

NAME: Values Web

INTENTION: This exercise is helpful to differentiate value-directed actions from goal-directed actions, illustrating the benefit this has in promoting flexibility and workability in pursuing change.

MATERIALS:

1. Paper
2. Drawing Materials

SCRIPT: (Written instructions for Group Leader)

Values are different than goals in some important ways. Goals are a linear, step by step progression towards a specific outcome. Values define a general direction or intention which might be approached in a wide variety of ways. Goals tend to be success or failure in their orientation. I take steps intended to lead to an outcome or I do not (I exercise 3 days a week or I don't). Value directed action is intended to lead to a more flexible approach. If my value is related to improving my health, I might move in that direction by working out 3 days a week or by eating an apple. Moving in the direction of my values opens the door to a broad array of behavioral options.

An effective approach to change is finding a way to remain aware of my value and take actions in the direction of that value, without judging the adequacy of the action. It doesn't matter if I workout, or ride my bike, or meditate, or eat an apple, or cut back on sugar... these are all actions in the direction of my value. They all count! Over time they all play a part in moving me towards living the life I most want to live.

Visual reminders of your values and of choices (big and small) that can move you closer to the life you want to live can be very useful. We often focus on the urgent rather than the important. In other words we get caught up in things that distress us and lose touch with the things that matter most.

The exercise today is to choose a value you would like to move towards (This activity can be used in collaboration with other activities that help people identify values). Write or draw a symbol of that value in the center (grey) circle. See if you can identify some big actions, ones that might require considerable effort or commitment, and put those in surrounding big circles. Place actions that might take a medium amount of effort in medium sized circles and little actions in the little circles.

Adapt the drawing as needed.

DISCUSSION: Possible questions or topics to address

- Invite group to share their drawings
- Discuss values that are important to group members
- Discuss how people might use these drawings to promote committed actions
- Discuss how this approach to change might be similar or different than ways people have approached change in the past
- Discuss acceptance of changing context (motivation, energy, health, willingness, opportunity) and the need for a variety of behavioral choices (big and small)

