

This manual was developed as part of NIDA Grant DA06162,  
*Improving Drug Abuse Treatment for AIDS-Risk Reduction (DATAR)*.

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# 10 Graduation and Beyond

## Participants will:

Discuss recovery progress and future goals

Make plans for continued group support

Receive recognition for participation in ***Straight Ahead***

## Procedure

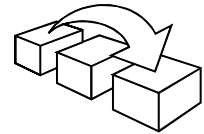
| Step | Segment Name  | Time       |
|------|---|------------|
| 1    | Welcome and overview of final session structure           | 5 minutes  |
| 2    | Open discussion: <b><i>Back to the Future Letters</i></b> | 45 minutes |
| 3    | Optional discussion: Arrangements for future meetings     | 15 minutes |
| 4    | Closure and evaluation                                    | 10 minutes |
| 5    | Recognition and “graduation”                              | 45 minutes |

## Session Length

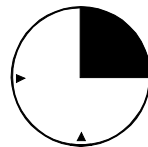
**2 hours  
(120 minutes)**

The purpose of the last session is to provide closure and give positive recognition to participants. Ideally, if group members are not scheduled to enter a structured aftercare program following the completion of ***Straight Ahead***, they should be given the option to continue meeting on a weekly basis as a support group. Obviously, your agency’s staffing requirements and policies should be taken into consideration before encouraging formation of an on-site support group.

## Objectives



## Session Structure



## NOTE!

## Group Leader Materials and Preparation



### ◆ Materials:

Flip chart or chalkboard  
Markers or chalk  
Pencils and paper for participants



### ◆ Prepare before class:

**BACK TO THE  
FUTURE LETTERS**  
Reuse the flip chart  
that was prepared  
for Session 9:

#### BACK TO THE FUTURE

Use the following questions to guide you:

- ☺ What do you think your older, wiser self would suggest to you to help you reach your recovery goals?
- ☺ What would he/she ask you to remember?
- ☺ What would your older, wiser self tell you to keep on doing more of?
- ☺ What would he/she say to comfort you and give you encouragement?



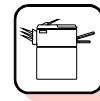
Graduation/recognition certificates for participants  
(sample provided on p. 182)



Arrangements for refreshments, invited guests, etc.

◆ **Make copies:**

*Client Survey*/posttest (optional) (p. 185 — Appendix)  
*Session Ten Evaluation* (p. 183)



**Procedure  
Steps**



## Step 1

### Welcome and overview of final session structure

◆ **Welcome participants** as they arrive.

◆ **If guests have been invited and arrive early**, provide a waiting area where they can relax while the “business” part of the meeting is handled.

◆ **Explain that the first part of the session will be used to talk about the “homework” assignment, and personal goals for the future.** Mention that the group will also be asked to briefly discuss the possibility of continuing to meet as a support group (if this is an acceptable option for your agency). During the last part of the session, invited guests will be welcomed, and the “graduation” party will proceed with refreshments and certificates of recognition.

## Step 2

### Open discussion: *Back to the Future Letters*

◆ **Begin by asking participants to share their “homework” assignment letters.** Work with one person at a time, and provide encouragement and praise as participants reveal their





### Process Questions

insights and hopes for the future. **Have the four suggested assignment questions listed on a flip chart**, and ask any participants who were unable to write letters to simply share their answers to the questions. When everyone has had a turn, use some of the following questions to process the exercise:

What did you learn about yourself from this assignment?

What would your “older, wiser self” say is different about you since you started this program?

How have you made that happen?

Who else has noticed this difference?

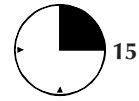
How has it affected your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_?

How will you help yourself remember the advice of your “older, wiser self?”

◆ **Thank participants for their input.** Provide closure by complimenting the participants’ wisdom and common sense as revealed through the “older, wiser self.” Encourage participants to continue writing letters to themselves from their “older, wiser selves” in the future. This exercise can be a powerful tool for getting in touch with one’s sense of inner wisdom, hope, and positive expectation for the future.

## Step 3

### Optional discussion: Arrangements for future meetings



If ***Straight Ahead*** has been given as a transition module and participants now are expected to enter a structured aftercare program, use this time to provide them with information about that program.

**NOTE!**

◆ **If agency policy allows, help participants reach a consensus about continuing to meet as an ongoing support group.** As the discussion unfolds, take notes on the decisions reached for use at the first group meeting. **Tailor the discussion to conform to agency policy.** In other words, if ongoing meetings must be led by staff or a 12-Step facilitator, keep these requirements in mind when offering options to participants. If members are interested in continuing the group, address the following issues:

- ❖ Where and when will meeting be held, and for how long?

Meet on site, weekly, twice a week, monthly?

Meet on site weekly to attend off-site meeting (12-Step, etc.)?

Meet off site, weekly, twice a week, monthly?

- ❖ How will the meetings be organized?

Topic-driven discussions?

Informal, open discussions?

On-site 12-Step group? Off-site 12-Step attendance?

For recreational or volunteer activities?

Other ideas?

***Issues for continuing the group***

***Issues for  
continuing the  
group  
(continued)***

- ❖ How will membership be decided?

Open or closed membership?  
Can significant others attend?

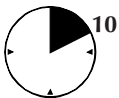
- ❖ How will group leadership be structured?

Staff leadership?  
Staff and group member leadership?  
Autonomous group?  
Outside leadership (i.e., 12-Step facilitator)?

- ❖ What group rules are necessary?

Sobriety?  
Attendance?  
Participation?  
Confidentiality?  
Other rules?

◆ **If a consensus for continued meetings is reached, invite participants to return next week for further planning.** This may include deciding such things as meeting days and times, transportation issues, child care needs, refreshments, picking a community 12-Step group or other support group to join, etc. Ask for a few group members to volunteer to contact absent members to encourage them to attend the planning session.

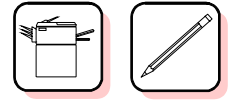


## Step 4

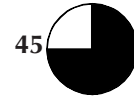
### Closure and evaluation

◆ **Thank group members for their participation in the *Straight Ahead* program.** Announce the graduation party will begin after a little “paperwork” is taken care of.

◆ **Ask each participant to complete a *Session Ten Evaluation*.** This is also the time to ask participants to complete the *Client Survey*/posttest if your program requires it.



## Step 5



### Recognition and “graduation”

◆ **Welcome participants’ guests and make introductions.** Ideally, this portion of the session will provide an opportunity for informal socializing and some type of recognition for participants. Consider some of the following suggestions to help make the closure of *Straight Ahead* special:

- Special refreshments (decorated cake, snacks, etc.)
- A brunch, luncheon, or other meal
- Child care services for those attending
- Certificates of recognition (sample provided)
- Games, entertainment, small door prizes
- A field trip to follow session — ball game, museum, zoo
- A picnic to follow session — softball, Frisbee, volleyball





# Certificate of Recognition



*Be It Known That*

\_\_\_\_\_

*has successfully completed \_\_\_\_\_ hours of*

*life skills training entitled "STRAIGHT AHEAD"*

*Developed by DATAR Project, Institute of Behavioral Research,*

*Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas*

**AWARDED** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Training Coordinator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Program Director*

EVALUATION OF THE *STRAIGHT AHEAD* PROGRAM

SESSION 10

THIS BOX IS TO BE COMPLETED BY DATA COORDINATOR:

[FORM 79; CARD 01]

|                      |   |  |                             |
|----------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| SITE #  __   __   __ | CLIENT ID#  __   __   __   __   __   __ | DATE:  __   __      __   __      __   __ | COUNSELOR ID#  __   __   __ |
| [5-6]                | [7-12]                                  | MO DAY YR [13-18]                        | [19-20]                     |

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer these questions based on your opinions of the *Straight Ahead* program.

| READ EACH ITEM AND CIRCLE ANSWER.   | DISAGREE |       |          | AGREE    |       |          |        |
|---|----------|-------|----------|----------|-------|----------|--------|
|   | STRONGLY | . . . | SLIGHTLY | SLIGHTLY | . . . | STRONGLY |        |
| 1. I enjoyed attending the <i>Straight Ahead</i> group meetings. ....               | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [21] |
| 2. The material presented in these meetings was helpful. ....                       | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 3. I have been using some of the ideas I learned in <i>Straight Ahead</i> . ....    | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [23] |
| 4. My family relationships have improved because of this group. ....                | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 5. I have made new friends who don't use drugs since the group started. ....        | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [25] |
| 6. I have joined a 12-Step group as a result of what I learned here. ....           | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 7. I am doing better at dealing with my feelings because of this group. ....        | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [27] |
| 8. I have used mapping on my own to help me think about solutions. ....             | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 9. I shared what I learned in <i>Straight Ahead</i> with my spouse or partner. .... | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [29] |
| 10. I intend to keep on using assertive communication skills. ....                  | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 11. The open discussions at the beginning of each meeting were helpful. ....        | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [31] |
| 12. I intend to continue using my recovery journal. ....                            | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 13. I plan to attend AA or NA meetings more frequently. ....                        | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [33] |
| 14. The group leader was knowledgeable and helpful. ....                            | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7      |
| 15. I would recommend the <i>Straight Ahead</i> group to my friends. ....           | 1        | 2     | 3        | 4        | 5     | 6        | 7 [35] |

