actually set your agenda. Spell out more possibilities that relate to your uncle's offer. You already said he's not going to push you into anything."

Geraldo. "Let's see. I'd be putting in 10 to 15 hours a week at my uncle's business."

Trish. "What would that look like?"

Geraldo. "Well, I don't know what my uncle has in mind."

Trish. "Well, what do you want? Name some of the things you'd like to get out of that kind of internship."

Geraldo. "Without being a nuisance, I'd like to make my uncle's place something like a lab for business studies. For instance, I've read about corporate culture and the way it can strangle a business. I'd like to see if there's a culture in my uncle's business and what it's like. There are only about a hundred people working there. So it's lab size, as it were."

Trish. "That would make it more than just work, but a place to learn a lot of practical things."

Geraldo. "I'd also like to learn something about the finance part of his business — where the money comes from, what kind of debt he carries, cash flow — all those things that are still too theoretical for me in the courses I'm taking."

Trish. "A way of bringing the texts alive. What else?"

Geraldo. "I'd like to learn something about the role of the manager. Especially in directing the work of others. I'm not sure what a manager really does with his day."

Trish. "That sounds practical."

Geraldo. "Yeah. It would certainly send me back to the books in a different way. I saw a couple of articles on new approaches to strategic management and on employee empowerment in the *Harvard Business Review*. But they were just theory. My uncle's place would help me turn theory into practice."

Trish. "So there could be a lot of synergy between the internship and your studies."

Geraldo. "Much more than I realized."

The dialogue goes on in that vein. Geraldo, with the help of Trish, develops not only a lot of possibilities for a better future but also much more enthusiasm about his uncle's project. Geraldo gives Trish high marks for empathy, probing, and challenge.

6. After ten minutes, the helper gets feedback from the client as to how useful he or she has been.

7. They then switch roles and repeat the process.

Section 13

STEPS II-B AND II-C:

WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT — CHOICES AND COMMITMENT

This section deals with two key tasks: (1) helping clients set problem-managing and opportunity-developing goals, and (2) helping them find ways of committing themselves to these goals.

STEP II-B: FORMULATING GOALS

What Do You Really Want?

Once clients have brainstormed possibilities for a better future, they need to make some choices. Another way of putting this is that they need to set goals as part of an agenda for constructive change. For instance, Geraldo, the college student seen in Section 12, after brainstorming a number of possibilities for structuring his internship in his uncle's company, chooses four of the possibilities and makes these his agenda. He shares them with his uncle and, after some negotiation, comes up with a revised package they can both live with.

EXERCISE 42: TURNING POSSIBILITIES INTO GOALS

In this exercise you are asked to do what Geraldo had to do — choose several preferred-scenario possibilities as the first step in crafting an agenda. Possibilities should be chosen because they will best help you manage some problem situation or develop some opportunity. First, read the following case.

The Case. Vanessa, 46, has been divorced for about a year. She has done little to restructure her life and is still in the doldrums. At the urging of a friend, she sees a counselor. With her help, she brainstorms a range of possibilities for a better future around the theme of "my new life as a single person." She is currently a salesperson in the women's apparel department of a moderately upscale store. She lives in the house that was part of the divorce settlement. She has no children. When she finally decided that she wanted children, it was too late. There was some discussion about adopting a child, but it didn't get very far. The marriage was disintegrating. Her visits to the counselor have reawakened a desire to take charge of her life and not just let it happen. She let her marriage happen, and it fell apart. She is not filled with anger at her former husband. If anything, she's a bit too down on herself. Her grieving is filled with self-recrimination.

A helper asked her, "What do you want now that the divorce is final? What would you like your post-divorce life to look like? What would you want to see in place?" Vanessa brainstormed the following possibilities:

- A job related to the fashion industry; maybe a career later.
- A small condo that will not need much maintenance on my part instead of the house.
- The elimination of poor-me attitudes as part of a much more creative outlook on self and life.
- The elimination of waiting around for things to happen.
- The development of a social life. For the time being, a range of friends rather than potential husbands. A couple of good women friends.
- Getting into physical shape.
- A hobby or avocation that I could get lost in. Something with substance.
- Some sort of volunteer work. With children, if possible.
- Some religion-related activities, not necessarily established-church related. Something that deals with the "bigger" questions of life.
- Some real "grieving" work over the divorce instead of all the self-recrimination.
- Resetting my relationship with my mother (who strongly disapproved of the divorce).
- Getting over a deep-seated fear that my life is going to be bland, if not actually bleak.
- Possibly some involvement with politics.

1. Mustering all the empathy within you, try to read the list from her point of view (even though you hardly know her).

2. Since Vanessa cannot possibly do all of these at once, she has to make some choices. Put yourself in her place. Which items would you include in your agenda? On separate pages of paper, indicate the items and your reasons for choosing each. In what way would the agenda item, if accomplished, help manage the overall problem situation and develop some opportunities?

3. Share your "package" with a learning partner. Discuss the differences in and the reasons for the choices. Note that there is no one right package.

EXERCISE 43: MAKING GOALS SPECIFIC

This exercise assumes that you are familiar with the material in Chapter Twelve. Many clients are more likely to pursue goals if they are clear and specific. Your job here is to move from the general to the specific.

Example: Tom, 42, and his wife, Carol, 39, have been talking to a counselor about how poorly they relate to each other. They have agreed to stop blaming each other, have explored their own behavior in concrete ways, have developed a variety of new perspectives on themselves as both individuals and spouses, and now want to do something about what they have learned.

Without having specific information about the issues Tom and Carol have discussed, use your imagination to come up with three levels of concreteness in a goal-shaping process that might apply to their situation. That is, move from some good intention to a broad goal and then turn the broad goal into one or more specific goals. Ultimate specific goals can be measured in some way. Obviously, in an actual counseling situation, you would be helping them shape their own goals. This exercise deals with goals (*what* needs to be put in place), not with strategies (*how* any specific goal is to be accomplished). What follows is Tom and Carol's first shot at moving from a vague to a more specific goal.

- **Good Intention.** "We've got to do something about saving our marriage because it is worth saving."
- **Broad Goal.** "We'd like to improve the quality of the time we spend together at home."
- **Specific Goal.** "We want to have better give-and-take, problem-solving conversations with each other."
- **Measurable Goal.** "Over the next month, we want to cut in half the number of times our so-called discussions turn into arguments or out-and-out fights."

Note that each level becomes more specific in some way. Note, too, that their specific goal is negative; they do not say what they'd like to put in place of fighting. This might be a flaw in the goal-setting process. Now do the same with the situations listed below.

1. Use your imagination to develop aims and goals. Get inside the client's mind and try to think the way the client might think.
2. Move from a vague statement of good intention to a specific goal in each case.

1. Linda W., 68, is dying of cancer. She has been talking to a pastoral counselor about her dying. One of her principal concerns is that her husband does not talk to her about her impending death. She has a variety of feelings about dying that well up from time to time such as disbelief, fear, resentment, anger, and even peace and resignation. She also has thoughts about life and death that she has never had before and has never shared with anyone.

Statement of good intention.

Broad goal.

Specific goal.

How is it to be measured? How will we know that it has been accomplished?

2. Troy, 30, has been discussing the stress he has been experiencing during this transitional year of his life. Part of the stress relates to his job. He has been working as an accountant with a large firm for the past five years. He makes a decent salary, but he is more and more dissatisfied with the kind of work he is doing. He finds accounting predictable and boring. He doesn't feel that there's much chance for advancement in this company. Many of his associates are much more ambitious than he is.

Statement of good intention.

Broad goal.

Specific goal.

How is it to be measured? How will we know that it has been accomplished?

3. Joan, 32, is married and has two small children. Her husband has left her, and she has no idea where he is. She has no relatives in the city and only a few acquaintances. She is talking to a counselor in a local community center about her plight. Since her husband was the breadwinner, she now has no income and no savings on which to draw.

Statement of good intention.

Broad goal.

Specific goal.

How is it to be measured? How will we know that it has been accomplished?

Supplemental exercises are found in Appendix Two.

EXERCISE 44: SHAPING VIABLE GOALS FOR YOURSELF

Counselors can add value by using the communication skills and helping methods and techniques discussed up to this point to help clients choose, craft, shape, and develop their goals. Goals are specific statements about what clients want and need. The goals that either emerge or that are explicitly set by clients in fashioning problem-managing and opportunity-developing programs for constructive change should have, at least eventually, certain characteristics in order to be *viable* goals. They should be:

- **outcomes** rather than activities.
- **specific** enough to be verifiable and to drive action.
- **substantive** and challenging.
- **realistic** and sustainable.

- in keeping with the client's values.
- set in a reasonable time frame.

From a practical point of view, these characteristics can be seen as "tools" that you can use to help clients shape their goals.

1. Take these possibilities and see whether they are statements of intent, general aims, more specific aims, or specific goals. If they are not specific goals, shape them so that they are.

Example: Jeff, a trainee in a counseling psychology program, has been concerned that he does not have the kind of assertiveness that he now believes helpers need in order to be effective in consultations with clients. He is specifically concerned about the quality of his participation in the training group. First he translates his intention to be more active into a much more specific goal:

- **Good Intention.** "I need to be more assertive if I expect to be an effective helper."
- **Broad Goal.** "I want to take more initiative in this training group."
- **Specific Goal.** "In our group sessions, when there is relatively little structure, I want to speak up without being asked to do so. Specifically, I want to practice empathy much more."
- **Measurable Goal.** "In the next training session, without being asked to do so, I will respond to what others say with empathy. During our two-hour meeting, I will respond at least ten times with basic empathy when other members talk about themselves."

Jeff then evaluates his specific and measurable goals by applying the criteria for viable goals:

- **Outcome.** "This goal is stated as an outcome, that is, a pattern of assertive responding to be accomplished."
- **Specific.** "It is clear. I can actually picture myself using empathy. It is quite easy to verify whether I have accomplished my goal or not. I can get feedback from the other members of the group and from the trainer. It might even be too specific because I have limited it to that one session."
- **Substantive.** "Responding with empathy with some frequency will help me develop, at least in part, the kind of assertiveness called for in helping. In this sense, my goal is a real step forward."
- **Realistic.** "I know how to respond with empathy. I think I do it well, when I do it. I can summon up the guts needed to use the skill in the group."
- **Values.** "This goal is in keeping with my values of being a good listener and of taking responsibility for myself as a trainee. The value of being an assertive, proactive helper, discussed in Chapter Three of *The Skilled Helper*, is new to me. While I like the idea, I need to work at making this value my own. My goal is a step in this direction."
- **Time frame.** "The time frame should refer to my developing a more assertive pattern of responding with empathy and not focus on just the next training session. By the end of the semester, I will be consistently participating the way I intend to in the next training session."

2. With a learning partner, critique Jeff's change program.
3. Finally, name two goals you have developed so far to become a more effective helper. Do what Jeff did above for each goal.

Goal # 1.

Goal # 2.

4. Share your goals with and get feedback from a learning partner.

EXERCISE 45: HELPING CLIENTS SET VIABLE GOALS

Example: Tom and Carol's specific goal is: "Over the next month, we want to cut in half the number of times our conversations turn into arguments or out-and-out fights."

- **Outcome.** "Number of fights *decreased*" is an accomplishment. A new pattern of behavior would be *in place*.
- **Specific.** It is behaviorally *clear*. They can get a picture of themselves not arguing or fighting. It probably would help if they were more specific, that is, if they actually talked about what an aborted fight or argument would look like. Moreover, it is not clear what they will be doing instead of fighting, such as substituting some kind of problem-solving or negotiation dialogue. Furthermore, since they have some idea of how often they fight per day or week, they can verify whether the number of fights has decreased. At this point, just some kind of counting might be in order. The goal says nothing about the intensity or viciousness of fights. Perhaps that should have been taken into account.
- **Substance.** It makes sense to suppose that a decrease in the number of arguments or fights will contribute substantially to the betterment of their relationship. However, stopping fighting leaves a void. They had better talk about the void. There is also something contrived about this goal. People don't usually talk about cutting the number of their fights in half.
- **Realism.** Tom cannot control his wife's behavior, but he can control his own. The same can be said of Carol. The assumption is that both of them have the self-management skills and the emotional resources to back off from fights. They don't have any experience in cutting

off fights before they begin. Furthermore, neither has something that they are going to put in place of fighting. In what ways does "number of fights decreased" appeal to both of them? There are some problems with realism here.

- **Values.** They both espouse give-and-take and fairness in their relationship, but they have been poor at delivering what they promise. They need to talk to one another more about what they need and want from the marriage. Their values right now are not clear.
- **Time frame.** "Over the next month" is the time frame. They have to determine whether this is a realistic time frame or whether they should move more to some kind of phasing out of unwanted behaviors (together with phasing in the behaviors that are to take the place of the unwanted ones).

Restated goal. In the light of the above analysis, Carol and Tom restate their goal. "We want to substantially reduce the number of arguments we have. We need more peace at home. Our goal is to put in place a process that will help us fight less. We've devised a time-out process. Anytime either of us sees things heating up, he or she can call time-out to discuss what's going on. A time-out session is not a who's-to-blame session. Rather we want to find out what the process is that leads to all the fighting. We've actually tried it a few times, and it works. We end up laughing at ourselves."

- Using the criteria above, critique the restated goal.
- Reshape the goal in the light of your critique. How would it read?

1. Return to the three specific goals you have come up with in each of the cases in Exercise 43.
2. Critique each in terms of the principles outlined above.
3. If a goal does not meet these standards, use these principles as tools to shape it until it does. Then restate the goal.

EXERCISE 46: HELPING LEARNING PARTNERS SET VIABLE GOALS

In this exercise you are asked to act as a helper/consultant to a learning partner.

1. The total training group is to be divided up into smaller groups of three.
2. There are three roles: client, helper, and observer. Decide the order in which you will play each role.
3. The client summarizes some problem situation and then declares his or her intent to do something about the problem or some part of it.

a. A summary of your problem and/or unused opportunity situation.

b. Your statement of intent.

4. The helper, using empathy, probing, and challenging, helps the client move from this statement of intent to a specific problem-managing or opportunity-developing goal that has the characteristics listed above.
5. When the helper feels that he or she has fulfilled this task, the session is ended and both observer and client give feedback to the helper on his or her effectiveness.
6. Repeat the process until each person has played each role.

EXERCISE 47: RELATING GOAL CHOICE TO ACTION

Once clients state what they want, they need to move into action in order to get what they want. At this point there are two ways of looking at the relationship of goals to action, one formal and one informal.

- **Formal.** Stage III of the helping model — brainstorming action strategies, choosing the best package, and turning them into a plan for accomplishing goals — is the formal approach to action.
- **Informal.** Once clients get an idea of what they want, there is no reason why they cannot move immediately into action, that is, do *something* that will move them in the direction of their goals. These are the "little" actions that can precede the formal planning process. This exercise is about these little actions.

Example: Larry, a young man with AIDS, wants to accomplish a lot of things before he dies. His overall aim is to live until he dies and to live as fully as possible. Since his lifestyle has alienated many of the members of his rather conservative extended family, one of his goals is some kind of reintegration into the family. He wants to feel that he belongs inside the family. He wants to be accepted by his relatives as they currently accept one another. At this point he wants everyone to know that he has AIDS. Up to this point it has been somewhat of a secret. Larry knows that he can't force anyone to accept him, so his goal focuses on creating a climate or set of conditions where this kind of acceptance is possible. Once he has chosen this overall goal, he does the following immediately: First, he moves back into town and takes up residence in the family

home. His parents, while bewildered by his lifestyle, have always been accepting. They are glad that he has decided to come home. Second, he tickles the informal communication network. He makes it clear to a couple of his relatives who are still relatively close to him that he wants everyone to know that he has AIDS. Third, he starts going to church again. These three actions are done quickly, almost instinctively, and are not part of a formal plan. They are "little" actions that head him in the right direction, that is, toward reintegration into the family. He has not yet developed a more formal plan.

1. Reacquaint yourself with the case of Vanessa discussed in Exercise 42.
2. While she believes that it is essential for her to develop a better attitude about herself and life in general, she believes that it is not best to try to do this directly. Therefore, she chooses goals that will have a better attitude as a by-product.
 - One goal centers around the development of a social life. For the time being, she wants a range of friends rather than potential husbands. She would especially like a couple of good women friends.
 - A second goal revolves around religion in some sense of that term. She would like to have religion-related activities, not necessarily established-church related, as part of her life. Something that deals with the "bigger" questions of life.
 - A third goal relates to physical well-being. The stress of the divorce has left her exhausted. She wants to build herself up physically and get into good physical shape.
3. If you were Vanessa and these were your goals, what are a few things you could do right away to get yourself moving in the right direction even before developing a formal plan to implement each goal?

Goal # 1.

Goal # 2.

Goal # 3.

STEP II-C: COMMITMENT

What Are You Willing to Pay for What You Want?

Many of us choose goals that will help us manage problems and develop opportunities, but we do not explore them from the viewpoint of commitment. Just because goals are tied nicely to the original problem situation and initially are espoused by us does not mean that we are really committed to them nor that we will follow through. The work of discussing problems and setting goals to manage them is costly in terms of time, psychological effort, and expense. A direct consideration of commitment can raise the probability that clients will actually pursue these goals.

EXERCISE 48: REVIEWING THE COST/BENEFIT RATIO IN THE CHOICE OF GOALS

In most choices we make there are both benefits and costs. Commitment to a preferred-scenario goal often depends on a favorable cost/benefit ratio. Do the benefits outweigh the costs?

Example: In January, Helga, a married woman with two children, one a senior in college and one a sophomore, was told that she had an advanced case of cancer. She was also told that a rather rigorous series of chemotherapy treatments might prolong her life, but they would not save her. She desperately wanted to see her daughter graduate from college in June, so she opted for the treatments. Although she found them quite difficult, she buoyed herself up by the desire to be at the graduation. Although in a wheel chair, she was there for the graduation in June. When the doctor suggested that she could now face the inevitable with equanimity, she said: "But, doctor, in only two years my son will be graduating."

This is a striking example of a woman's deciding that the costs, however high, were outweighed by the benefits. Obviously, this is not always the case. This exercise gives you the opportunity to explore your goals from a cost/benefit perspective. Is it worth the effort? What's the payoff?

1. Divide up into pairs, with one partner acting as client, one as helper.
2. Help your partner review one of the goals of his or her agenda from a cost/benefit perspective. The helper is to use basic empathy, probing, and challenging to help his or her partner do this. Help your partner identify benefits and costs and do some kind of trade-off analysis such as the balance sheet technique (see the text).
3. Help your partner clearly state the incentives and payoffs that enable him or her to commit to the specified goals.
4. After the discussion, each is to get a new partner, change roles, and repeat the process.

EXERCISE 49: MANAGING YOUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR GOALS

In this exercise you are asked to review the goals you have chosen to manage some problem situation with a view to examining your commitment. It is not a question of challenging your goodwill. All of us, at one time or another, make commitments that are not right for us.

1. Review the problem situation you have been examining and the preferred-scenario goals you have established for yourself as a way of managing it or some part of it.
2. Review the material on choice and commitment in the text and then use the following questions to gauge your level of commitment:

- To what degree are you choosing this goal freely?
- Are your goals chosen from among a number of possibilities?
- How highly do you rate the appeal of your goals?
- Name any ways in which your goals do not appeal to you.
- What's pushing you to choose these goals?
- If any of your goals are imposed by others, rather than freely chosen, what incentives are there besides mere compliance?

3. With a learning partner, review your principal learnings from answering the above questions about two of your goals. Take turns. Use empathy, probes, and challenges to help one another explore levels of commitment.

4. If you have any hesitations about committing yourself to a goal, discuss these hesitations with your partner. Use the following questions in the discussion.

- What is your state of readiness for change in this area at this time?
- What difficulties do you experience in committing yourself to your agenda or any part of it?
- What stands in the way of your commitment?
- What can you do to get rid of the disincentives and overcome the obstacles?
- What can you do to increase your commitment?
- To what degree is it possible that your commitment is not a true commitment?
- In what ways can the agenda be reformulated to make it more appealing?
- In what ways does it make sense to step back from this problem or opportunity right now? To what degree is the timing poor?

5. Finally, reformulate your goals in terms of what you have learned from the dialogue.

The Restated Goal.

STAGE III: GETTING THERE — HELPING CLIENTS IMPLEMENT THEIR GOALS

Stage III deals with what clients need to do in order to accomplish their problem-managing and opportunity-developing goals. In this stage, counselors help clients brainstorm different ways of accomplishing their goals, choose the strategies that best fit available resources, and draw up formal plans to accomplish goals.

Section 14 STEP III-A: STRATEGIES — WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO GET WHAT YOU WANT?

There is usually more than one way to accomplish a goal. However, clients often focus on a single strategy or just a few. The task of the counselor in Step III-A is to help clients discover a number of different routes to goal accomplishment. Clients tend to choose a better strategy or set of strategies if they choose from among a number of possibilities. Read Chapter Fourteen before doing the exercises in this section.

EXERCISE 50: BRAINSTORMING ACTION STRATEGIES FOR YOUR OWN GOALS

Brainstorming is a technique you can use to help yourself and your clients move beyond overly constricted thinking. Recall the rules of brainstorming:

- Encourage quantity. Deal with the quality of suggestions later.
- Do not criticize any suggestion. Merely record it.
- Combine suggestions to make new ones.
- Encourage wild possibilities, "One way to keep to my diet and lose weight is to have my mouth sewn up."
- When you feel you have said all you can say, put the list aside and come back to it later to try once more.

Example: Ira, a retired lawyer in training to be a counselor, is in a high-risk category for a heart attack: some of his relatives have died relatively early in life from heart attacks, he is overweight, he exercises very little, he is under a great deal of pressure in his job, and he smokes over a pack of cigarettes a day. One of his goals is to stop smoking within a month. With the help of a nurse practitioner friend, he comes up with the following list of strategies:

- just stop cold turkey.
- shame myself into it, "How can I be a helper if I engage in self-destructive practices such as smoking?"
- cut down, one less per day until zero is reached.
- get the doctor to prescribe the new nicotine patches.
- look at movies of people dying with lung cancer.
- pray for help from God to quit.

- use those progressive filters that gradually squeeze all taste from cigarettes.
- switch to a brand that doesn't taste good.
- switch to a brand that is so heavy in tars and nicotine that even I see it as too much.
- smoke constantly until I can't stand it anymore.
- let people know that I'm quitting.
- put an ad in the paper in which I commit myself to stopping.
- send a dollar for each cigarette smoked to a cause I don't believe in, for instance, the "other" political party.
- get hypnotized; through a variety of post-hypnotic suggestions have the craving for smoking lessened.
- pair smoking with painful electric shocks.
- take a pledge before my minister to stop smoking.
- join a group for professionals who want to stop smoking.
- visit the hospital and talk to people dying of lung cancer.
- if I buy cigarettes and have one or two, throw the rest away as soon as I come to my senses.
- hire someone to follow me around and make fun of me whenever I have a cigarette.
- have my hands put in casts so I can't hold a cigarette.
- don't allow myself to watch television on the days in which I have even one cigarette.
- reward myself with a week-end fishing trip once I have not smoked for two weeks.
- substitute chewing gum for smoking, starting first with nicotine-flavored gum.
- avoid friends who smoke.
- have a ceremony in which I ritually burn whatever cigarettes I have and commit myself to living without them.
- suck on hard candy made with one of the non-sugar sweeteners instead of smoking.
- give myself points each time I want to smoke a cigarette and don't; when I have saved up a number of points, reward myself with some kind of "luxury."

Note that Ira includes a number of wild possibilities in his brainstorming session.

1. Now do the same for two goals you have set for yourself in order to manage some problem situation or develop some opportunity. Make sure that the goal has been properly shaped according to the principles in Step II-B. Vague goals will yield vague strategies.

Goal # 1.

On a separate page, like Ira, brainstorm ways of achieving this goal. Observe the brainstorming rules. When you think you have run out of possibilities, stop and return to the task later.

Goal # 2.

Brainstorm ways of achieving this goal. Add wilder possibilities at the end.

2. After you have finished your list, take one of the goals and the brainstorming list, sit down with a learning partner, and see if, through interaction with him or her, you can expand your list. Be careful to follow the rules of brainstorming.
3. Switch roles. Through empathy, probing, and challenge, help your partner expand his or her list.
4. Keep both lists of brainstormed strategies. You will use them in an exercise in Step III-B.

EXERCISE 51: ACTION STRATEGIES: PUTTING YOURSELF IN THE CLIENT'S SHOES

Here are a number of cases in which the client has formulated a goal and needs help in determining how to accomplish it. You are asked to put yourself in the client's shoes and brainstorm action strategies that you yourself might think of using were you that particular client.

Example: Richard, 53, has been a very active person — career-wise, physically, socially, and intellectually. In fact, he has always prided himself on the balance he has been able to maintain in his life. However, an auto accident that was not his fault has left him a paraplegic. With the help of a counselor he has begun to manage the depression that almost inevitably follows such a tragedy. In the process of re-directing his life, he has set some goals. Since his job and his recreational activities involved a great deal of physical activity, a great deal of re-direction is called for.

One of his goals is to write a book called "The Book of Hope" about ordinary people who have creatively re-set their lives after some kind of tragedy. The book has two purposes. Since it would be partly autobiographical, it would be a kind of chronicle of his own re-direction efforts. This will help him commit himself to some of the grueling rehabilitation work that is in store for him. Second, since the book would also be about others struggling with their own tragedies, these people will be models for him. Richard has never published anything, so the "how" is more difficult. For him, writing the book is more important than publishing it. Therefore, the anxiety of finding a publisher is not part of the "how."

Hobart is a graduate student in a clinical psychology training program. He puts himself in Richard's shoes and asks himself, "What would I have to do to get a book written?" Here are some of his brainstormed possibilities:

- Get a book on writing and learn the basics.
- Start writing short bits on my own experience, anything that comes to mind.
- Read books written by those who conquered some kind of tragedy.
- Talk to the authors of these books.
- Find out what the pitfalls of writing are, like writer's block.
- Get a ghost writer who can translate my ideas into words.
- Write a number of very short, to-the-point pamphlets, then turn them into a book.
- Learn how to use a word-processing program both as part of my physical rehabilitation program and as a way of jotting down and playing with ideas.
- Do rough drafts of topics that interest me, and let someone else put them into shape.
- Record discussions about my own experiences with the counselor, the rehabilitation professionals, and friends and then have these transcribed for editing.
- Interview people who have turned tragedies like mine around.
- Interview professionals and the relatives and friends of people involved in personal tragedies. Record their points of view.
- Through discussion with friends get a clear idea of what this book will be about.
- Find some way of making it a bit different from similar books. What could I do that would give such a book a special slant?

1. Now do the same kind of work for each of the following cases.

Case # 1. Noma, 27, has been an intravenous drug user. She has learned that she is not only HIV positive but that she has ARC (AIDS Related Complex). She has begun taking two drugs and her symptoms are in remission. Since her family — parents, two brothers, one married, and two sisters, both married — never approved of her lifestyle, she moved to a different city. But now she wants to return to her home town and struggle with this illness where she grew up. One of her goals is reconciliation with her family. There has been very little communication with them, but she did return briefly for two of the weddings. She wants to start the work on reconciliation while she is still feeling well. She realizes that reconciliation is a two-way street and that she cannot set goals for others.

a. **Goal.** If you were Noma, what would "reconciliation with my family" look like? If accomplished, what would this goal look like? What would be in place that is not now in place? How is the goal modified by the fact that reconciliation is a two-way street? Formulate a goal that has the characteristics of a viable goal outlined earlier.

b. **Brainstorming Strategies.** What are some of the things you might do to achieve the kind of reconciliation with your family that you have outlined above? Do the brainstorming on a separate sheet of paper. Include some "wild" possibilities.

2. After you have developed your list, first share your goal with a learning partner. Give each other feedback on the quality of the goal. Note especially how you and your partner interpret "reconciliation."
3. Next share the lists of brainstormed possibilities. Working together, add several more possibilities to the combined lists. Keep your list for use in an exercise in Step III-B.
4. Discuss with your partner what you have learned from this exercise.

Case # 2. A priest was wrongfully accused of molesting a boy in his parish. Working with a counselor, he set three goals. His "now" goal was to maintain his equilibrium under stress. At the time other priests had been accused and convicted of pedophilia. He knew that in the eyes of many he would be seen to be guilty until proved innocent. With the help of the counselor and some close friends, both lay and clerical, he kept his head above water. A near-term goal was to win the case in court. He also accomplished this goal. He was acquitted, and all charges were dropped. After the trial the bishop wanted to send him to a different parish "to start fresh." He had been removed from his pastorate and was living in a different parish. But he wanted to return to the same parish and re-establish his relationship with his parishioners. After all, he had done nothing. The bishop returned him to the same parish.

a. Goal. If you were this man, what would "re-establishing my relationship with and reconciliation with my parishioners" look like? What would be in place that is not now in place? Formulate a goal that has the characteristics of a viable goal outlined earlier.

b. Brainstorming Strategies. What are some of the things you might do to re-establish your relationship with your parishioners, especially in view of the fact that some might still see you as tainted by the whole affair? Do the brainstorming on a separate sheet of paper. Include some "wild" possibilities.

2. After you have developed your list, first share your goal with a learning partner. Give each other feedback on the quality of the goal. Note especially how you and your partner might differ in your approach to re-establishing the relationship.
3. Next share the lists of brainstormed possibilities. Working together, add several more possibilities to the combined lists. Keep your list for use in an exercise in Step III-B.
4. Discuss with your partner what you have learned from this exercise.

EXERCISE 52: HELPING OTHERS BRAINSTORM STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

As a counselor, you can help your fellow trainees stimulate their imaginations to come up with

creative ways of achieving their goals. In this exercise, use probes and challenges based on questions such as the following:

- **How:** How can you get where you'd like to go? How many different ways are there to accomplish what you want to accomplish?
- **Who:** Who can help you achieve your goal? What people can serve as resources for the accomplishment of this goal?
- **What:** What resources both inside yourself and outside can help you accomplish your goal?
- **Where:** What places can help you achieve your goal?
- **When:** What times or what kind of timing can help you achieve your goal? Is one time better than another?

Example: What follows are bits and pieces of a counseling session in which Angie, the counselor trainee, is helping Meredith, the client, develop strategies to accomplish one of his goals. One of Meredith's problems is that he procrastinates a great deal. He feels that he needs to manage this problem in his own life if he is to help future clients move from inertia to action. Therefore, his "good intention" is to reduce the amount of procrastination in his life. In exploring his problem, he realizes that he puts off many of the assignments he receives in class. The result is that he is overloaded at the end of the semester, experiences a great deal of stress, does many of the tasks poorly, and receives lower grades than he is capable of. While his overall goal is to reduce the total amount of procrastination in his life, his immediate goal is to be up-to-date every week in all assignments for the counseling course. He also wants to finish the major paper for the course one full week before it is due. He chooses this course as his target because he finds it the most interesting and has many incentives for doing the work on time. He presents his list of the strategies he has brainstormed on his own to Angie. After discussing this list, their further conversations sound something like this:

Angie. "You said that you waste a lot of time. Tell me more about that."

Meredith. "Well, I go to the library a lot to study, with the best intentions, but I meet friends, we kid around, and time slips away. I guess the library is not the best place to study."

Angie. "Does that suggest another strategy?"

Meredith. "Yeah, study someplace where none of my friends is around. But then I might not . . ."

Angie (interrupting): "We'll evaluate this later. Right now let's just add it to the list."

* * * * *

Angie. "I know it's your job to manage your own problems, but I assume that you could get help from others and still stay in charge of yourself. Could anyone help you achieve your goal?"

Meredith. "I've been thinking about that. I have one friend . . . we make a bit of fun of him because he makes sure he gets everything done on time. He's not the smartest one of our group, but he gets good grades because he knows how to study. I'd like to pair up with him in some way, maybe even anticipate deadlines the way he does."

* * * * *

Angie. "Your strategy list sounds a bit tame. Maybe it sounds wild to you because you're trying to change what you do."

Meredith. "I guess I could get wilder. Hmmm. I could make a contract with my counseling prof to get the written assignments in early! That would be wild for me."

Note here that Angie uses probes based on the how, who, what, when, and where probes outlined above. She also uses the "wilder possibilities" probe.

1. Divide up into groups of three: client, helper, and observer.
2. Decide in which order you will play these roles.
3. The client will briefly summarize a concern or problem and a specific goal which, if accomplished, will help him or her manage the problem or develop the unused opportunity more fully. Make sure that the client states the goal in such a way that it fulfills the criteria for a viable goal.
4. Give the client five minutes to write down as many possible ways of accomplishing the goal as he or she can think of.
5. Then help the client expand the list. Use probes and challenges based on the questions listed above.
6. Encourage the client to follow the rules of brainstorming. For instance, do not let him or her criticize the strategies as he or she brainstorms.
7. At the end of the session, stop and receive feedback from your client and the observer as to the helpfulness of your probes and challenges.
8. Switch roles and repeat the process until each has played all three roles.

Section 15

STEP III-B: BEST-FIT STRATEGIES — WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEST FOR YOU?

The principle is simple. Strategies for action chosen from a large pool of strategies tend to be more effective than those chosen from a small pool. However, if brainstorming is successful, clients are sometimes left with more possibilities than they can handle. Therefore, once clients have been helped to brainstorm a range of strategies, they might also need help in choosing the most useful. These exercises are designed to help you help clients choose "best-fit" strategies, that is, strategies that best fit the resources, style, circumstances, and motivation level of clients. We begin with you.

EXERCISE 53: A PRELIMINARY SCAN OF BEST-FIT STRATEGIES FOR YOU

You do not necessarily need sophisticated methodologies to come up with a package of strategies that will help you accomplish a goal. In this exercise you are asked to use your common sense to make a "first cut" on the strategies you brainstormed for yourself in Exercise 50.

1. Review the strategies you brainstormed for each of the goals considered in that exercise.
2. Star the strategies that make the most sense to you. Just use common-sense judgment. Use the following example as a guideline.

Example: Let's return to the case of Ira in Exercise 50. Remember that he is the counselor trainee who wants to stop smoking. Here are the strategies he brainstormed. The ones he chooses in a preliminary common-sense scan are marked with a square (□) instead of a bullet (•).

- just stop cold turkey.
 - shame myself into it, "How can I be a helper if I engage in self-destructive practices such as smoking?"
 - cut down, one less per day until zero is reached.
 - get the doctor to prescribe the new nicotine patches.
 - look at movies of people with lung cancer.
 - pray for help from God to quit.
 - use those progressive filters on cigarettes.
 - switch to a brand that doesn't taste good.
 - switch to a brand that is so heavy in tars and nicotine that even I see it as too much.
 - smoke constantly until I can't stand it any more.
 - let people know that I'm quitting.
 - put an ad in the paper in which I commit myself to stopping.
 - send a dollar for each cigarette smoked to a cause I don't believe in, for instance, the "other" political party.
 - get hypnotized; through a variety of post-hypnotic suggestions have the craving for smoking lessened.
 - pair smoking with painful electric shocks.
 - take a pledge before my minister to stop smoking.
 - join a group for professionals who want to stop smoking.
 - visit the hospital and talk to people dying of lung cancer.
 - if I buy cigarettes and have one or two, throw the rest away as soon as I come to my senses.
 - hire someone to follow me around and make fun of me whenever I have a cigarette.
 - have my hands put in casts so I can't hold a cigarette.
 - don't allow myself to watch television on the days in which I have even one cigarette.
 - reward myself with a week-end fishing trip once I have not smoked for two weeks.
 - substitute chewing gum for smoking, starting first with nicotine-flavored gum.
 - avoid friends who smoke.
 - have a ceremony in which I ritually burn whatever cigarettes I have and commit myself to living without them.
 - suck on hard candy made with one of the new non-sugar sweeteners instead of smoking.
 - give myself points each time I want to smoke a cigarette and don't; when I have saved up a number of points, reward myself with some kind of "luxury."
3. Share with a learning partner the strategies you have starred and the reasons for choosing them.

EXERCISE 54: BEST-FIT STRATEGIES: PUTTING YOURSELF IN THE CLIENT'S SHOES

In this exercise you are asked to put yourself in clients' shoes as they struggle to choose the strategies that will best enable them to accomplish their goals.

1. Review the case of Richard in Exercise 51.
2. Review the strategies that were brainstormed by Hobart, the clinical psychology trainee who put himself in Richard's shoes:

- Get a book on writing and learn the basics.
 - Start writing short bits on my own experience, anything that comes to mind.
 - Read books written by those who conquered some kind of tragedy.
 - Talk to the authors of these books.
 - Find out what the pitfalls of writing are, like writer's block.
 - Get a ghost writer who can translate my ideas into words.
 - Write a number of very short, to-the-point pamphlets, then turn them into a book.
 - Learn how to use a word-processing program both as part of my physical rehabilitation program and as a way of jotting down and playing with ideas.
 - Do rough drafts of topics that interest me, and let someone else put them into shape.
 - Record discussions about my own experiences with the counselor, the rehabilitation professionals, and friends and then have these transcribed for editing.
 - Interview people who have turned tragedies like mine around.
 - Interview professionals and the relatives and friends of people involved in personal tragedies. Record their points of view.
 - Through discussion with friends, get a clear idea of what this book will be about.
 - Find some way of making it a bit different from similar books. What could I do that would give such a book a special slant?
3. If you have further strategies, add them to the list now.
 4. Using your common sense, circle the strategies you believe belong in the best-fit category.
 5. Jot down the reasons for your choices.
 6. Share your choices and reasons with a learning partner and give each other feedback.

EXERCISE 55: USING CRITERIA TO CHOOSE BEST-FIT STRATEGIES

Just as there are criteria for crafting preferred-scenario goals and agendas (Step II-B), so there are criteria for choosing best-fit strategies. The following questions can be asked, especially when the client is having difficulty choosing from among a number of possibilities. These criteria complement rather than take the place of common sense.

- **Clarity.** Is the strategy clear?
- **Relevance.** Is it relevant to my problem situation and goal?
- **Realism.** Is it realistic? Can I do it?
- **Appeal.** Does it appeal to me?
- **Values.** Is it consistent with my values?
- **Efficacy.** Is it effective enough? Does it have bite? Will it get me there?

These questions can be recalled through the acronym CRRAVE, on the assumption that clients "crave" to accomplish their goals.

Example: Ira, the counselor trainee who wanted to quit smoking, considered the following possibility on his list: "Cut down gradually, that is, every other day eliminate one cigarette from the 30 I smoke daily. In two months, I would be free."

C - Clarity: "This strategy is very clear; I can actually see the number diminishing. It gets a 6 or 7 for clarity."

- R - Relevance:** "It leads inevitably to the elimination of my smoking habit, but only if I stick with it."
- R - Realism:** "I could probably bring this off. It would be like a game; that would keep me at it. But maybe too much like a game."
- A - Appeal:** "I like the idea of easing into it; but I'm quitting because I now am convinced that smoking is very dangerous. I should stop at once."
- V - Values:** "There is something in me that says that I should be able to quit cold turkey. That has more moral appeal to me. Gradually cutting down is for weaker people."
- E - Effectiveness:** "The more I draw this action program out, the more likely I am to give it up. There are too many pitfalls spread out over a two-month period."

In summary, Ira says, "I now see that only strategies related to stopping cold turkey have bite. In fact, stopping is not the hard thing. Not taking smoking up again in the face of temptation, that's the real problem." The CRRAVE criteria not only helped Ira eliminate all strategies related to a gradual reduction in smoking, but they helped him redefine his goal to "stopping and staying stopped." Sustainability is the real issue. He also noted that the brainstormed strategies he preferred referred not just to stopping but to sustainability.

1. Read the following case, put yourself in this woman's shoes, and, like Ira, use the CRRAVE criteria for determining the viability of the strategy she proposes.

Case: A young woman has been having disagreements with a male friend. Since he is not the kind of person she wants to marry, her goal is to establish a relationship with him that is less intimate, for instance, one without sexual relations. She knows that she can be friends with him but is not sure if he can be just a friend with her. She would rather not lose him as a friend. She also knows that he sees other women. She uses the CRRAVE criteria to evaluate the following strategy: "I'll call a moratorium on our relationship. I'll tell him that I don't want to see him for four months. After that we will be in a better position to re-establish a different kind of relationship, if that's what both of us want."

2. Once you have done your analysis, share your findings with a learning partner. See if the two of you can learn from your differences.
3. Now review the reasoning that the woman herself went through and her decision.

**DO NOT READ THE NEXT SECTION
BEFORE DOING STEPS 1 AND 2 OF THIS EXERCISE!**

Here, then, is her analysis:

- C - Clarity:** "A moratorium is quite clear; it would mean stopping all communication for four months. It would be as if one of us were in Australia for four months. But no phone calls."
- R - Relevance:** "Since my goal is moving into a different kind of relationship with him, stepping back to let old ties and behaviors die a bit is essential. A moratorium is not the same as ending a relationship. It leaves the door open. But it does indicate that cutting the relationship off completely could ultimately be the best course."
- R - Realism:** "I can stop seeing him. I think I have the assertiveness to tell him exactly what I want and stick to my decision. Obviously I don't know how realistic he will think it is. He

might see it as an easy way for me to brush him off. He might get angry and tell me to forget about it."

- A - **Appeal:** "The moratorium appeals to me. It will be a relief not having to manage my relationship with him for a while."
- V - **Values:** "There is something unilateral about this decision, and I prefer to make decisions that affect another person collaboratively. On the other hand, I do not want to string him along, keeping his hopes for a deeper relationship and even marriage alive."
- E - **Effectiveness:** "When — and if, because it depends on him, too — we start seeing each other again, it will be much easier to determine whether any kind of meaningful relationship is possible. A moratorium will help determine things one way or another." Based on her analysis, she decides to propose the moratorium to her friend.

4. Discuss her reasoning with your learning partner. In what ways does it differ from your own? If you were her helper, in what ways would you challenge her reasoning and her decision?

EXERCISE 56: USING CRITERIA TO HELP YOU CHOOSE BEST-FIT STRATEGIES

Carry out the six-step process described below for the key strategies you have starred for yourself in Exercise 53.

1. Consider the list of strategies in Exercise 53. Note the strategies you have starred.
2. Choose two starred strategies that (a) are important to you and (b) are substantial enough to merit the kind of scrutiny the CRRAVE criteria provide, that is, two key strategies.
3. Use the CRRAVE questions to check the viability of each of these strategies.
4. Share your choices and your reasoning with a learning partner. Get feedback from him or her.

EXERCISE 57: CHOOSING BEST-FIT STRATEGIES: THE BALANCE SHEET METHOD

The balance sheet is another tool you can use to evaluate different program possibilities or courses of action. It is especially useful when the problem situation is serious and you are having difficulty rating different courses of action. Review the balance sheet format in Chapter Eleven of *The Skilled Helper*.

Example: Rev. Alex M. has gone through several agonizing months re-evaluating his vocation to the ministry. He finally decides that he wants to leave the ministry and get a secular job. His decision, though painful in coming, leaves him with a great deal of peace. He now wonders just how to go about this. One possibility, now that he has made his decision, is to leave immediately. However, since this is a serious choice, he wants to look at it from all angles. He uses the decision balance sheet to evaluate the strategy of leaving his position at his present church immediately. We will not present his entire analysis (indeed, each bit of the balance sheet need not be used). Here are some of his key findings:

- **Benefits for me:** Now that I've made my decision, it will be a relief to get away. I want to get away as quickly as possible.

- Acceptability:** I have a right to think of my personal needs. I've spent years putting the needs of others and of the institution ahead of my own. I'm not saying that I regret this. Rather, this is now my "season," at least for a while.
- Unacceptability:** Leaving right away seems somewhat impulsive to me, meeting my own needs to be rid of a burden.
- **Costs for me:** I don't have a job, and I have practically no savings. I'll be in financial crisis.
 - Acceptability:** My frustration is so high that I'm willing to take some financial chances. Besides, I'm well educated, and the job market is good.
 - Unacceptability:** I will have to forgo some of the little luxuries of life for a while, but that's not really unacceptable.
- **Benefits for significant others:** The associate minister of the parish would finally be out from under the burden of these last months. I have been hard to live with. My parents will actually feel better because they know I've been pretty unhappy.
 - Acceptability:** My best bet is that the associate minister will be so relieved that he will not mind the extra work. Anyway, he's much better than I at getting people involved in the work of the congregation.
 - Unacceptability:** I can't think of any particular downside here.
- **Costs to significant social settings:** This is the hard part. Many of the things I do in this church are not part of programs that have been embedded in the structure of the church. They depend on me personally. If I leave immediately, many of these programs will falter and perhaps die because I have failed to develop leaders from among the members of the congregation. There will be no transition period. The congregation can't count on the associate minister taking over, since he and I have not worked that closely on any of the programs in question.
 - Acceptability:** The members of the congregation need to become more self-sufficient. They should work for what they get instead of counting so heavily on their ministers.
 - Unacceptability:** Since I have not worked at developing lay leaders, I feel some responsibility for doing something to see to it that the programs do not die. Some of my deeper feelings say that it isn't fair to pick up and run.

Alex goes on to use this process to help him make a decision. He finally decides to stay an extra three months and spend time with potential leaders within the congregation. He will tell them his intentions and then help them take ownership of essential programs.

1. Choose a personal goal for which you have brainstormed strategies.
2. Choose a major strategy or course of action you would like to explore much more fully. If this exercise is to be meaningful, the problem area, the goal, and the strategy or course of action in question must have a good deal of substance to them. Using the balance sheet to make a relatively inconsequential choice is a waste of time.
3. Identify the "significant others" and the "significant social settings" that would be affected by your choice.
4. Explore the possible course of action by using as much of the balance sheet as is necessary to help you make a sound decision.

Section 16
STEP III-C: MAKING PLANS —
HELPING CLIENTS DEVELOP ACTION PLANS THAT WORK

A plan is a step-by-step procedure for accomplishing each goal of an agenda. The strategies chosen in Step III-B often need to be translated into a step-by-step plan. Clients are more likely to act if they know what they are going to do first, what second, what third, and so forth. Realistic time frames for each of the steps are also essential. The plan imposes the discipline clients need to get things done. To prepare for these exercises, read Chapter Sixteen.

EXERCISE 58: SETTING UP THE MAJOR STEPS OF YOUR OWN ACTION PLAN

In this exercise you are asked to establish a plan to accomplish one of the goals you have set for yourself. First, consider the following case.

Example: Eliza, 38, a widow with two children in their upper teens, wants to get a job. In outcome terms, "job obtained and started" is her goal. However, in talking to a counselor, she soon realizes that there are a number of steps in a program leading to the accomplishment of this goal. In putting a plan together, she comes up with the following major steps of a plan.

- **Step 1: Job criteria established.** She soon discovers that she doesn't want just any kind of job. She has certain standards she would like to meet insofar as this is possible in the current job market.
 - **Step 2: Resume developed.** In order to advertise herself well, she needs a high-quality resume.
 - **Step 3: Job possibilities canvassed.** She needs to find out just what kinds of jobs are available that meet her general standards.
 - **Step 4: A "best-possibilities" list drawn up.** She needs to draw up a list of possibilities that seem most promising in view of the job market and the standards she has worked out.
 - **Step 5: Job interviews applied for and engaged in.** This includes sending out her resume. She has to find out whether she wants a particular job and whether the employer wants her.
 - **Step 6: Best offer chosen and job started.** If she receives two or more offers that meet her standards, she must decide which offer to accept.
 - **Contingency plan.** If the kind of job search she designs proves fruitless, she needs to know what she is to do next. She needs a backup plan.
1. Review the work you did for your own constructive change program in Exercises 50 and 53.
 2. Once more, indicate the goal you want to accomplish.
-
-
-

5. Share your plan with a learning partner. Give each other feedback on the quality of the plan. Use probes in talking to each other to help the other discover the most difficult parts of the plan. What is the probability of overall success? How much would you bet on the full implementation of the plan?

6. In light of the feedback and discussion, what changes would you make in the plan?

EXERCISE 59: SETTING UP THE MAJOR STEPS OF AN ACTION PLAN

Let us return to the case of Richard, the man who wanted to write a book about hope as part of his overall rehabilitation plan after an accident. As you recall, Hobart, putting himself in Richard's shoes, brainstormed the following strategies.

- Get a book on writing and learn the basics.
 - Start writing short bits on my own experience, anything that comes to mind.
 - Read books written by those who conquered some kind of tragedy.
 - Talk to the authors of these books.
 - Find out what the pitfalls of writing are, like writer's block.
 - Get a ghost writer who can translate my ideas into words.
 - Write a number of very short, to-the-point pamphlets, then turn them into a book.
 - Learn how to use a word-processing program both as part of my physical rehabilitation program and as a way of jotting down and playing with ideas.
 - Do rough drafts of topics that interest me, and let someone else put them into shape.
 - Record discussions about my own experiences with the counselor the rehabilitation professionals, and friends and then have these transcribed for editing.
 - Interview people who have turned tragedies like mine around.
 - Interview professionals and the relatives and friends of people involved in personal tragedies. Record their points of view.
 - Through discussion with friends get a clear idea of what this book will be about.
 - Find some way of making it a bit different from similar books. What could I do that would give such a book a special slant?
1. Place yourself in Richard's shoes.
 2. Add further strategies as you see fit.
 3. Identify key best-fit strategies.

EXERCISE 60: SUBGOALS: DIVIDE AND CONQUER

If a goal is complex, for instance, changing careers or doing something about a deteriorating marriage, the plan to achieve it will have a number of major steps. In this case a divide-and-conquer strategy is useful. That is, the complex goal (the improvement of the marriage) is divided up into a number of subgoals. In a marriage, a more equitable division of household chores might be such a subgoal. It is one goal in the total "package" of goals that will constitute the improved marriage.

In this exercise you are asked to pretend that, like Eliza, the widow in Exercise 58, you are searching for a job.

1. In order to find a job, you must draw up a resume. What is the step-by-step process you would engage in to develop a resume?

2. In order to find a job, you would also have to canvass for open positions. What is the step-by-step process you would use to canvass for jobs?

3. Share your plan for each of these with a learning partner. Pool your approaches and come up with a better plan for each subgoal. Note, however, that you may have different needs. Your plans should not be exactly the same.

EXERCISE 61: FORMULATING PLANS FOR THE MAJOR STEPS OF A COMPLEX GOAL

In this exercise you are asked to spell out the action steps for two of the subgoals leading up to the accomplishment of some complex goal of your own.

Example: Lynette, a clinical psychology student in a counselor training program, has discovered that she comes across as quite manipulative both to her instructors and to her classmates. She believes that she has developed the style as a response to the less than enthusiastic reception she received whenever she encroached on "male" territory, whether at home, school, or in the workplace. However, she realizes that this style is contrary to the values she wants to permeate helper-client relations. She would end up doing to clients what she resents others doing to her. One of the goals she sets in order to manage her manipulative ways is to establish a collaborative style in dealing with teachers, classmates, and clients. This would be a major step in changing her overall manipulative style. The essence of collaboration, as she sees it, is mutual understanding of the issues and mutual decision making. Her current style in working with others is to make the decisions herself while letting the other party think that he or she is having a say. Here are the steps in her plan to implement this style change:

- Get a very clear picture of the difference between my current style and my preferred style.
- Learn a decision-making process based on mutuality (such as the negotiation process offered by Fisher and Ury in their popular book *Getting to Yes*).
- Practice mutual decision making in non-critical situations, that is, in situations in which I do not feel the other has any intention of taking advantage of me.
- Develop a list of the decision-making situations in which I must change my style.
- Plan out ahead of time what I need to do to change my interaction style in each critical encounter, for instance, in discussing a major project with an instructor in the counseling program.
- Review with myself how well I actually used the new style.
- Get feedback from the other party from time to time to see whether the process is experienced by others as mutual.

1. Evaluate the steps she has laid out. If she were to ask you for your help, what feedback would you give her about her plan? What changes would you make?

2. Now do the same for two of the major steps of a plan you have developed to achieve some complex goal related to becoming a more effective helper.

a. A key goal of mine.

b. One major step in the plan to accomplish this goal.

c. A brief description of the steps I would take to achieve this subgoal.

d. A second major step in the plan to accomplish this goal.

e. A brief description of the steps I would take to achieve this subgoal.

b. Skills or other resources you need to accomplish this goal.

c. Summarize a plan that can help you develop or get the resources you need.

Problem situation #2

a. Your problem-managing or opportunity-developing goal.

b. Skills or other resources you need to accomplish this goal.

c. Summarize a plan that can help you develop or get the resources you need.

EXERCISE 63: HELPING OTHERS DEVELOP THE RESOURCES NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTING PLANS

In this exercise you are asked to help clients develop the kinds of resources they need to pursue their principal goals.

1. Mildred and Tom are having trouble with their marriage. They do not handle decisions about finances and about sexual behavior well. Fights dealing with these two areas are frequent. They both agree that their marriage would be better without these fights, and they realize that collaborative decision making with respect to sex and finances would be an ideal. But they have never communicated very well with each other.

a. Given the brief picture outlined above, what kind of resources do Mildred and Tom need to improve their marriage?

b. Summarize a program that will help them develop one or two of these resources.

2. Todd feels bad about his impoverished social life. He is now in his late twenties and has no intimate female friend and no close friends of either sex. He feels lonely a great deal of the time. Some of the goals he set for himself involve joining social groups, developing wider circles of acquaintances, and establishing some close friendships.

a. What kind of resources does he need for effective group participation?

b. Summarize a plan that will help him develop these resources.

c. What resources does he need to establish and maintain closer and even intimate relationships?

d. Summarize a plan that might help him develop these resources.

Section 17
MAKING THINGS WORK —
HELPING CLIENTS GET WHAT THEY NEED AND WANT

There is a huge difference between talking about action and action itself. Some clients develop challenging goals, excellent strategies, and elegant plans and then stop short of using them effectively to get to their final destinations — valued outcomes, that is, outcomes that make a difference in their lives. Once a workable plan has been developed to accomplish a goal or a subgoal, clients must act. They must implement the plan.

Clients as Tacticians. There are a number of things you can do to help clients act. You can help them become effective tacticians in their everyday lives. In the exercises in this section, tactics, that is, the art or skill of employing available means to accomplish a goal *in the face of changing circumstances*, is the focus. Tactics is a military term. Not a bad choice, perhaps, because the work of implementing strategies and plans often enough resembles combat. Clients are more likely to implement plans if they can adapt them to changing conditions.

Sustained Action. When clients are trying to manage more complex problem situations, such as a deteriorating marriage or change in lifestyle, then the issue of **sustained** action is important. They must not only begin to act but continue to act even in the face of temptations to slack off. The exercises in Section 17 will help you prepare clients to grapple with temptations to quit and to sustain problem-managing and opportunity-developing action on their own.

EXERCISE 64: LEARNING FROM FAILURES

As suggested in the text, inertia and entropy dog all of us in our attempts to manage problem situations and develop unexploited opportunities. There is probably no human being who has not failed to carry through on some self-change project. This exercise assumes two things, that we have failed in some self-change project and that we can learn from our failures.

Example: Miguel kept saying that he wanted to leave his father's business and strike out on his own, especially since he and his father had heated arguments over how the business should be run. He earned an MBA in night school and talked about becoming a consultant to small, family-run businesses. A medium-sized consulting firm offered him a job. He accepted on the condition that he could finish up some work in the family business. But he always found "one more" project in the family business that needed his attention. All of this came out as part of his story, even though his main concern was the fact that his woman friend of five years had given him an ultimatum: marriage or forget about the relationship.

Finally, with the help of a counselor, Miguel makes two decisions: to take the job with the consulting firm and to agree to break off the relationship with his woman friend because he is still not seriously entertaining marriage as an immediate possibility.

However, in the ensuing year Miguel never gets around to taking the new job. He keeps finding tasks to do in his father's company and keeps up his running battle with his father. Obviously both of them, father and son, were getting something out of this in some twisted way. As to his relationship with his woman friend, the two of them broke it off four different times during that year until she finally left him and got involved with another man.

Some of Miguel's learnings. Since Miguel and his counselor were not getting anywhere, they decided to break off their relationship for a while. However, when his woman friend definitively broke off their relationship, Miguel was in such pain that he asked to see the counselor again. The first thing the counselor did was to ask Miguel what he had learned from all that had happened, on the assumption that these learnings could form the basis of further efforts. Here are some of his learnings:

- I hate making decisions that have serious action implications.
- I pass myself off as an adventuresome, action-oriented person, but at root I prefer the status quo.
- I am very ambiguous about facing the developmental tasks of an adult my age. I have liked living the life of a 17-year-old at age 30.
- I enjoy the stimulation of the counseling sessions. I enjoy reviewing my life with another person and developing insights, but this process involves no real commitment to action on my part.
- Not taking charge of my life and acting on goals has led to the pain I am now experiencing. In putting off the little painful actions that would have served the process of gradual growth I have ended up in great pain. And it could all happen again.

Notice that Miguel's learnings are about himself, his problem situations, and his way of participating in the helping process.

1. Recall some significant self-change project over the last few years that you abandoned in one way or another.
2. Picture as clearly as possible the forces at work that led to the project's ending in failure, if not with a bang, then with a whimper.
3. In reviewing your failed efforts, jot down what you learned about yourself and the process of change.
4. Share your learnings with a learning partner. Help each other (a) discover further lessons in the review of the failed project, and (b) discover what could have been done to keep the project going.

a. The self-change project that failed.

b. Principal reasons for failure.

c. What you learned about yourself as an agent of change in your own life.

d. What could have been done to keep the project going?

EXERCISE 65: IDENTIFYING AND COPING WITH OBSTACLES TO ACTION

As suggested in an earlier exercise, "forewarned is forearmed" in the implementation of any plan.

1. Picture yourself trying to implement some action strategy or plan in order to accomplish a problem-managing goal. As in the example below, jot down what you actually see happening.

2. As you tell the story, describe the pitfalls or snags you see yourself encountering along the way. Some pitfalls involve inertia, that is, not starting some step of your plan; others involve entropy, that is, allowing the plan to fall apart over time.
3. Design some strategy to handle any significant snag or pitfall you identify.

Example: Justin has a supervisor at work who, he feels, does not like him. He says that she gives him the worst jobs, asks him to put in overtime when he would rather go home, and talks to him in demeaning ways. In the problem exploration phase of counseling, he discovered that he probably reinforces her behavior by buckling under, by giving signs that he feels hurt but helpless, and by failing to challenge her in any direct way. He feels so miserable at work that he wants to do something about it. One option is to move to a different department, but to do so he must have the recommendation of his immediate supervisor. Another possibility is to quit and get a job elsewhere, but he likes the company and that would be a drastic option. A third possibility is to deal with his supervisor more directly. He sets goals related to this third option.

One major step in working out this overall problem situation is to seek out an interview with his supervisor and tell her, in a strong but nonpunitive way, his side of the story and how he feels about it. Whatever the outcome, his version of the story would be on record. The counselor asks him to *imagine himself doing all of this. What snags does he run into? Some of the things he says are:*

- "I see myself about to ask her for an appointment. I see myself hesitating to do so because she might answer me in a sarcastic way. Also, others are usually around, and she might embarrass me and they will want to know what's going on, why I want to see her, and all that. I tell myself that I had better wait for a better time to ask."
- "I see myself sitting in her office. Instead of being firm and straightforward, I'm tongue-tied and apologetic. I forget some of the key points I want to make. I let her brush off some of my complaints and in general let her control the interaction."

a. How can he prepare himself to handle the obstacles or snags he sees in his first statement? Then what could he do in the situation itself?

b. How can he prepare himself to handle the pitfalls mentioned in his second statement? What could he do in the situation itself?

Personal Situation # 1.

a. Consider some plan or part of a plan you want to implement. In your mind's eye see yourself moving through the steps of the plan. What obstacles or snags do you encounter? Jot them down.

b. Indicate how you might prepare yourself to handle a significant obstacle or pitfall and what you might do in the situation itself to handle it.

Personal Situation # 2.

a. Consider some plan or part of a plan you want to implement. In your mind's eye see yourself moving through the steps of the plan. What obstacles or snags do you encounter? Jot them down.

b. Indicate how you might prepare yourself to handle a significant obstacle or pitfall and what you might do in the situation itself to handle it.

EXERCISE 66: FORCE-FIELD ANALYSIS AT THE SERVICE OF ACTION

In this exercise you are asked to identify forces "in the field," that is, out there in clients day-to-day lives, that might help them implement strategies and plans, together with forces that might hinder them. The former are called "facilitating forces" and the latter "restraining forces." The use of force-field analysis to prepare for action is an application of the adage "forewarned is forearmed." Read the section on force-field analysis in Chapter Seventeen of *The Skilled Helper*. Then review the following case.

Example: Ira, as we have seen earlier, wants to stop smoking. He has also expanded his goal from merely "stopping" to "staying stopped." He has formulated a step-by-step plan for doing so. Before taking the first step, he uses force-field analysis to identify facilitating and restraining forces in his everyday life.

Some of the facilitating forces identified by Ira:

- my own pride.
- the satisfaction of knowing I'm keeping a promise I've made to myself.
- the excitement of a new program, the very "newness" of it.
- the support and encouragement of my wife and my children.
- the support of two close friends who are also quitting.
- the good feeling of having that "gunk" out of my system.
- the money saved and put aside for more reasonable pleasures.
- the ability to jog without feeling I'm going to die.

Some of the restraining forces identified by Ira:

- the craving to smoke that I take with me everywhere.
- seeing other people smoke.
- danger times: when I get nervous, after meals, when I feel depressed and discouraged, when I sit and read the paper, when I have a cup of coffee, at night watching television.

- being offered cigarettes by friends.
- when the novelty of the program wears off (and that could be fairly soon).
- increased appetite for food and the possibility of putting on weight.
- my tendency to rationalize and offer great excuses for my failures.
- the fact that I've tried to stop smoking several times before and have never succeeded.

1. Review a goal or subgoal and the plan you have formulated to accomplish it.
2. Picture yourself "in the field" actually trying to implement the steps of the plan.
3. Identify the principal forces that are helping you reach your goal or subgoal.
4. Identify the principal forces that are hindering you from reaching your goal or subgoal.

Personal Situation # 1.

- a. Spell out a goal or subgoal you want to accomplish.

- b. Picture yourself in the process of implementing the plan formulated to achieve the goal. List the facilitating forces that could help you to carry out the plan.

- c. List the restraining forces that might keep you from carrying out the plan.

Personal Situation # 2.

a. Spell out a goal or subgoal you want to accomplish.

b. Picture yourself in the process of implementing the plan formulated to achieve the goal. List the facilitating forces that could help you to carry out the plan.

c. List the restraining forces that might keep you from carrying out the plan.

5. Finally, share your findings with a learning partner. Use empathy, probing, and challenge to help each other clarify these two sets of forces.

EXERCISE 67: BOLSTERING FACILITATING FORCES

Once you have identified the principal facilitating and restraining forces, you can determine how to bolster critical facilitating forces and neutralize critical restraining forces. In this exercise you are asked to devise ways of bolstering critical facilitating forces.

Example: Klaus is an alcoholic who wants to stop drinking. He joins Alcoholics Anonymous. During a meeting he is given the names and telephone numbers of two people whom he is told

he may call at any time of the day or night if he feels he needs help. He sees this as a critical facilitating force — just knowing that help is around the corner when he needs it. He wants to strengthen this facilitating force.

- First of all, he sees being able to get help anytime as a kind of dependency, and so he talks out the negative feelings he has about being dependent in this way with a counselor. In talking, he soon realizes that it is a temporary form of dependency that is instrumental in achieving an important goal, developing a pattern of sobriety.
- Second, he calls the telephone numbers a couple of times when he is not in trouble just to get the feel of doing so.
- Third, he puts the numbers in his wallet, he memorizes them, and he puts them on a piece of paper and carries them in a medical bracelet that tells people who might find him drunk that he is an alcoholic trying to overcome his problem.
- Finally, he calls the telephone numbers a couple of times when the craving for alcohol is high and his spirits are low. That is, he gets used to this as a temporary resource.

1. Review your list of facilitating forces from Personal Situation # 1 or # 2 in Exercise 66 that you see as capable of making a difference in the implementation of a program and that you believe you can strengthen in some way.
2. Indicate what you could do to strengthen one or more critical facilitating force.
3. Share what you intend to do with a learning partner. Using empathy, probes, and challenges, help each other strengthen the plan.

a. Briefly describe one or two key facilitating forces from Personal Situation #1 in Exercise 66 that you would like to strengthen.

b. Indicate how you would like to go about strengthening these key facilitating forces.

EXERCISE 68: MANAGING KEY RESTRAINING FORCES

Sometimes it is helpful to try to neutralize or reduce the strength of critical restraining forces. Act as a consultant to the woman in the example.

Example: Ingrid is on welfare, but she has a goal of getting a job. Part of her plan is to apply for and go to job interviews. However, she ends up missing a number of the interviews. By examining her behavior, she learns that there are at least two critical restraining forces. One is that she has a poor self-image: she thinks she looks ugly and that the interviewer won't give her a fair chance simply because of her looks. Another is that at the last moment she thinks of a number of "important" tasks that must be done, for instance, visiting her ailing mother, before she can do anything else. She does these tasks instead of going to the interview.

a. How might Ingrid handle the problem of feeling ashamed of her looks?

b. How might Ingrid handle the problem of putting "important" tasks ahead of going to job interviews?

1. On separate paper, identify some key restraining forces you face in the pursuit of important personal goals and indicate what you can do to minimize these forces.
2. Share your findings with a learning partner and help each other to find even better ways of anticipating and dealing with substantial restraining forces.

EXERCISE 69: USING SUPPORTIVE AND CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIPS

Key people in the day-to-day lives of clients can play an important part in helping them stay on track as they move toward their goals. If part of a client's problem is that he or she is "out of community," then a parallel part of the helping process should be to help the client develop supportive human resources in his or her everyday life. In this exercise you are asked to look at strategies and plans from the viewpoint of these human resources. People can provide both support and challenge.

Example: Enid, a 40-year-old single woman, is making a great deal of progress in terms of controlling her drinking through her involvement with an AA program. But she is also trying to

decide what she wants to do about a troubled relationship with a man. In fact, her drinking was, in part, an ineffective way of avoiding the problems in the relationship. She knows that she no longer wants to tolerate the psychological abuse she has been getting from him, but she also fears the vacuum she will create by cutting the relationship off. She is, therefore, trying to develop some possibilities for a better relationship. She also realizes that ending the relationship might be the best option. Because of counseling, she has been much more assertive in the relationship. She now cuts off contact whenever he becomes abusive. That is, she is already engaging in a series of "little actions" that help her better manage her life and discover further possibilities. Finally, since this is not the only time she has experienced psychological abuse, she is beginning to wonder what it is about herself that in some way almost draws contempt. She has a sneaking feeling that the contempt of others might merely mirror the way she feels about herself. She has also begun to wonder why she has stayed in a safe but low-paying job so long. She realizes that at work she is simply taken for granted. In other words, there are some issues that she has yet to explore.

In summary, because Enid has a troubled relationship with herself, she is likely to have troubled relationships with others, in this case her male friend. At time she resorts to drinking to "manage" her relationships both to herself and to others. It is an ineffective management technique, providing temporary relief from pain but, in the long run, causing even more pain.

Over the course of two years, the counselor helps Enid develop human resources for both support and challenge.

- She moves from one-to-one counseling to group counseling with occasional one-to-one sessions. Group members provide a great deal of both support and challenge.
- She begins attending church. In the church she attends a group something like Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Through one of the church groups she meets and develops a friendship with a 50-year-old woman who has "seen a lot of life" herself. She challenged Enid when she began feeling sorry for herself. She also introduced Enid to the world of art.
- She does some volunteer work at an AIDS center. The work challenges her, and there is a great deal of camaraderie among the volunteers.

Since one of Enid's problems is that she is "out of community," these human resources constitute part of the "solution." Rather, all these contacts give her multiple opportunities to get back into community and both give and get support and challenge.

1. Summarize some goal you are pursuing and the action plan you have developed to get you there.
 2. Identify the human resources that are already part of that plan.
 3. Indicate the ways in which people provide support for you as you implement your plan.
 4. Indicate ways in which people challenge you to keep to your plan or even change it when appropriate.
 5. What further support and challenge would help you stick to your program?
 6. Indicate ways of tapping into or developing the people resources needed to provide that support and challenge.
- a. Summarize your goal and action plan.

b. Identify the human resources that are already part of that plan.

c. Indicate the ways in which people might provide further support and challenge for you as you implement your plan.
