

# CHAPTER 2

## PLAYING DOWNWARD SPIRAL: THE RULES

Chapter 2 provides the rules and Chapter 3 provides the setup procedure for the *Full Gameboard* version of ***Downward Spiral***. This is the way we recommend you set up the game. The *Full Gameboard* version has the following benefits:

- ◆ Allows smoother, faster play
- ◆ Helps players keep track of what happens in the game (they keep their cards)
- ◆ Greater interaction among participants
- ◆ Makes it easier to see who is “winning” and “losing”
- ◆ More fun and engaging

Chapter 4 provides supplementary rules and the setup procedure that will be necessary to play the *By the Book* version (a way of playing the game that requires fewer resources to set up).

### Game Description

***Downward Spiral*** takes players on a journey that is plagued with pitfalls due to continued drug use. Health problems, loss of social support, loss of self-esteem, financial difficulties, and jail terms are all part of the game. Factual information supports negative consequences whenever possible. Quotes also are used to capture the flavor of certain consequences. In ***Downward Spiral***, luck and the decisions players make determine how long it takes before they succumb to the mounting dangers of continued drug abuse. Players roll dice that dictate their movement around the board. Based on where they land, players draw different cards that reflect drug-related consequences. Points lost are recorded on their score sheets.

The objective is to survive while retaining some points, and by avoiding death and jail. To win, players must outlast their peers or recover.

#### Objective

- Outlast other players or recover

#### Role:

- You play the role of someone who decides to continue abusing drugs (alcohol is a drug)

#### Ways You Lose:

- Landing on a death square
- Going to jail 4 times
- Losing all your health points

## Rules

- ◆ Select one player to be the reader/banker for the game. He or she will read the consequence cards, keep track of the money, and referee the game.
- ◆ Have each player choose a playing piece, and roll one die to determine who plays first. The player with the highest score rolls first. Play continues in a clockwise direction.
- ◆ Each player receives \$200 at the start of the game and each time he or she passes the \$ square.
- ◆ The player rolls the 3 dice and moves the number of spaces equal to their total.
- ◆ Draw a card with the same icon (color) as the square you land on.
- ◆ The table leader reads the card to everyone, then gives it to you.
- ◆ Keep track of your score on your score sheet.

## Game Squares and Cards

The type of square that a player lands on determines what type of card he or she receives. There are **Consequence** cards (Health, Social Support, Self-Concept, Financial/Legal, and Chance), an **Opportunity** card, and **Outcome** cards (Death and Recovery). The reader/banker will read the appropriate card to the player and then give the player the card to keep face down in front of them.

Before you read the section that follows, you may want to examine the gameboard (Appendix F) to familiarize yourself with the different types of consequence squares.

## Consequence Squares and Cards

Consequence squares and cards have the following symbols associated with them:

### Health



An example is the fourth square from the start position on the gameboard. A player that landed on this square would receive a health card, and then indicate on their score sheet the corresponding number of **emotions/sanity, physical, or judgement** points lost.

### Social Support



An example is the first square from the start position. Social support consequences affect one's **significant other, family, or friends**.

### Self-Concept



An example is the thirteenth square from the start position. Self-concept consequences affect one's **self-esteem, personal accomplishments, or self-confidence**.

## Financial/Legal



An example is the second square from the start position. Financial/legal consequences may involve fines and/or jail time. Players who are sent to jail miss their next turn, but continue play after the next turn on the square that sent them to jail. Players may need to sell possessions or ask their significant other, family, or friends to help them out (but it will cost them social support points to do so).

## Chance



An example is the tenth square from the start position. Both good or bad things can occur to a player who receives a chance card.

## Outcome Squares and Cards

### Death



These are located toward the center of the gameboard. A person who lands on a death square receives a death card and is automatically removed from the game.

### Treatment Recovery



These are located toward the center of the gameboard. A person who lands on a treatment recovery square receives the treatment recovery card and wins the game. Play continues until all other players recover or die. It is possible to have more than one “winner.”

### Opportunity Squares



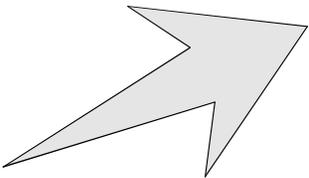
An example is the twenty-third square from the start position. Players who land on an opportunity square can earn back up to 4 points for each consequence, fact, or quote they can remember (the opportunity card included in Appendix A provides a summary of the following rules for game players). Importantly, consequences remembered have to be ones that happened to **another** player. When this player answers incorrectly, cannot remember anything new, or has earned all the points he or she can, the person to his or her left gets a chance. Other players can earn up to 2 points for remembering a new consequence, fact, or quote. After everyone has had a chance to earn points, play continues as normal to the left of the person who landed on the opportunity square.

### Money Squares



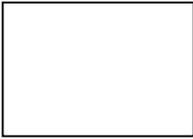
An example is to the left of the fifth square from the start position. Players start the game with a job, and every time they land on or pass a money square they receive a \$200 wage (for as long as they have a job). Players can earn back a job they lost by rolling 3 of a kind (the number on all 3 dice are the same) at any point during the game. If a player has less than 3 dice, (players lose a die each time they lose all of their points for one **Health** dimension, such as *emotions/sanity*), they may not earn back their job.

### Transport Squares



An example is the twelfth square from the start position. Transport squares either send you further in or back out of the spiral (usually further in). Players must land on a transport square for it to have any effect. Players advance to the square indicated by the arrow. This square is a “safe” square (nothing bad happens).

### Safe Squares.



An example is the third square from the start position. Nothing bad happens to the player who lands on a safe square (note that there are fewer safe squares the further into the spiral you get). A player stays on a safe square until his or her next turn. Play continues as usual with the player to this person's left.

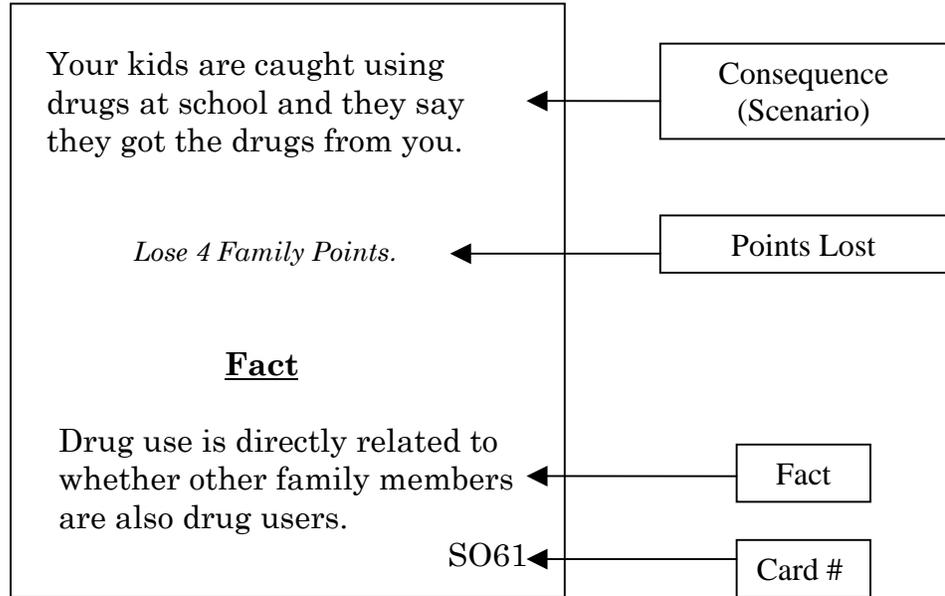
## Personal Assets Score Sheet (See Appendix B)

Players keep track of their current standing on their **Personal Assets Score Sheet**. The score sheet has 15 points for every aspect of **Health**, **Social Support**, and **Self-concept**. When a player loses points in any of these areas, he or she places as many X's in the squares for that dimension as are points lost (starting from the 1's box and moving right for each dimension). When a player has an X in all 15 boxes for a given dimension, he or she loses that dimension.

Check This Out!!



For example, say a player received the following card:



The reader/banker would read the consequence and then tell how many points were lost (in this case 4 family points). The player would then mark off 4 points on their score sheet (see below).

**Social**

**Support**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Significant Other															
Family	X	X	X	X											
Friends															

If a person had already lost most or all of their **family** points, then they would choose whether to lose **significant other** or **friends** points. The reader/banker next reads the fact and then hands the card to the player.

## A Matter of Money (See Appendix C)

Players start the game with \$200 in their bank account and receive \$200 each time they pass the squares with the \$ sign on them (you do not have to land on the squares, you only have to pass them). If players lose their job, they no longer collect a \$200 dollar wage. However, a player that rolls 3 of a kind (all three dice are the same) will earn their job back. A person with less than 3 dice cannot earn their job back (players lose a die each time they lose all of their points for one **Health** dimension, such as *emotions/sanity*).

**Selling Possessions.** If players do not have enough money in their bank account to pay the bank for fines or other consequences involving money, they may attempt to sell any possessions they have indicated on the *personal assets* score sheet to raise money. To sell possessions, players should first announce which item they intend to sell, and then roll one die. If they roll a 2, 4, or 6, they can sell the item and receive its full value from the bank. If they roll a 1, 3, or 5, that item is repossessed and they receive no money back even if the item was worth more than the fine. The “repossession,” however, still covers the player’s debt, as long as the debt does not exceed the full value of the possession.

### **EXAMPLE:**

You must pay a \$2,000 dollar fine, you may decide to sell your car (worth \$5,000). If you roll a 2, 4, or 6 then you receive the difference in cash (i.e., \$3,000). If you roll a 1, 3, or 5 then the fine is removed but you receive no money from the bank. You cannot switch items once you have announced which item you intend to sell, so choose wisely. Cross off any possessions that you no longer have from your score sheet (Appendix C).

If you still cannot meet your financial obligation, you may have the opportunity to get friends, family, or significant other to bail you out of the situation, but it will cost you **Social Support** points. If you still cannot meet your financial obligation you go directly to jail. If you go to jail more than four times, you are sentenced to life in prison and are removed from the game.

# Note This!!

Many of the instructions are included on the game cards themselves. In fact, whatever is written on a game card takes precedence over the rules included here in the manual.

## When in doubt, democracy rules!!





## Ways You Lose/Horrible Consequences



- ◆ If you lose all of your **Health** points (dice) you are terminated!!  
(1 die = **physical**; 1 die = **emotions/sanity**; 1 die = **thinking judgment**)
- ◆ If you land on a **Death** square, you face horrible consequences and are automatically removed from the game!!
- ◆ If you go to jail more than 4 times, you are sent to life in prison and are removed from the game!!
- ◆ Anytime you cannot meet a financial obligation, and you do not have an option or ability to use social support points to get out of the bind, you go directly to jail!!
- ◆ If you lose all of your **Self-concept** points, all **Health** points lost are doubled!!



## Treatment Recovery



- ◆ If you are lucky enough to land on the  square, you recover while in treatment and win the game. You leave the game with your remaining possessions, but still retain all the damage to your **Health, Social Support, and Self-concept**. If there are two or more remaining players, they continue to play until there is one sole survivor. The sole survivor also *wins*.

## **Post-Session Discussion**

We recommend that you engage players in a discussion after playing the game to synthesize and share any insights that occurred during game play. Before clear winners are established, we often have players at each table engage in a discussion to determine *who won and why*. It is interesting to see what types of criteria players will use to determine a winner. For example, some players may think that money is the deciding factor, whereas others may think that having friends and family or their health is more important. It is important that players look at their score sheet and cards and consider the true impact that these would have had on their lives. Then, players at each table can share their criteria for who won and why. This can be followed by a group discussion about any other important ideas the game has stimulated. These discussions allow the counselor to see how individuals are processing game-related information, and to intervene and highlight faulty logic or rationalizations.

### **Other Potential Discussion Topics**

- ◆ How closely did the game resemble your real life?  
(Players could complete a score sheet to reflect their real life experiences for point of comparison)
- ◆ Which quotes or facts affected you?
- ◆ How realistic is the game?  
(Could it really happen?)