



Starting and Staying on a Good Note - This exercise is designed for anyone who is ready to reevaluate where they are in their overall plan for making positive changes related to substance use and any coexisting mental health or other conditions. However, even if you are already on an established path toward positive change and recovery, you can still benefit from this exercise by simply checking in on some key aspects involved in making and sustaining positive changes for growth and progress toward your substance use and mental/emotional life goals.

Directions – As a group review and discuss the following areas that can be essential aspects of “starting and staying on a good note” in the positive change process. The counselor/group leader should decide to do this exercise one of two ways:

- **General Group Discussion** – Depending upon time and overall willingness of group members, it may be easier to just talk through each section with no writing involved. If using telehealth this may be optimal
- **In Depth Write and Review** – For more motivated groups with members who are ready to do some more effort and hard work, have everyone write down their answers to each section as a worksheet. Then discuss completed worksheets as a group

Starting and Staying on a Good Note – Discussion Areas: Parts 1, 2 and 3

Part 1 – Building Momentum

- **Rid Yourself** – To achieve your goals what do you need to remove or get rid of in your life?

- **Keep Close By** – Who and what do you have in your life now that helps you on your path to progress?

- **Add On or In** – What else do you think you could add on or into your life that would help you to keep moving in a positive direction? (For example: Supports, hobbies, coping skills, new job, etc.)

- **To-Do List** – In the next month or two, what are a few essential things on your life “To-Do List”?

- **Not-To-Do List** – What are a few things you are going to do your best NOT to do in the next few months



Part 2 – Sustaining Progress – Keeping Life Moving Forward and Upward

- **Stay Awake and Aware (*Insight*)** – This can be challenging but think of how you are going to keep your goals in front of you, so you don't “fall asleep” on your progress and slip back into older negative ways of thinking (or not thinking clearly because of a lack of self-awareness)
- **Sustaining Forward Motion (*Internal Motivation*)** – Making progress is a process with ups and downs in motivation from day to day. How can you remember every day to keep trying without giving up? How can you keep the fire of motivation burning inside of you on a daily and long- term basis?
- **Push From the Outside (*External Motivation and Support*)** – What is your plan to involve others to help you stay on the right path? Who can help “correct or redirect” you when you start to step out of line?
- **Inspiration** – Who or what inspires you to keep going on a deeper more meaningful level?

Part 3 – Measuring Progress

- How will you know for sure that you are making progress? (Counting days alone is not enough)- How can you measure the **quality** of your progress in addition to quantity?



The Taking the Escalator Method is focused on enhancing and sustaining these three essential qualities in the diagram (Insight, Internal Motivation and External Motivation/Support) to establish and drive the positive changes needed for inspiration and progress toward treatment and overall lifestyle goals