



Handling Frustration Workshop Guide

The goals and objectives below are meant to be a guide for individuals or groups working with the Fair Shake Reentry Packet; please adjust according to your group or individual needs.

Goals and Objectives: The goals and objectives of this section are to provide insights and ideas that may help frustrated people understand themselves and other frustrated people, learn some tips to cope with feeling frustrated, and create options to relieve frustration. The learners will have an understanding why it is important to try to manage frustration.

Possible discussion points:

We have provided the following discussion points as a guide. Use them if you wish or create your own.

- Please share your thoughts about the text provided in the Reentry Packet by Scott Young.
- How do you see frustration? (Similarly? Differently?)
- What types of things frustrate you? Can you recognize them?
- Is frustration energy-draining? If so, how could this affect your transition? What happens to you when your energy stores are depleted?
- Why are frustrating problems more energy-consuming than normal tasks?
- Consider some frustrating situations. Do you have a personal strategy such as walking away? Imagining yourself sitting on the edge of a calm lake? Using meditation, breathing or yoga to lift yourself out of the situation for a moment to get perspective?

Quotes:

Quotes are Fire Starters. They are thought-provoking and effective for making a point or setting the stage for an open discussion. We suggest asking the group if they can provide a quote for dealing with frustration and discuss it.

Example:

To conquer frustration, one must remain intensely focused on the outcome, not the obstacles.
- T.F. Hodge

Handling Frustration Worksheet

An important key to handling frustration is identifying our triggers! Frustration can impact every facet of life and if it's not recognized or handled appropriately, it can have potentially dangerous results. When you start feeling like it's getting harder to breathe and the walls are getting a little closer, if possible, take a moment to calm yourself and reflect before continuing on your task.

Practice a brief moment of deep breathing. Sometimes taking a few deep breaths and releasing them slowly, while focusing on nothing...or a calming image...is enough to keep the frustration



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from taking a turn toward anger. Can you see identify the trigger for your frustration? Your friends, children, spouses, family members and roommates can help you see your triggers! The table below is a tool to help you recognize your triggers and frustration levels.

Directions: Write down the frustrations you experience throughout the week in the appropriate box, according to the level of frustration and the day of the week. Think about how you handled the frustration and circle whether the outcome was effective or ineffective. We have provided an example to get you started. This will enable you to become proactive in creating effective ways to deal with your frustration.

	Minor Irritation	Irritating but Manageable	Extremely Irritating
Examples:	Someone scuffed my new shoes accidentally Effective / Ineffective	My neighbor was playing loud music while I studied Effective / Ineffective	Someone spoke to me in a disrespectful tone Effective / Ineffective
Monday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective
Tuesday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective
Wednesday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective
Thursday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective
Friday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective
Saturday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective
Sunday	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective	Effective / Ineffective

The table will become a helpful tool for you to recognize your triggers. Once you see yourself more clearly, you may be able to tailor your responses to the outcomes you desire. The more honest and specific you are with yourself, the better your overall chances are of channeling that energy into something positive.



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A helpful excerpt by Eric Ravenscraft.

Use the ABCD Method to Deal with Frustration

Location: <http://lifehacker.com/use-the-abcd-method-to-deal-with-frustration-1695919429>

We get frustrated by a lot of things. Some make sense like our car breaking down. Others, less so, like everyday traffic. To deal with everyday frustrations like these, employ the ABCD method.

The problem with many of our frustrations is that we irrationally expect that totally normal things won't happen to *us*. The phone call we weren't expecting. The person in front of us at the checkout line who's writing a *check*. How dare they? The problem isn't really those other people. It's our expectations. You can adjust your expectation with what notable psychotherapist and researcher Albert Ellis calls the ABCD method. As tips blog Barking Up the Wrong Tree explains:

A is Activating Event. *Bumper-to-bumper traffic.*

B is your beliefs. Often they're irrational. *"This shouldn't happen to me."* Well, guess what? It is happening.

C is emotional consequences of A and B. You get angry, frustrated or depressed. You can't change A very often, but you can change B. And changing B will change C.

D: Dispute your irrational thoughts and beliefs. *"Wait a second. When did the universe guarantee me a trouble-free existence? It didn't. Traffic has happened before. It will happen again. And I will survive."* Look for the beliefs that hold the words "should", "ought" or "must." Don't 'should' on yourself! Try to replace irrational thoughts and fears with a calmer, more reasonable assessment that can shift your mood.

Not every problem you ever have is going to be something you can make disappear with a simple attitude adjustment. Losing your job or an unexpected medical expense is always gonna cause some stress. But you can save yourself some trouble by not already being worked up over the little things. The less you internalize the trivial problems that you can already expect, the more prepared you'll be to handle the big problems.

- What do you think of the chart, or the ABCD method, or of trying to get 'out of your head' for a moment?
- Have you tried any of these methods and if so, can you share your experience with the group?
- What kinds of feelings can be experienced when we are frustrated?
- Describe the meaning of: *Don't make a mountain out a mole hill...* and how it relates to this topic.



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Terrell's Frustration Story

Since my release to the halfway house, I've had problems getting my state Identification.

It started when I left the facility that I was released from without the original copy of my birth certificate, although I had had an original sent into the facility. *(Be sure to check your documents!)*

No problem, I figured; I'd just order another, so I ordered my birth certificate to be shipped overnight. 'Overnight' turned into over a week, so I called the office. I was told that I would have to wait until the end of the second week to 'give it more time'. *(More time for an overnight request?!)*

Not having the ID hindered me from starting my new job. Even though my employer insisted that they didn't need it, the halfway house required me to have it to get a job.

I felt stranded; lost in the Office of Vital Statistics. We called back and forth for three months and in the end I spent over \$200 to get my \$15 birth certificate.

I was finally able to go down to the DMV and get a non-driver ID. I was issued a temporary card that allowed me to start working. The card was good for three months.

I could finally start my routine, or so I thought.

Like the birth certificate, I was told that I'd have the official ID card in 14 business days. Nearly three months later, with my temporary ID about to expire, it was still not in my possession.

By this time I was in the process of beginning college. Fortunately, I was able use my veteran's ID card to get through the initial round of admissions, but they informed me that I would need the official state ID in order to take the admission exams.

I inquired about the ID to find out that it had been sent, but was sent back to the DMV. In order for me to have it in time for the exams I would have to spend another \$20 and hope that I'd get in time.

Just when I thought it was over, here I was again...with my plans to start college about to derail.

Though extremely frustrating, I realize that these experiences will to prepare me for other frustrations that are sure to come.

The little issue with ID didn't get the best of me, in fact, it prepared me to give my best. Friedrich Nietzsche said: *What does not kill me, makes me stronger*. Thanks to these experiences, and clear intentions for reentry success, I am getting stronger every day.