

Forward Thinking Evaluation and Assessment Instruments

As established in The Integrated Model of Evidence-based Practices (Crime and Justice Institute and National Institute of Corrections 2004, 2009), evaluation and assessment instruments are primary components of all evidence-based practices. Through the use of these instruments, agencies are able to collect progressive and aggregate data (short-term and long-term) and to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of on-going programs. Additionally, these instruments serve to monitor fidelity and adherence to evidence-supported practices and to provide valuable guidance for adjustments in future case planning and supervision efforts.

Evaluation and assessment instruments created for the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System* have been designed to measure pre and post participation results for both participants and program providers/facilitators. They incorporate using specific instruments to measure participant progress (through self-assessment and provider assessment), and to include instruments to measure provider fidelity and adherence to journal exercises and material (through direct observation by trained observers, participant assessments, and facilitator self-evaluations).

Through the use of the evaluation and assessment instruments, participants will gain valuable insight and feedback into their on-going progress during their journaling experiences. For program facilitators and agencies, the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System* evaluation and assessment instruments will provide far-reaching data from which quantitative and qualitative measures of the journaling process can be assessed. These measures include changes in staff competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes), on-going case planning considerations (use of sanctions vs. rewards, adjustments to dosage, intensity, duration, etc.), future training needs, and quality of relationships with participants.

The following instructions are set forth to assist in the measurement and analysis of data collected in evaluation and assessment instruments for the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling®* series.

Instructions for Use

I. Definitions

Unique Client ID: This number is either self-assigned by the participant, assigned by the facilitator or other unique identifiers such as case numbers, birthdays or randomly chosen numbers can be used. Be sure the digit is at least 6 digits long and is unique to that individual. Also be sure that this ID number matches for the pre-test, post-test and course evaluation. Essentially this is the participant's name, but in a way that is kept confidential.

Facilitator: This is the name of the individual facilitating the sessions.

Organization: The supervising agency, county and/or district in which the participant is probated under or where services are being delivered.

Assessment Type: Administer any and all pre-tests before participants begin any work in their Interactive Journals. Administer the post-tests as participants complete those specific Interactive Journals. Once participants have completed the program (all topic areas), administer the Course Evaluation. Because the pre-test and the post-test is the same form, indicate which assessment type is being measured at the top of the form.

Session Type: This is how each page is being facilitated for the participant(s). If the Journals are facilitated between a mix of group and one-to-one sessions, please respond based on how the majority of your sessions are facilitated.

Date Completed: The date the assessment was completed.

II. Types of Forms

Pre- and Post-tests

Overall, there are three types of forms. The two found below are the pre- and post-test forms. These are indicated at the top of each form.

1. Facilitator Assessment of Participant – These forms are to be completed by an observing supervisor, facilitator or collaboratively by the participant and the facilitator. This measures changes in attitudes, knowledge and skills in the specific topic areas of the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System*. Complete any and all pre-test assessments before beginning any Interactive Journals in the program. It is recommended that any and all post-test assessments be conducted once all Interactive Journals in the program have been completed.
2. Participant Self-evaluation – These forms are to be completed by the participant and are self-evaluations which measure changes in attitudes, knowledge and skills in the specific topic areas of the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System*. Complete any and all pre-test assessments before beginning any Interactive Journals in the program. It is recommended that any and all post-test assessments be conducted once all Interactive Journals in the program have been completed.

Evaluations

The third type of form is the facilitator evaluations. These are to be completed at the end of the program.

3. Evaluation of Facilitator – These evaluations can be completed by the participant (Participant Evaluation of Facilitator) and/or by a supervisor (Supervisor Evaluation of Facilitator) and/or by the facilitator (Facilitator Self-evaluation). These forms measure how well facilitators adhere to the rules of *Interactive Journaling*® and fidelity to program delivery. These should be administered at the end of the program once all Interactive Journals and sessions have been completed.

III. Scoring

Coding

In all three types of forms, the user has a selection between *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* for each question. For scoring, each of these responses is translated or coded to a number.

Coding:

Strongly Agree = 1

Agree = 2

Disagree = 3

Strongly Disagree = 4

Most questions are phrased such that *Strongly Agree* is the most desirable response (i.e. The participant takes full responsibility for the choices that brought him or her to this program).

Few questions, however are phrased such that *Strongly Disagree* is the most desirable response (i.e. The participant places more importance on the payoffs than costs of their illegal/irresponsible behavior). In order to properly align the scores, these questions will be reverse coded.

Reverse Coding:

Strongly Agree = 4

Agree = 3

Disagree = 2

Strongly Disagree = 1

To score, simply circle the number that best represents your level of agreement to each statement. Reverse coded items are already incorporated into the *Forward Thinking Outcome Tools*.

Types of items: Attitudes, Knowledge and Skills (these apply to the pre- and post-tests only)

Attitudes: These items measure changes in the attitudes and intentions related to the specific topic areas addressed in the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System*. For example, “The participant is willing to work on his or her top three issues” and “The participant views this program as an opportunity for behavior change.”

Knowledge: These items measure changes in factual knowledge related to the specific topic areas addressed in the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System*. For example, “The participant understands the connection between behaviors and consequences” and “The participant understands the characteristics of an unhealthy relationship.”

Skills: These items measure changes in behaviors and skills related to the specific topic areas addressed in the *Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling® System*. For example, “The participant appropriately uses self-reward to reinforce behavior” and “The participant frequently uses assertive communication.”

Calculating Averages

Calculate the average pre-test score and the average post-test score for each of the three categories of items (attitudes, knowledge and skills). Find the average by adding all the items within a category, then divide by the total number of questions in that category. In addition to each category, it is also recommended that the scorer tabulate the total average as well. The forms have been set up so that the scorer can tabulate the averages directly on the form.

IV. Qualitatively Interpreting Facilitator Assessments and Participant Evaluations

To interpret knowledge, attitude and skill scores - qualitative comparisons can be made from pre-test to post-test using the following definitions.

Attitudes

Scores of 1. The participant is fully aware of the necessity of behavior change and places high importance on the steps associated with it. The participant intends to make positive changes associated with the specific Journal topic being measured and does so with high confidence.

Scores of 2. The participant is somewhat aware of the necessity of behavior change and for the most part is interested in the steps associated with it. The

participant may intend to make positive changes associated with the specific Journal topic being measured but may need additional work increasing the importance and self-confidence needed to attain and maintain positive changes.

Scores of 3. If the participant recognizes the need for behavior change, the level of willingness, importance or confidence to carry out actions is very small and/or inconsistent. Those who score a three have high levels of resistance or deny that change is needed. If the participant is not aware of the necessity of behavior change, further probing may be required to determine the level of denial.

Scores of 4. The participant fully lacks awareness of the necessity of behavior change or has absolutely no intentions to engage in the treatment program.

Knowledge

Scores of 1. The participant understands the knowledge and concepts presented. The participant has internalized this knowledge and has developed an understanding of how it applies to his or her own personal circumstances/challenges.

Scores of 2. The participant for the most part understands the knowledge and concepts presented. There may be inconsistent or incomplete internalization of this information. These participants may need additional help in recognizing the relevance of the knowledge in his or her daily life.

Scores of 3. The participant for the most part does not understand the knowledge and concepts presented. There is little to no internalization of the information presented. The participant sees no relevance to his or her daily life.

Scores of 4. The participant does not understand any knowledge or concepts presented. The participant places no importance on the knowledge presented and denies it's relevance to his or her daily life.

Skills

Scores of 1. The participant is maintaining the positive behaviors associated with this topic area. Participants are consistently able to recognize, understand and confidently apply pro-social learned skills.

Scores of 2. Further practice is desirable, however participants possess and have begun demonstrating the skills necessary for maintaining positive behavior changes. It is encouraged that participants continue to practice and make adjustments to skill implementation.

Scores of 3. Further development is required. Participants have not demonstrated the skills necessary for making positive behavior changes or do so with minimal effort. Participants have shown consistent difficulty with implementing pro-social behaviors. Participants have little to no behavior changes to speak of.

Scores of 4. There are significant skill deficits preventing participants from making positive behavior changes. There is a major inability implement pro-social behaviors.

Comparing Facilitator Assessments and Participant Self-evaluations

Although the Facilitator Assessment of Participant and the Participant Self-evaluation should be scored separately, these forms have been aligned question by question to give the scorer the option to validate responses. If the facilitator's response and the participant's response match or are similar, this is a good indicator of an accurate response from both parties.

If the facilitator's response and the participant's response are largely dissimilar, consensus may need to be reached to resolve any discrepancy. A third party supervisor/observer may also be beneficial to help the participant and facilitator address any differences for a specific item. If the facilitator and participant are answering honestly, there should be very few discrepant items.

Essentially, this alignment is a way to ensure that participant's (and facilitators) are answering truthfully on their assessments and evaluations.

V. Interpreting Facilitator Evaluations

1	2	3	4
Skill evidenced at superior level	Skill evidenced at above average level	Skill evidenced at below average level	Skill level undermines program integrity

1 – Skill evidenced at superior level

The facilitator consistently demonstrates the skill to a high standard throughout the session. A score of 1 represents highly proficient performance with the facilitator demonstrating superior group facilitation skills.

2 – Skill evidenced at above average level

Facilitators show skilled performance in session delivery, showing very minor areas for improvement. A score of 2 represents competent performance. Areas for improvement will be very minor and based on enhancing skills that are already apparent and delivered to good effect in the group process.

2.5 – Skill evidenced at average level

The skill is demonstrated consistent with curriculum, behavior change approach and *Interactive Journaling*® model with minor areas for improvement. A score of 2.5 indicates that the facilitator runs the session as intended but can be improved.

Examples:

- a. Participants are generally encouraged to make links between journaling exercises and personal issues/goals but may miss some opportunities.
- b. Facilitators demonstrate adequate listening and motivational skills, adequate use of open-ended questions, but occasionally fail to do so.
- c. Reinforcement/verbal rewards are generally given when appropriate, but on occasions facilitators may fail to comment on important contributions or learning.
- d. Consistent use of facilitator guide and *Interactive Journaling*® strategies.

3 – Skill evidenced at below average level

The skill is delivered with some adherence to the facilitator guide, interactive journal facilitation strategies or group work/individual skills, but with significant areas for improvement.

Examples:

- a. The session objectives are covered, but some exercises/activities are shortened (or deleted) for no apparent reason.
- b. Facilitators show some use of an open questioning style, but predominantly use closed-ended questions.
- c. Facilitators rely primarily on lecture style; participants not regularly engaged in discussion or interaction. Use of *Interactive Journaling*® strategies: read, respond, share, and receive feedback is inconsistent.
- d. If co-facilitated, facilitators work collaboratively during the session, but show poor co-working often.

4 - Skill level undermines program integrity

The facilitator has major skill deficiencies to the extent that the integrity of the curriculum and *Interactive Journaling*® model is seriously undermined.

Examples:

- a. Inaccurate or misleading explanations of exercises are given indicating that the facilitator does not understand the underlying principles of behavior change.
- b. Facilitators may model offense-supporting, anti-social or discriminatory attitudes.
- c. Facilitators show persistent competency deficits throughout the sessions tending to use a lecturing style; fails to actively engage participants or encourage them to explore issues for themselves; consistently use closed questions.
- d. Failure to regularly use *Interactive Journaling*® strategies of: read, respond, share, and receive feedback; does not use facilitator guide.
- e. Poor skills are persistently demonstrated in the dynamics between the facilitator and the individual (individual application) or between the facilitator and the group. For example engaging in long, open-discussions with individual participants on topics unrelated to goals and objectives of the program.

Subsequent action taken based on a facilitators' score is up to their supervisor and/or their programs' institutional policy and procedure. Generally, scores equal to or less than two should be debriefed by identifying the items that were successfully addressed in the program. Then, the facilitator's performance should be recognized and positively reinforced. Scores equal to or greater than three should be debriefed by identifying the specific items that were successfully addressed and the items that require improvement. Identified deficits should be addressed through a collaborative action plan to enhance the facilitator's performance.