



## Mandated

*Mandate -n. - an official order or commission to do something*

It is a reality that in substance use treatment programs, quite often many program participants are mandated or otherwise coerced, forced, or ordered to attend. For some, even if they are not legally mandated, it may feel the same way if a family member or employer is stipulating or demanding a substance use program be completed. This group exercise is specifically for people in this situation\*

\*If you are participating in this exercise and you are not mandated or otherwise forced into treatment, you can still benefit by trying to think about how you can increase your motivation to succeed in the program through this discussion. For example, if you are in the program on your own volition, think about how you are in a sense “mandating” yourself to complete the program

## Some Paths...

When someone is mandated into a treatment program, there are a number of ways to try and handle the situation. Consider a few:

- ❖ **Biding Time (aka “On Standby”)** – The person who chooses this path is cooperating with the program for now with the eventual goal of going back using once the mandate is over.
  - For example: *“I’ll abstain from substances while I am on probation, but the minute probation is over I am going to enjoy getting high again”*
- ❖ **Partially Progressing** – The person who chooses this path follows the program to some degree but not all the way. This person may choose to hide some of the things that the authorities may not like
  - For example: *“I am going to avoid using substances that can show up in my urine while I am being tested but when the opportunity is there between tests, I’ll sneak a little drug or drink here and there”*
- ❖ **Catch Me if You Can** - The person who chooses this path is making a full investment into the game of trying to keep getting high but not getting caught. The focus is on beating the system
  - For example: *“Probation starts next week so I got my stuff to flush out my system for urine tests, I got some of my sober friend’s urine just in case I need to sneak that in and I got some fake weed which I don’t think they are testing for”*
- ❖ **Calmly Cooperate (aka If you can’t beat ‘em, join em)** – The person who chooses this path recognizes there is no use trying to fight the system when mandated. This person is choosing to give in and instead do their best to make the most out of the program even if they are mandated
  - For example: *“I am not sure whether or not I really need this, but while I am here, I might as try to learn something and see if it helps”*
- ❖ **Self-Motivated (aka I don’t mind the mandate)** – The person who is in this situation may be mandated but on an equal or even stronger level there is a personal desire to change. This person plans to do their best even when the mandate ends because on some level, they know they need it
  - For example: *“There is a chance my court case is going to get dropped but even if it does, I am going to stay and complete this program because I need this for myself”*

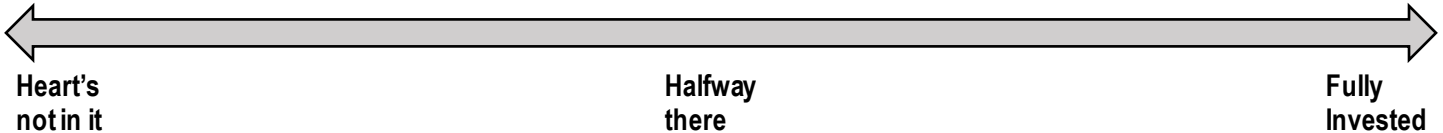
REVIEW: Think to yourself, which of the above honestly describes your situation? Discuss what you are willing to share on this topic. If you have another answer not listed, what is it?



Group Question - How does it feel to be mandated, forced or otherwise directed to complete a program? Be honest with how you think and feel about the situation. (If you are not mandated, how do you think it would feel if you were?)

### Rating Scale Exercise

Directions – On the scale below, as honestly as possible, try to rate about where you are when it comes to your effort to sincerely comply with this program? **Mark where you believe are on the line below**



### Discussion:

1. Where did you rate yourself? (Share with the group and briefly discuss why you marked the line where you did)
2. What do you think it will take to for your line marker to move to the right (in a positive direction) on this rating scale? – In other words, what do you think that you need to make improvement?
3. Pick one person in the room and ask them what they think that you need to do to improve your effort, based on their observations. *(Whomever is answering should try to be constructive, respectful and positive rather than critical or condescending)*
4. What is one thing that you can start doing today (or at least as soon as possible) to try to improve your overall effort in spite of perhaps being mandated. How can you make the best of this situation?

#### **Three Ways to Make the Best of Any Situation**

1. **Accept** – Recognizing that “It is what it is” can save a lot of wasted time and energy trying to fight against reality
2. **Learn** – You don’t have to like something to learn from it. See what you can get from this situation regardless of whether or not you agree with it. There is something to be learned from every situation in life
3. **Flex and Flow** – You can swim against the current in life but that can be very tiring. Sometimes it is better to surrender and see where the proverbial river takes you. In this case, even if you are mandated, why not go with it and see what happens rather than fight it?