



Great Lakes  
**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

**TASC**

Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

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## Lack of time perspective

March 21, 2012



Center for  
**HEALTH & JUSTICE**  
at TASC



# About the Presentation

Thinking errors in criminals continue to expand into almost all areas of their lives and they regularly fail to deter their distorted thinking which results in regular violence and harm of others. These thinking errors are similar for the addicted offender as well, leading to substance use and criminal activity. This webinar is an overview of the criminal and addictive thinking patterns and their similarities, tactics used by the addicted offender in an effort to mask their criminogenic needs, and "the lack of time perspective" which prevents them from learning from their experiences.

# Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Identify how many patterns are identical between criminal and addictive thinking
- Define at least three criminal thinking patterns; and;
- Identify at least three characteristics of the "lack of time perspective" and why it's so important

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

Samuel Yochelson and Stanton Samenow are the originators of the Criminal Thinking approach to change.

- Samuel Yochelson began his exploration into the criminal mind in 1961 at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C.
- Joined in 1970 by Stanton E. Samenow a recent graduate student lured into the world of research by Yochelson
- This sixteen year research study would prove to be the longest, in-depth clinical research-treatment study of offenders that has been conducted in North America

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

## **The Result: The Criminal Personality Theory and publication of three books;**

- Criminal Personality – A Profile for Change (1971)
- The Criminal Personality: The Change Process (1977)
- The Criminal Personality: The Drug User (1986)

After the death of his partner and mentor, Samenow entered private practice in 1978, continuing to evaluate and treat adult and juvenile offenders. Samenow continued to build upon and revise the Criminal Personality Theory, releasing several more books in the next three decades.

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

- During the 1960's, strain theory dominated the world of criminology with researchers and scientists attributing crime to an individual's environment and their reaction to said environment.
- 16 years of research, Yochelson & Samenow concluded it is not sociological variables that cause an individual to become a criminal – rather it is the result of faulty thinking patterns.
- The Criminal Personality Theory birthed a program designed to alter thinking errors of criminals.

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

## **Goals of the program**

1. Understand the personality makeup of the criminal;
2. To establish techniques that could be utilized to alter personality disorders which produce crime;
3. To encourage an understanding of legal responsibility; and,
4. To establish techniques that could be effective in preventing criminal behavior.

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

## Things common to all criminals:

- The criminal is very fearful;
- The criminal must cut off both internal and external deterrents in order to commit crime;
- The criminal is a predator who pursues power and control;
- The criminal demands to be identified as the “**unique number one person**” in all that he does, having never learned to fully function independent of others;



# General Background of Criminal Thinking

## Things common to all criminals:

- The criminal feels “**put down**” and becomes angry when he does not get his own way, making him more relentless in pursuit of his goals using stealth or force to accomplish them; and,
- Except in the planning of a crime, the criminal “**fails to think long range**”
- Same thinking errors in both drug-using and non-drug using criminals alike

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

- Cognitive Behavioral Programs centered around criminal and addictive thinking
- Assessment tools developed to determine risk
- Widely used with justice involved addicts
- Better outcomes when used with this population
- Changed the focus of treatment for this population

**WHY?**

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking Are Linked

## **Criminal**

### **Thinking Patterns**

- victim stance
- “good person” stance
- “unique person” stance
- fear of exposure
- lack-of-time perspective
- selective effort
- use of power to control
- seek excitement first
- **ownership stance**

## **Addictive**

### **Thinking Patterns**

- self-pity stance
- “good person” stance
- “unique person” stance
- fear of exposure
- lack-of-time perspective
- selective effort
- use of deceit to control
- seek pleasure first
- **ownership stance**

# General Background of Criminal Thinking

- There are six (6) thinking errors that are identical in both the criminal and addictive thinking patterns.
- The good person, unique person, fear of exposure, selective effort, and ownership thinking patterns are “self views” or perceptions of one’s situation.
- They all have powerful influences on how these individuals make decisions or take action.
- But, there is one thinking pattern that trumps them all and often not apparent until after the action is taken.

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

## Lack-of-time perspective

**“Hindsight is 20-20”**



**“It’s better to stay out of trouble, than to get out of trouble”**

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

## Lack-of-time perspective characteristics

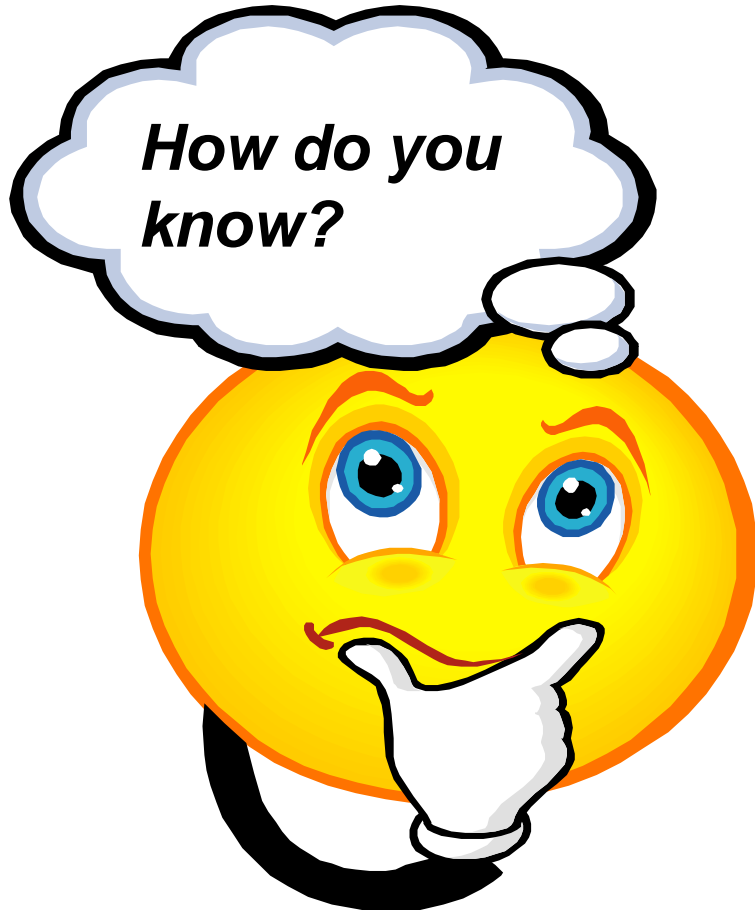
1. You do not learn from past experiences or plan for the future.
2. You see behaviors as isolated events.
3. Your philosophy is “I want it, and I want it now.
4. You expect to be a big success with little or no effort.
5. You make choices based on what you **want** to be true, rather than what **is** true.

## Criminal & Addictive Thinking

When you adopt this addictive thinking pattern, getting high is the **most** important thing in your life; you live only in the present when you are high and only in the near future (“How can I get more soon?”) when you are not high.

***Lack-of-time perspective in addictive thinking helps you do that.***

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking



- ***“I didn’t break any rules, but I know I’m going to be revoked”***
- ***“I don’t know, it just happened”***
- ***“I’ve got plenty of time”***



## Criminal & Addictive Thinking

Failing to learn from experience is one of the key components of the thinking error, **lack of time perspective**. If we repeatedly fail to learn from experience we will continually spend our time in 'quadrant one' of Stephen Covey's time management matrix

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not Urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>	<p><b>Q1</b> Emergencies, crisis, deadlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Running from the law</li><li>•Not meeting obligations</li><li>•Missed appt. with PO</li></ul>	<p><b>Q2</b> Reading something about recovery, relapse prevention, or making amends.</p>
<b>Not Important</b>	<p><b>Q3</b> needing to have a cigarette, interruptions from a child, etc.</p>	<p><b>Q4</b> day dreaming, random web surfing, play video games.</p>

## Criminal & Addictive Thinking

- A crisis oriented person will spend most of their time in quadrants one and three.
- A person not actively pursuing goals or changing distorted thinking patterns can spend a significant amount of time in quadrant four doing many mindless things.
- A person actively attempting to change the bad habits and errors in their thinking will purposely make time for activities that are very important, but not necessarily urgent.

## Criminal & Addictive Thinking

For the ex-offender it is critical that they develop a clear sense of time perspective so they don't repeat the same pattern of thinking and behavior that contributed to their incarceration and victimization of others.

***Quadrant two is the heart of recovery and thinking change!***



**Learned from mistakes**



# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

So how does that work?  
What could I do to start?



# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<p>Q1 Emergencies, crisis, deadlines.</p> <p>•Not meeting obligations</p> <p>10%</p>	<p>Q2 Reading something about recovery, relapse prevention, going to meetings, volunteering, etc.</p> <p>60%</p>
Not Important	<p>Q3 needing to have a cigarette, interruptions from a child, etc.</p> <p>30%</p>	<p>Q4 day dreaming, random web surfing, play video games.</p> <p>20%</p>

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

- A natural deterrent to lack of time perspective is goal orientation.
- Developing goals in various areas of our lives will help us combat lack of time perspective.
- Developing a goal in a single area will often help turn the tide and create a ripple effect of other positive actions.

*For example, instead of setting a goal of getting a job, staying sober and paying off all fines, it would be better to set smaller step objectives to achieve those goals.*



# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

**For the job goal, identify smaller steps that will help result in getting a job.**

1. Meet with a career counselor, probation agent and/or mentor to identify strengths, weaknesses, potential contacts, job goals, references, etc.
2. Create a resume
3. Identify 5 primary sources for locating jobs
4. Send out 5 resumes and/or make 5 inquiries a week
5. Find out about 2 volunteer opportunities that would help me in my chosen field
6. Ask a friend for an introduction to someone who can tell me about jobs in a given field.

# Criminal & Addictive Thinking

## Goals need to be SMART

S = specific

M = measurable

A = action-oriented

R = realistic

T = time-bound

# SUMMARY

- Criminal and Addictive Thinking share six identical stances or “self views” (perceptions).
- “Lack of time perspective” prevents learning from mistakes or planning for the future.
- Unless a person can overcome this thinking error, they will remain in crisis and likely repeat behaviors.
- A natural deterrent to this thinking error is goal orientation (SMART).
- The ideal place to be is working on “what’s important but not urgent” because you have a plan.

# Next Presentation

## **Criminal and Addictive Thinking Part 2**

**April 4, 2012 1:00 – 3:00 PM CDT**

This workshop continues to examine criminal thinking and the similarities between offenders and individuals with substance use disorders. We will explore 10 common thinking errors and their relationship to criminal and drug seeking behaviors.

- Identify styles at three 3 styles of criminal thinking.
- Contrast and compare the thought processes of criminal justice offenders with those of individuals with substance use disorders.
- Describe strategies for effectively working with individuals whose cognition and behavior is influenced by criminal thinking.