**Personal Change Plan**

**We all have habits/patterns in our life that if changed for the better, would contribute to greater health and wellness.**

It is NORMAL, however, for us to be ambivalent about such change. Quitting bad habits and starting good ones is hard! The best Change Plans are realistic ones. They often involve stopping old behaviors or starting new behaviors SLOWLY. So be realistic and kind to yourself about what you plan to do. Just THINKING about making a change is the first step in every successful plan. Once you do start, expect for motivation to waiver at times. Also be prepared for slips and relapses. Know that even small changes can reduce harm and/or improve health and well-being.

**What is the health behavior that you would like to improve?**

* Alcohol use
* Marijuana use
* Tobacco use
* Physical exercise
* Nutrition
* Sleep
* Social connection
* Spiritual connection
* Social media/mobile phone usage
* Online gaming
* Shopping/financial responsibility
* Other (any other harmful or annoying habit you would like to CUT DOWN or STOP, such as nail biting) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* Other (any other healthy behavior you would like to INCREASE or START, such as skin care or dental care) \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTE: Quitting verses “cutting down.”** Sometimes, but not always, quitting a harmful behavior COMPLETELY is the best plan. This is most common after a person has already had some success in cutting down on the behavior, or when there have suddenly been some serious negative consequences for a person’s current lifestyle. For example: you have just been diagnosed with diabetes, so you are highly motivated to change your diet.

Quitting without substituting another satisfying healthy behavior, however, can set you up for failure. If you were not getting something out of your current behavior, you wouldn’t be doing it. So, if you plan on quitting something altogether, it is recommended that you find something else that satisfies a similar need. For example: you quit drinking Mountain Dew and substitute with something like V-8 Fusion or V-8 Splash. Another example: you quit Facebook and Twitter, substituting with Instagram only. Yet another example: quit drinking shots of hard liquor and drink beer/wine instead. Or, how about you quit drinking altogether, but get counseling for stress management.

So remember, you don’t have to change any behavior until YOU are ready. Be honest. If you are not really ready to give up something, DON’T. Try cutting down or choosing another area of your life to change.

**PART I**

**Use the following outline to create a personal change plan for the behavior you indicated above.**

1. **First, what is the most important reason for making this change?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **How would your life look different in 6 months if you were successful in making this change? Try to be specific.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **How IMPORTANT is it for you to make this change? Circle a number on the scale below:**

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Not at all important Somewhat important Very Important

1. **List one thing that would increase your MOTIVATION for making this change**.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**PART II**

**In order to make a behavioral change, you need to have a very specific plan: when, where, how, with whom, etc… Please fill in the sections below to indicate the amount, frequency, route, mix and situation you will engage in the new behavior. In addition, you will be asked to list a harm reduction strategy for the worst possible consequence if you don’t change.**

1. **Amount.** How MUCH do you want to engage in the new behavior (drink/smoke/eat/sleep/shop…)? Your target should be a specific quantity.

For example: number of beers, number of calories, hours of sleep, dollars spent, etc… \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Frequency.** How OFTEN will you engage in the behavior? Your target should be a unit of time such as minutes per day, hours per week, days per month, etc… \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Route.** How will you engage in this behavior?This is sometimes tricky to understand, and doesn’t apply to all behaviors. But imagine that there are multiple ways that you can do the same behavior. For example: you can drink vodka in a shot, OR, you can drink it with a mixer; you can smoke marijuana or consume it in an edible. Another example would be: you can check Facebook on your mobile device OR you can check it on your laptop. Or these examples: you can cook your own healthy food at home OR you can get a meal plan and eat healthy at the ETSU Marketplace; or you can use your own exercise equipment at home OR you can go to the CPA.

Sometimes one “route” is more habit-forming or harmful that another; or sometimes one “route” is more easy and convenient than another. Choosing the right “route” can make breaking or starting a new habit easier. What route will you choose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Behavior mix.** How can you eliminate, change or add another behavior that is paired with or associated with the behavioral change you want to make? Doing this often increases success. This is particularly relevant to substance misuse. For example: you always smoke weed when you have nothing to do on the weekend, so you start planning regular weekend activities instead. Or, drinking beer makes you crave a cigarette, so you drink wine instead. But this also applies to bad habits as well. For example: you always spend too much money when you shop with a certain friend, so you go with another friend instead. Another way of pairing two behaviors would be: always wear or bring your workout clothes to your late Tuesday/Thursday class and go to the CPA right afterwards. (BTW, research shows that just putting on workout clothes can increase your motivation!) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Environment/Situation.** How can you avoid situations that increase the unhealthy behavioral choice; and/or how can you intentionally put yourself in situations that increase the new healthy behavioral choice? This is similar to the above, but focuses particularly on location/situation. For example: you tend to drink too much at parties when you stay more than 2 hours, so you delay your arrival instead. Another example: you always overeat at Cookout, so you go somewhere else instead. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Harm reduction.** How can you avoid the worst possible consequences of your current unhealthy behavior? This is always a good place to start with change! For example: call a cab when you overdrink. Another example: don’t engage in sexual activity while intoxicated. Yet another example: don’t schedule an online-gaming binge the night before a test. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**PART III**

1. **Summarize your plan for change by writing a SMART goal.** SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. For example: I will go to the 5PM Yoga class at the CPA twice per week with my roommate for the next 6 weeks in a row.*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

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1. **What information/resources/help from others do you need to execute this plan?** For example: get an appointment with a nutritionist at the Student Health Clinic. Another example: check out the CPA website for the fitness-class schedule.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **List the FIRST three steps necessary to starting your plan of change.**
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5. **How CONFIDENT are you in succeeding with this change? Circle a number on the scale below:**

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Not at all confident Somewhat competent Very competent

1. **List one thing that would increase your CONFIDENCE in making this change?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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1. **What do you plan to do now?** Remember it is NORMAL for a person to be ambivalent about change…to waiver in motivation…to stop and start a new behavior several times before succeeding. Be realistic and kind to yourself about what you plan to do. Just THINKING about making a change is the first step in every successful plan. Briefly discuss your readiness to change below. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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