

Foreword



The decision to commit yourself to the process of self-change is a tough one, and not one to be undertaken lightly. It is easy for all of us to resist thinking about our lives: what is going wrong or how we really feel about ourselves and other people. Being fully honest and self-confronting is extremely painful. It is much more tempting to stay with what is familiar. The problem for you is that the familiar path, the easy path, is a very dangerous one, both for yourself and for other people. If you are really honest, it is easy to see that it does not work to engage in sex with children or with non-consenting adults to escape loneliness, to avoid feelings of powerlessness, or simply to feel alive. It's ultimately a dead end. You now have a chance to get to know yourself much better. You now can find out what is behind your sexual fantasies and offenses and can grasp what things in life are likely to provide you with a genuine shot at happiness and a sense of purpose.

This workbook will help you on the journey to self-understanding and change. As you go through this book, you will learn about the ingredients for a better or a good life, and you will figure out how, with help from others and hard work on your behalf, to achieve these new goals. Make no mistake, it is critical to learn what situational and personal factors are likely to increase the chances for you to re-offend. It is important for you to identify your unique set of risk factors—have no question about that. But it is also important to set personal goals for yourself that aim at happiness and a richer, more fulfilling life. The authors of this workbook believe you can do both of these things at the same time. I agree with them.

I want to congratulate you in taking this step. If you put in the necessary effort, face your fears and doubts, and work hard on acquiring the skills identified in this workbook, I am confident you will be able to live a life that is more meaningful and less harmful to others. It is your choice. This is your chance to make things different, and better.

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Introduction



Welcome!

This workbook is about building a better life and achieving life goals that are common to all human beings. Sexual offenses often involve the pursuit of worthwhile goals, even though sexual abuse as a means of achieving these goals is unacceptable and harmful. In this workbook, you will learn about the relationships between what you want out of life (your personal life goals) and how those goals relate to your offending.

WHAT MAKES THIS WORKBOOK DIFFERENT?

In the past, the focus of most treatment programs has only been about reducing your risk to re-offend. Although that goal is essential, this workbook will help you to reduce and manage your risk as well as help you to have a good life—a satisfying and balanced life, and one in which you are able to meet important goals without offending.

Among other things, this workbook recognizes that people are happiest and most fulfilled when they are working toward goals they can achieve. People tend to have more distress in their lives when their goals are only to avoid bad things. People have less distress when they also actively work toward having a positive life. In this workbook, you will also find an emphasis on enhancing your motivation and your ability to work toward these goals. The goal is to help you to have a better or good life that is satisfying and that does not include offending.

You will notice this workbook requires many written exercises. You will need to work closely with your therapist and others involved in your treatment to fully understand and apply the material ahead. Your therapist will help you to devise the best plan for moving forward. This workbook deliberately involves reviewing material and moving forward one step at a time.

WHAT MAKES TREATMENT WORK?

One thing is for sure: a workbook is only as helpful as the treatment program it is used in, and the work you put into both. It is important for you to work hard to develop the best relationships you can with the people involved in your treatment. Research shows simply having a good working relationship with a therapist improves how well people do in treatment. So you will need to work closely with your therapist and other people on your case management team. If, for some reason, you are unclear about what you are learning or the goals of your treatment program, it is essential that you bring these issues to the attention of others so you can work well together. It is the same with your community support team—your probation or parole officer, your community supports, your family, and any others committed to helping you.

As you work in treatment and through this workbook, you will probably do much better if you take regular breaks to review your accomplishments, no matter how big or small. Ask yourself: How is your life even a little better than it was this time last week? It is easy to list all the negatives. Finding and celebrating the positives is not only good treatment, but a good way to live.

You are in a treatment program because you want to change. While you need to be motivated to do this, many other people are willing to help you. You will also need specific strategies to make changes—motivation by itself is never enough. This workbook provides information to help you to explore and develop new ways of living, to achieve your goals, and to manage factors that might put you at risk to re-offend. You will be most successful at making these changes if you establish a solid foundation of personal motivation for change. If you are reading this workbook and you are in treatment, you have already taken that first important step.