

1

Making Sense of What Happened Facilitator Notes

Main Learning Points

This is the first session. Every session except this one will begin with a review of the Main Learning Points from the last session.

Materials Needed to Accompany Participant

Handout: “*My Dreams*” handout

Potential Problem for this Session

Since this is the first session, participants may be anxious and over-stimulated.

Tips for this Session

1. Give each participant a personal set of handouts for this session, with a folder or notebook for saving all *Recovering: Achieving My Life Goals* workbook materials.
2. Announce when you pass out the handouts, “We will be reading and discussing our lesson handouts together. We will take turns reading a few sentences each. It’s okay to say, *I pass,*’ if you don’t want to read aloud.”
3. Stop and discuss frequently, especially where indicated. You will greatly increase participants’ chances of making behavioral changes if you can focus the discussion, allowing the participants to process the information, say it in their own words, link it to personal experiences, and clarify unclear meanings.
4. To stress a main point, say, “*This is important, so let’s write it down on your handout.*” Write it on the handout. Then recite it aloud together to increase learning.

Possible Responses

1. **Immediate reassuring warmth:** Greet every new arrival warmly, with a smile. Say, “*I am so glad you’re here.*” However, never touch or pat any participant without getting his or/her permission first. (Example: later, after a success, you may ask, “*That’s great! May I give you a pat on the back?*”)
2. **Fellowship and belonging:** If it is a group session, help each participant make a nametag or a folded nameplate name card. Introduce them to one another. Say, “*While we are waiting for everyone to arrive, I’d appreciate your help. We will be having introductions, so will you help me by learning three things about the person beside you—his or /her name and nickname, hometown and hobby?*” Write those three things on the board. Then when everyone arrives, begin by focusing on the participants. Have participants introduce the person sitting next to them by giving those three pieces of information.
3. **Moving from concern into enjoyment:** Say, “*We are going to learn helpful information and skills and we’re going to enjoy doing this together.*”
4. **“Pulling the stinger” by giving ownership:** Say, “*This is your class. It is to meet your needs. I am here to help.*”
5. **Deliberate pace:** Counterbalance over-stimulation by slowing down and keeping a smooth, considered pace. Don’t feed the over-stimulation by covering “too much too soon.”
6. **Assigning a special task:** If a participant appears to need extra support or attention, ask him or her to help you. If it is a group session, ask the person to pass out the handouts, or pencils, or write on the board. If it is an individual session, ask the person to help you know him or /her better. Offer a cup of decaffeinated coffee.

Suggestion for Topic Introduction and Relevance to Participants

As this is the first session of the first workbook, take time for introductions—you may want to use an icebreaker by asking them participants to tell where they were born, name or what is their favorite movie, etc.

“All of you have a doctor. One way doctors help us is to explain what our problem is, they give us a diagnosis. When we hear what the diagnosis is, that is often the first step to getting well. Today we will talk about how to understand a diagnosis and also how it feel when you are given a diagnosis.”

“Receiving a diagnosis can sometimes be difficult because it raises questions. When the doctor says you have a certain diagnosis you might have some thoughts, questions and feelings.”

“Were you ever given a diagnosis?”

(encourage responses)

“When you were given a diagnosis, did you find you had questions?”

“How might a group that discusses this be helpful to you?”

“Let’s answer the first six questions on the Topic Assessment before we start, just to see how familiar we are with this topic.”

Topic Assessment Answer Key

1. B 2. A 3. A 4. A

T – topic introduction
R – relevance to participant
I – identify objectives
M – materials for session
M – motivate to use

Topic Assessment



Mark one: Pre Post

Your Score:
+ ____ out of 4

Directions:

1. Read each question carefully.
2. Read every answer before marking one.
3. Mark only one answer to each question.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. When a person gets a serious diagnosis, he or she loses all plans for the future and life will never be the same.

A. True B. False

2. When a person gets a serious diagnosis, he or she can remain hopeful.

A. True B. False

3. “Resources” means people or things that help me.

A. True B. False

4. The human ability to learn gives hope for managing mental illness.

A. True B. False

5. I feel confident that I understand what has happened to me with my illness.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Unsure

6. This information is important for me to know.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Topic Assessment



At the end of the session, answer these questions before turning in this paper:

7. This session helped me.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree
Nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly
Agree

8. What I liked about this session: _____

9. How this session could have been better for me: _____

Making Sense of What Happened

Objectives for this Session

1. Identify how you can use a diagnosis as the first step in getting well.
2. State your readiness to start thinking about and planning how to reach your life goals.



“When I got the diagnosis, I lost myself. The ‘me’ I knew was gone. I did not know what to expect anymore.”

“It shattered my dreams. I lost the plans I had for my future.”

“It was unacceptable to me to have that label, that diagnosis. I refused to accept that it could happen to me. But then it kept happening to me—I kept getting sick. I just want my life back!”

“It was a relief to finally get a diagnosis. Now I knew that other people had this, too, and that medical experts knew about it. It was a relief to know. I thought, ‘Now I will get the help I need for this.’”

No one expects to get a diagnosis of a serious illness. However, sometimes it happens. And the person’s life changes. But **hope remains** and should not be lost. There is the hope of improvement through modern medicine. Medical research gives hope of cure and better treatments. Also there is the hope that comes with the human ability to learn new things. Human beings have an amazing ability to adapt—to learn new skills, new ways to do things, new ways to manage.

Main Learning Point #1

I am hopeful. Modern medicine gives me hope for improvement. Recovery is possible.

Learning from the Experience of Others

Discussion (saying “I pass” is fine): Which of these things gives me the most hope?

Person 1:

“When I got the diagnosis, I lost myself. The ‘me’ I knew was gone. I did not know what to expect anymore.”

Person 2:

“It shattered my dreams. I lost the plans I had for my future.”

Person 3:

“It was unacceptable to me to have that label, that diagnosis. I refused to accept that it could happen to me. But then it kept happening to me—I kept getting sick. I just want my life back!”

Person 4:

“It was a relief to finally get a diagnosis. Now I knew that other people had this, too, and that medical experts knew about it. It was a relief to know. I thought, ‘Now I will get the help I need for this.’”

The four people above were still adjusting to having a mental illness when they made these statements. Eventually three of them began working toward recovery. Because one of these people abused substances, her recovery was delayed, but she continued to work on managing her illness.



Circle your choices: Which of their statements could you have said, based on your experiences?

Person 1

Person 2

Person 3

Person 4

Discussion (It’s okay to say, “I pass.”): My comments about which statement I chose and why:



Circle any words that describe how you feel about your diagnosis now:

Disagree with it Angry/Sad/Depressed Accept it Relieved

Other: _____

Our Purpose: RECOVERY

The fact that you are part of this session is proof that the members of your treatment team believe you are now ready to start, or keep, moving toward recovery. It is time to start thinking about your hopes, dreams, and plans for the future again.



Main Learning Point #2

I am ready to start moving toward recovery.

The purpose of this workbook is to help you start on the road to recovery—to make plans! If the goals you had for your life were shattered when you first became ill, like Person 2 above, it is time to “pick up the pieces.” Step by step, we are going to look at:

1. Basic needs
2. What our choices are
3. What our present skills are
4. What our present resources are (people and things to help us)
5. What our dreams are

Let’s get informed and begin planning how to reach our life goals.

Main Learning Point #3

**I have goals for my life.
I am making plans to reach them.**

Review & Moving Forward



The *main learning points* of this session are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Move Forward – Choose a Personal Practice Option

It's important to practice new knowledge and skills. What will you do between now and the next session? Please choose one option from the list below:

- 1. STUDY.** I am going to reread my handout at least once.
- 2. SHARE.** I will share my handout with someone in my support system. I will ask _____ to read it and talk with me about it.
- 3. DISCUSS.** I have decided to ask _____ what he or she remembers about when I was first diagnosed.
- 4. OTHER:** _____

Take an “Extra Step Forward” (optional)

- 5. ASSESS.** I will fill in the blanks in the “My Dreams” handout and bring it to the next session. (It is your choice whether to share this sheet with others or not.)

If there is time left before the end of the session, you might talk about your personal practice goals. How will you **remember** and **complete** your goal by the next session?

My Dreams



By _____

My dream is to be a (job or occupation) _____

My dream is to live (where? type of housing?) _____

My dream is to share love with these people in my life: _____

My dream is to one day have a _____

