








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.