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## Practice Makes Better 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.

### Tips for This Session

1. This workbook is written for family members, caregivers, and friends of people who are recovering from mental illnesses. The information and skills in this workbook will probably also be helpful for direct care staff working with people who have mental illnesses. Mental health professionals might also find this workbook to be a useful reminder for learning or brushing up on crisis management skills.
2. Because this workbook is written from the caregiver's point of view, clients should only be assigned to these sessions if they have a supportive person (family member, friend, caregiver, or supporter) who can attend with them.
3. This workbook is written at a slightly higher cognitive level, so check frequently with participants to ensure they understand the materials. Offer explanations and clarifications as needed.
4. For this workbook, you will not find regular pre- and post-topic questions in each session, but you will find the personal practice options. They have been written to facilitate continued discussion between the participants and their caregivers between sessions. There is a pre- and post-workbook assessment of confidence for both participants and their caregivers.
5. Plan an icebreaker to introduce participants and their guests to each other.

### General Tips

1. Using discussion and sharing thoughts throughout these sessions can add value for the participants and their supportive partners.
2. Everyone remembers much more of what they say themselves and what they do. That is why the deepest learning comes when new material is actively applied to real life situations.

## Suggestion for Topic Introduction and Relevance to Participants

(Start the session with an icebreaker. For example, “Tell us your favorite hobby/favorite band/favorite sport/ favorite movie star.”)

*“If you could magically gain one new skill, without having to learn anything or to practice, what skill would you choose? If you had to learn and practice that skill in order to be really good at it, how long do you think it might take? We often hear the statement, ‘Practice makes perfect.’ What do you think about that?”*

*“Today we are going to begin a workbook, ‘Managing Crisis,’ that will help us learn and practice skills. These skills can be used to interact with people who are getting upset and building up to a crisis.”*

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

# Topic Assessment



Mark one:  Pre  Post

**Directions:**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. I am confident I have good crisis management skills.**

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neither Agree Nor Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree       Unsure

**2. This information is important for me to know.**

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neither Agree Nor Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

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

**3. This session helped me.**

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neither Agree Nor Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

**4. What I liked about this session:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. How this session could have been better for me:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Practice Makes Better

## Objectives for this Session

1. Identify at least 2 benefits of practicing skills.
2. Recognize the advantages of thinking and choosing a response, instead of reacting automatically.

**Practicing skills builds confidence and competence.** Coping with day-to-day problems from mental illness can be very stressful for everyone involved. Keep in mind that other illnesses also bring a lot of stress and sometimes crisis situations. Someone with heart disease or asthma can have a life-threatening crisis that happens suddenly. Knowing how to respond to a crisis is a valuable life skill. The good news is that symptoms of mental illnesses tend to have a gradual build-up before a crisis happens. That gives us a chance to act before things get out of hand.

Practicing specific skills can help build competence and confidence for dealing with a crisis. When you know you have the skills you need, you will be less anxious about dealing with crisis situations. For this workbook, we will be talking about crisis only as it relates to mental illnesses.

### Main Learning Point #1

**Practicing skills builds confidence and competence.**

**Consciously choose and use effective tools.** This workbook offers a collection of practical, effective skills that you can use to manage a crisis. You will be more effective and confident in times of trouble if you begin practicing these skills when everything is going well. As we go through these materials, you can pick out one or two of the tools that seem the most useful to you. Practice until you are comfortable using them. Then master the others, one or two at a time. Consciously choosing and using effective tools will help you gain confidence and competence.

## Practice Makes Better

(continued)



**Discussion tip:** If time permits, share ideas about ways to consciously remember and practice crisis management skills during peaceful times. When life goes along calmly, it is easy to lose focus and forget to practice. What can you do to stay focused and practice on a day-to-day basis? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Main Learning Point #2

**Having effective skills will help you be more prepared to manage problems.**

**New skills take time, patience, and persistence.** Using a new tool may feel uncomfortable for a while. The same is true for the skills in this workbook. That is normal. Practice using them and give yourself plenty of time to get comfortable with them.

### Main Learning Point #3

**New skills take time, patience, and persistence.**

**“I tried that once.”** There will be times you use one of these skills and you will not get the results you had hoped for. You may be tempted to say to yourself, “Well, I tried that once and it did not work.” Do it again because practice and perseverance are necessary for success. If at first you do not succeed, keep practicing. Stay with the program.



**Discussion tip:** In addition to driving a car, or riding a bike, think of at least three other examples of skills that require practice and patience to learn and master. What are these skills? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Practice Makes Better

(continued)



What would happen if people gave up or quit practicing after the first few tries to learn those skills? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**“I could have used a different skill.”** Take time to reflect after you have dealt with a typical daily problem. For a while, you will probably realize you went back to your old habits instead of practicing the new skills you wanted to use. Do not blame yourself or give up. Think about a skill you could have used in that situation. Make a plan to use it at the next opportunity. Be patient and supportive with yourself. Do not give up. Be persistent and stay with the program!

**Practice makes better, not perfect.** Give yourself plenty of time to learn and practice using these crisis management skills. Remind yourself that perfection is a myth. There is no such thing as perfection. It is impossible to be perfect. If you expect to be perfect, you will be disappointed. The most skilled skaters sometimes fall on the ice. The very best bowlers do not throw strikes every time. Top basketball players sometimes miss the hoop. The goal is to practice and get better, and improve your skills, not to become perfect.

**Main Learning Point #4**

**Practice makes better,  
not perfect.**

## Review & Moving Forward



The *main learning points* of this session are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### 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 network. I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ to read it again with me so we can talk about the importance of practicing skills ahead of time.
- 3. PLAN.** I will make a plan for remembering to practice during calm times. I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help me do this.
- 4. OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

Take an *“Extra Step Forward”* (optional)

- 5. WRITE and ANALYZE.** I am going to write my thoughts about some of the crisis situations I have dealt with in the past. I will make note of some of the most important reasons for learning and practicing these skills. I will share this with \_\_\_\_\_.

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?