

Making a plan

Posted by MenachemGYE - 23 Jan 2020 16:16

This thread will discuss how to create a *plan of action* often referred to as a "Change Plan". All comment are welcome! You're also welcome to post a copy of your own plan if you'd like to get feedback on it.

Making a **personal** plan is one of the most critical things we need to do to change an addictive behavior.

Project MATCH began in 1989 in the United States and was sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). The project was an 8-year, multi site, \$27-million investigation that studied which types of alcoholics respond best to which forms of treatment.

The motivational enhancement therapy developed for Project MATCH included the following template for a plan:

- The changes I want to make are:
- The most important reasons why I want to make these changes are:
- The steps I plan to take in changing are:
- The ways other people can help me are: (include the names of some people and the possible ways each one can help)
- I will know if my plan is working if:
- Some things that could interfere with my plan

Here are some details that explain each of the areas. It's quoted from <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/projectmatch/match02.pdf> p. 34-36 with a few minor changes.

The changes I want to make are...

In what ways or areas do you want to make a change? Be specific. (e.g. Do you want to stop both porn and masturbation, or do you want to focus now on only one of these behaviors.)

The most important reasons why I want to make these changes are... What are the likely consequences of action and inaction? Which motivations for change seem most compelling?

The steps I plan to take in changing are...

How do you plan to achieve the goals? How could the desired change be accomplished? Within the general plan and strategies described, what are some specific, concrete first steps that you can take? When, where, and how will these steps be taken?

This usually will focus on 2 areas: [Dealing with urges](#), and [Stimulus Control](#) (avoiding triggers and blocking access)

The ways other people can help me are...

In what ways could other people help the client in taking these steps toward change? How will the you arrange for such support?

I will know that my plan is working if...

What do you hope will happen as a result of this change plan? What benefits could be expected from this change?

Some things that could interfere with my plan are...

Try to anticipate situations or changes that could undermine the plan. What could go wrong? How could you stick with the plan despite these problems or setbacks?

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Re: Making a plan

Posted by MenachemGYE - 23 Jan 2020 16:21

SMART Recovery suggests a similar structure for a change plan. You can find a copy here: https://smartrecovery.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Change_Plan_Worksheet-1.pdf

It's essentially the same as the one I just posted, but it includes 2 additional questions:

1. How important is it to me to make these changes? (1-10 scale)
2. How confident am I that I can make these changes? (1-10 scale)

These 2 questions are based on Motivational Interviewing, a certain type of counseling method.

Once you respond to these questions, you can brainstorm or discuss with a partner/mentor why the numbers are not higher or lower. This type of discussion can do wonders. Try it!

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Re: Making a plan

Posted by MenachemGYE - 23 Jan 2020 16:27

Here's another version of a **Change Plan** that I've shared with some GYE members. You can download it here: <https://guardyoureyes.com/images/stories/gye-change-plan.pdf>

This version of the change plan emphasizes that the plan needs to focus on 2 areas:

1. The first is *avoiding triggers*. That means planning to make some changes to your environment so that there is less *nisyonos* (temptations) and triggering situations, for example, by installing a filter, you won't see triggering images as often, and if you try to watch porn, the filter will block the site.
2. The second area is *dealing with urges* without acting on them ("Urge Management"). You might be holding an unfiltered device in your hand, but with good urge management techniques you'll be able to overcome the urge to browse inappropriate websites.

Why do you need both?

Filters on their own are only part of the solution. What happens if you have access to a device without a filter, or if you know how to bypassing your own filter? Also controlling your environment is tricky for masturbation, since you can't filter yourself...

On the other hand, urge management alone is not enough either. The habit of visiting certain

sites might be so ingrained, that it is done almost automatically without thinking, and before you know it, the site is open... But when you control your environment, such surprise situations become uncommon. Even the weakest filter will give you a short delay before you can access a porn site, just enough time to catch yourself and use an urge management technique to deal with the urge.

By including both of these areas in your plan, you're increasing the chances that your plan will be successful.

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Re: Making a plan

Posted by DavidT - 23 Jan 2020 17:01

The first step of a successful battle plan is figuring out our upcoming tests and preparing for them. We must work on ourselves *before we are challenged* to stop our rational minds from falling asleep when our desires start up. By training ourselves to be alert, we will maintain our focus and be ready for any stirrings of desire. We will not lose ourselves, so we will stay awake and keep our ability to make the right choice. We will also be able to use techniques during the challenge that will help us win.

Another vital part of the battle plan is ***developing the desire and excitement to defeat the yetzer hara***. We can do this by contemplating how much we gain when we exercise self-control. This is the most important weapon for battling the yetzer hara in any area, not just desire.

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Re: Making a plan

Posted by MenachemGYE - 23 Jan 2020 22:17

Another vital part of the battle plan is ***developing the desire and excitement to defeat the yetzer hara***. We can do this by contemplating how much we gain when we exercise self-control. This is the most important weapon for battling the yetzer hara in any area, not just desire.

I would consider "developing desire" (also known as building motivation) to be a *prerequisite* for making a plan. I know that might sounds like semantics, but it's really a deep

distinction. More on that soon in a separate thread.

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