Low Hanging Fruit – *Why not start with the easy stuff?*

Intro – The focus of this activity is for people who are just getting started making changes toward substance use and mental health treatment goals. Start by discussing the following points about low hanging fruit:

- **Low hanging fruit** is a common metaphor that refers to doing the simplest or easiest work first. Just like the phrase sounds, fruit that hangs low on a tree is the easiest to grab with the least effort.

- Especially with more difficult tasks or dealing with a long-term process, it makes sense to start going after low hanging fruit first. Why not try to go after and get what is **within reach** early on?

- Successfully going after low hanging fruit can bring some quick results that can fuel motivation to keep going.

Discuss and make personal application: In your personal situation, how can going after low hanging fruit help you personally to start to achieve all of these things?

- Kickstarting motivation
- Build up and increase early momentum
- Fuels and stimulates important feelings of encouragement and inspiration
- Empowering (Yes - I can do it!)
- Decreases discouragement (Helps avoid the feeling of wanting to give up)

### Identifying Low Hanging Fruit for Your Goals

**Directions:** Start by identifying two or three (or more) areas where you have goals for positive change (Substance Use, Mental Health, Relationship, Social, Employment/Education, Financial, Family, Health, Other).

Under each life area are some examples of low hanging fruit: (Things you can reach for early in the change process to start making progress). Discuss any that you may have already achieved and then choose a few more that you can strive for soon, from the examples provided or come up with your own ideas.

- **Remember,** for something to be considered to be low hanging fruit, it must be **within reach** and does not require a large amount of time or strenuous effort. *What can you start to achieve right away or in the very near future?*

#### Goal areas with Low Hanging Fruit suggestions:

##### Substance Use

- Clear home of booze/drugs/paraphernalia
- Delete dealers contact info from phone
- Sober support- Try to go to a meeting or schedule time with someone who is doing well
- Find and try a sober hobby
- Medication Assisted Treatment (Suboxone, Methadone, Vivitrol etc.)

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?
Mental Health
- See a counselor for individual therapy
- See a prescriber (APN/psychiatrist)
- Practice a basic coping skill every day – Relaxation skills – Self-care – Stress management

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Close Relationships
- Basic conflict resolution skills
- Assertiveness/boundaries (learn to say no)
- Couples/family counseling

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Social Functioning
- Therapy to learn about self, manage anxiety, increase self esteem
- Prescriber – medicine for social anxiety?
- Learn and start to practice basic social skills

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Family
- Schedule family therapy session
- Increase daily effort to openly communicate your feelings with family peacefully

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Education
- Go online and look at application process for school or training program
- Research a course of study that interests you

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Financial
- Work on a budget

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Employment
- Start a job search
- Fill out some applications

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?
Health
- Exercise
- Join a gym
- Research and start a healthy hobby
- Plan a diet

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Basic life improvement – Easy life improvement ideas
- Organize daily structure – Use a daily planner
- Organize home environment and chore schedule

Other? – Identify and Discuss: What other low hanging fruit is within your reach in this area?

Closing Discussion – *Summarize your goals and go for it*

Evaluate your successes: What are some examples of low hanging fruit that you are already doing well with?

Overcome obstacles: Be honest: What are some examples of low hanging fruit that you know that you really should be going after but for some reason you are not?

➢ Consider and discuss some possible causes of not going after low hanging fruit. Do any of these apply in your situation?
  - Procrastination- (I'll do it tomorrow)
  - Just not ready (hesitant, anxious or afraid of change?)
  - Headstrong/Unmotivated (I just don’t want to)
  - Denial/Lack of insight (Deep down I still don’t believe that I need to change)
  - Other?

*Go for it:* What are one or two (or three?) low hanging fruit goals that were discussed in this group you can commit to trying to start today?

1.

2.

3.