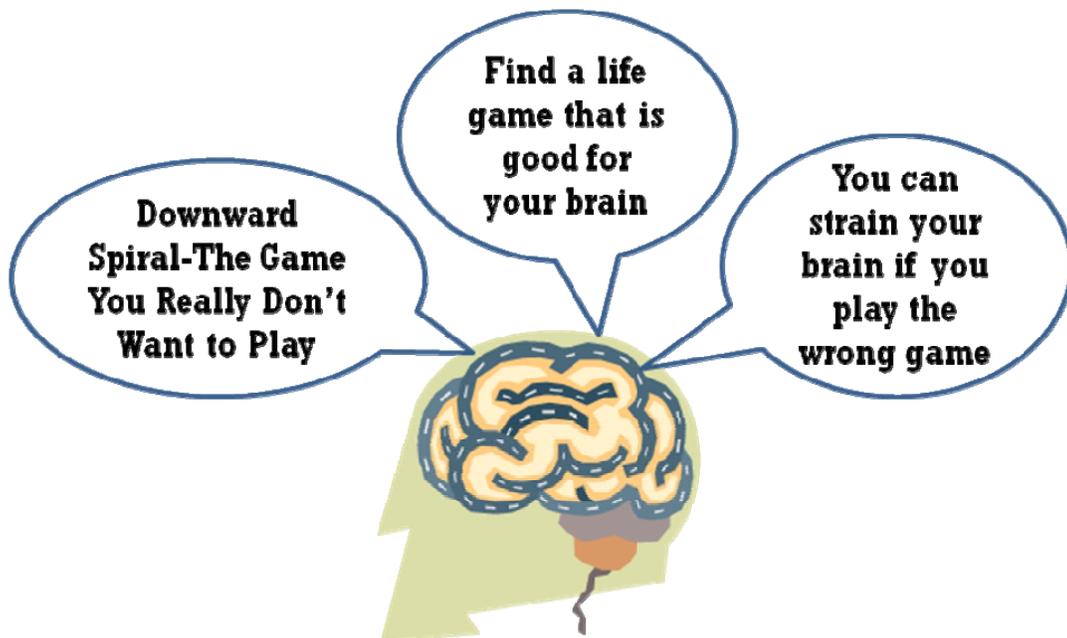


Chapter 5

# Downward Spiral

## Part 1

***THINKING ABOUT  
WHAT'S REAL***



## ***Part One: Thinking About What's Real***

### **Leader Notes for Module**

#### **As general objectives for this module, participants will:**

- Play an experiential game on the perils of drug abuse
- Explore consequences that follow drug life styles
- Gain perspectives from "senior" peers in the program

### **Rationale**

The *Downward Spiral* game used in this session has been widely implemented in drug treatment programs around the country. Using a monopoly-like game to engage adolescents' interest, players move across a board fraught with realistic scenarios depicting personal, social, financial, and health consequences associated with drug abuse. The game is facilitated by senior peers who take a role in engaging participants in the game and leading discussions using "reflection cards" to help picture a future that is not a "downward spiral."

### **Activities**

Quick "Check In"	10 minutes
Game Introduction Senior peers	5 minutes
Downward Spiral Game (Peer led game session)	50 minutes
Reflection Cards (Process activity)	15 minutes
Wrap Up/Thinking assignment	5 minutes

### **Materials needed for this session**



#### ***Opening Board***

Copy the brain map on the front cover of this session on erasable board or flip chart so participants can read it as they come in

#### ***Senior Peers***

Make arrangements for your senior peer facilitators to be available for this session  
Note: If your group is small, you may want to arrange for senior peers to join in playing the game

#### ***Downward Spiral Game and materials***

Downward Spiral "Quick Rules" (page 92)  
One or two *Downward Spiral* game sets (each game allows for 6 players)  
Refer to "Downward Spiral Set-up" (page 93) for set up needs

#### ***Mapping materials***

Make sure you have plenty of pencils, pens, markers, colored map pencils, crayons, and mapping paper for the group

#### ***TRIP Session Evaluation***

Provide copies of the Session Evaluation (page 94)

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### **STEP ONE**

**Welcome participants to the group. Take a minute to acknowledge any new members with a quick introduction:**

*If this is your first TRIP group - Welcome! In this group, we take some time to think about thinking. You heard right - it's all about learning more about the thinking process. It will be a little different from some of the other groups you attend here, but every session is different, so you won't have any trouble joining in.*

**Go around the room quickly and ask group members to introduce themselves to any new members.**

**Ask participants:**

*What has been on your mind the last few days?  
What have you found yourself really thinking about?*

**Use erasable board or flip chart to make a map of participants' thoughts or issues that they volunteer.**

**Summarize the check-in activity:**

*As always, it looks like there has been a whole lot of thinking going on over the last few days. Brains have been active. I have made a map or layout of your thoughts or the ideas you all have been having. We'll leave these posted here, and see what kind of influence today's activities might have on everyone's thinking before we leave.*

### **STEP TWO**

**Introduce "senior peers" that will help facilitate the game and discussion:**

*Today is what we call Game Day - so to allow more time for playing we aren't starting with a thinking trick today. You are going to play a game, but it is hard to say it's a "fun" game. It's called Downward Spiral. We have a few of your senior peers joining us for the game. These folks are farther along in the program and in their recoveries and can add some*

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*perspective to the game. They will be the "game masters" and keep the game flowing along.*

**Allow "senior peers" to introduce themselves and say a few words about themselves.**

### **STEP THREE**

*Leader note: If you are able to have extra tables set up with Downward Spiral game laid out, this would be great. Participants could move chairs and be ready to play. Otherwise, you will need to take a moment to set up the game.*

**Use Downward Spiral "Quick Rules" (page 92) to briefly explain the rules and process of the game (a copy also is contained in the game set box).**

*Here's how you play in a nutshell. You will each choose a playing piece and then use the dice to move around the board. You will land on different colored spaces. Depending on what it is, you will draw a card and do what it says. You will have a Score Sheet for keeping up with your money and possessions - which will be a challenge...because this is the Downward Spiral.*

*Remember, in the game, you play the part of someone who continues to abuse drugs and alcohol, even when there is everything to lose.*

*Now I'm going to turn things over to the game masters. They will explain the rules in more detail and get everyone playing. Good luck!*

**Turn the further explanation of the rules and facilitation of the game over to the senior peers. Monitor senior peers as they facilitate the playing of the game. Allow about 40-45 minutes of play, depending on group size. (Refer to the *Peer Facilitation Handbook* in the Appendix)**

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### **STEP FOUR**

**Reassemble group and briefly process participants' experiences with game. Encourage senior peers to participate by asking for their observations, as well, using some of the following questions:**

*What did you think of the game?*

*What did you like best? Least?*

*What scenario was most realistic to you?*

*What scenario scared you the most?*

*Who do you think "won" the game? What do you base that on?*

*Was there a "biggest loser" in the game? What's that based on?*

**Ask senior peers to pass out a "Reflection Card" to each player and to take one for themselves. Allow a minute for participants to reflect:**

*Take a minute to read over the scenario on your card and to think hard about the reflection question that is asked. Imagine that the person in the card is you. Let yourself think about your strengths and possibilities when you aren't burdened with all the hassles of getting high.*

*Once you've had a chance to think and reflect, we'll go around the room and talk about our cards and our thoughts.*

**Go around the room and allow players and peers to share their scenarios and their thoughts about a more positive future. Use probes, as needed to encourage participants to share their reflections.**

**Summarize the game and discussion:**

*The Downward Spiral game was designed to give players a feel for what happens when drugs and alcohol hijack the brain. Thinking suffers, and when thinking suffers, people can make really stupid decisions and choices. The games give plenty of examples. It truly is a Downward Spiral.*

*And we've also had a chance to reflect on the "upward spiral" - the way thinking and behaving can change once people get a handle on recovery.*

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*Getting high can make people feel lousy, in part, because it gets in the way of taking care of the little things that can make all the difference. Sometimes when people are high they forget about all the strengths and possibilities that they possess.*

### **STEP FIVE**

**Summarize the Downward Spiral game and briefly review the opening map reflecting things participants stated they had been thinking about.**

*You were joined today by senior peers to experience a game called Downward Spiral. Also titled - The Game You Don't Want to Play.*

**Ask for discussion:**    *What did you learn from Downward Spiral?  
How is it a useful "brain tool"?  
How did it help your thinking?*

*Before we break for the day, let's review some of the things you were thinking about when you first arrived (**review each point on the map**).*

**Ask:** *What is something from the game that you could use to help with what was on your mind when group started?*

*So here is your take away question to think about:*

**Ask:**    *What did this game teach you about how you are going to avoid your own personal downward spiral?*

**Distribute copies of the *Session Evaluation* (page 94) and ask participants to complete and hand in before leaving.**

**Thank members for their participation and encourage them to attend their next TRIP group.**

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# **QUICK RULES TO PLAYING.... DOWNWARD SPIRAL**

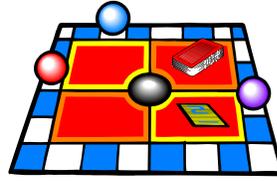
You play the role of someone who decides to continue abusing drugs (alcohol is a drug). Your goal is to outlast the other players or recover.

- Get a game piece, a score sheet, a copy of quick rules to playing, a pencil, and \$200 from the Reader/Banker.
- Roll all three dice and move your game piece.
- Draw a card with the same icon/color as the square you land on (see below for details).
- Read the card out loud or hand it to the Reader/Banker to read to everyone, and then he/she gives it to you. Keep each card (except the Opportunity Card) until the end of the game.
- Keep track of your score, possessions, and jail time on your score sheet.

Land on this 	→	Get a Health Card	Land on this 	→	Get an Opportunity Card (see additional rules if necessary)
Land on this 	→	Get a Self-Concept Card	Land on this 	→	Get a Recovery Card (you win)
Land on this 	→	Get a Chance Card	Land on this 	→	Get a Death Card (you lose)
Land on this 	→	Get a Social Card	Land on this 	→	Safe Square (roll again)
Land on this 	→	Get a Financial/ Legal Card	Land on, or pass this 	→	Collect \$200
			Land on this 	→	Move up or down one level in the spiral. This is also a Safe Square (roll again)

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### ***Downward Spiral Set-Up***

(6 players per game set)

Unroll board and lay out with weights (books) to help flatten. You may want to mount your board(s) on cardboard or foamboard using a spray adhesive

#### ***When ready to play:***

Set out decks of cards by color for easy reach by players

Remove "Reflection Cards" (Hot Pink) and keep separate. These are used at the end of the game for processing

Set up bank, with money arranged for easy access by players

Unpack dice and playing pieces

Make a copy of Downward Spiral Score Sheet for each player

Make a copy of Downward Spiral Quick Rules for each player

Have pencils available for Score Sheets (there may be a need to erase)

# ***DOWNWARD SPIRAL PART 1***

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## **Session Evaluation** ***Downward Spiral Part 1***

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please take a minute to give us some feedback about how you liked this session.

1. Use one word to describe your feelings about today's class \_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the most important thing you learned today?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate today's class? (Circle your rating.)

<u>01</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>09</u>	<u>10</u>
Poor				Pretty Good					Excellent

4. Do you have any suggestions to help make this class better?