



Staying the Course Toward Success – Know the SIGNS

This exercise is for people who have made some progress and now want to “stay the course” in a positive direction. If we know the signs and take heed of them, we can avoid setbacks and pitfalls. These activities are focused on identifying and discussing some of these important signs

“Like a drive along any long confusing road, make sure to read the signs or you’ll surely get lost”

Opening Exercise – “Then and Now”

Directions – Everyone should consider the following boxes below which compare your thinking, feelings, attitude, motivation, and behaviors in the past (THEN) contrasted with the same areas NOW in your life. After everyone has had a chance to think this over discuss your thoughts on your life THEN and NOW

**Each person can decide the approximate time and age in their life under the heading “THEN”. Choose a time when you may have been struggling - *Examples are provided in [brackets] to help*

THEN	NOW
Thinking <i>[I thought I was invincible like nothing could touch me]</i>	Thinking <i>[Trying to stay positive and care about myself and others]</i>
Feelings <i>[I was angry and stressed most of the time]</i>	Feelings <i>[I’m calmer, more focused, starting to feel happier]</i>
Attitude <i>[I was close-minded to what others had to say to help]</i>	Attitude <i>[Working on being more optimistic, hopeful and open]</i>
Motivation <i>[I didn’t care very much about the future]</i>	Motivation <i>[Building more and more drive toward goals each day]</i>
Behaviors <i>[I was hiding a lot of what I was doing]</i>	Behaviors <i>[Owning my responsibilities, being honest, working hard]</i>



Follow up:

THEN - “I (Wish) I Saw the SIGNS”

At the point in life when you may have been headed in a negative direction what were some of the SIGNS that you can see now? - For example: *“When I was first starting to spiral out of control with drugs, I was associating with some really negative people, and I was really running from a lot of my feelings and problems at that time”*

NOW – “I Know the SIGNS so Now I Can Survive and Thrive”

Once again: When we know the signs that things may be taking a turn for the worse, we can prevent and redirect setbacks before its too late. As a group discuss some of the signs that might show you are veering off course and headed in the wrong direction with your goals for positive change and recovery. [Again, some examples provided]

Thinking

[It's a bad sign when I start thinking that I don't need anyone's support and I start getting overconfident]

Feelings

[If my anxiety, stress, and fears start getting the best of me, it's a bad sign]

Attitude

[When I stop caring it's a sign my attitude is going downhill]

Motivation

[Procrastination and avoidance (“I'll do it tomorrow”) show that I am losing my motivation]

Behaviors

[If I start lying, making excuses, and keeping secrets it can mean I am taking a turn for the worse.]

This can be a useful tool to stay on a positive path. Now that this has been shared with the group, everyone can help support one another. Also, it's a good idea to share this with at least one (or more) people who care about you and who are willing to tell you when some of the SIGNS listed are present.

Knowing the SIGNS can help you reflect and redirect to stay on a course toward success!