

# SESSION 12

## MOVING FORWARD

### Session Goals

In this session, group members will:

- Celebrate treatment progress
- Participate in end-of-treatment planning
- Receive additional information about local and national resources

### Session Content

#### Setting the Agenda

- A. Congratulate group members on reaching the final session.** Group members will reflect on what, if any, progress they have made during treatment. In preparation for this session, you may ask group members beforehand how they would like to celebrate (e.g., with light refreshments, having a formal ceremony).
- B. Review session objectives. The goals of this session are to process what group members' have learned and discuss where they go from here.**

#### Opening Exercise (optional) - "The M&M Game"

- A. Set up.** You will need a small bag of M&Ms. (You can substitute M&Ms for colored paper. You will need at least five different colors represented.) To begin, have group members sit in a circle (if possible). Print copies of the handout "The M&M Game Key" in Appendix A (or write on the board) what each color represents:
- For every **Red** M&M, say what your *biggest accomplishment has been*.
  - For every **Blue** M&M, name *three important skills you've learned*.
  - For every **Green** M&M, tell the group *one important thing you've learned*.
  - For every **Orange** M&M, finish the sentence "*When I think about the person I am today, I am ...*"
  - For every **Brown** M&M, say *what was meaningful* about this group experience.
- B. Review instructions.** Ask each group member to select at least one M&M (or colored piece of paper). Next, have each group member answer the question that corresponds with the color of their M&M (or paper), using the game key. For example, if a group

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member picks a **Red** M&M, he or she will tell the group what his or her biggest accomplishment was. **All answers should reflect treatment progress since participating in the group.** You may repeat this process two to three times as long as you do not exceed 20-25 minutes.

- **Alternate instructions.** You may ask group members to answer a select number of questions or to answer all questions as long as the exercise does not exceed 20-25 minutes.

### Planning for Your Future

- A. Explain SMART goals.** You will use the SMART framework to help group members effectively develop an end-of-treatment recovery plan (on page 66 of the patient workbook; also in the appendix). **SMART** is an acronym that describes five steps to setting realistic, achievable goals:
- ***The S is for Specific*** – goals should be specific and not vague. “I want to start running” is too broad, while “I want to run a half marathon” is more specific.
  - ***The M is for Measurable*** – goals should have a clear endpoint or milestones that can be assessed. An example would be “I will run for 30 minutes each day.”
  - ***The A is for Achievable*** – goals should be something that can be reasonably accomplished within a certain timeframe. “I will run a half marathon in two weeks” is not very realistic for someone who has no prior long-distance running experience or training. In this case, “I will run a half marathon in four months” may be more realistic.
  - ***The R is for Relevant*** – goals should align with personal values. A person may choose to run to be healthier, get in shape, or feel good about himself/herself.
  - ***The T is for Time-bound*** – goals should have a deadline. Deadlines help motivate us and prioritize what is important. For example, “I want to run a half marathon by June 1st.”
- B. Normalize setbacks as a normal part of the healing process.** Life is full of stressors and surprises that can cause us to slip back into old habits (e.g., avoidant behaviors, isolation, lack of self-care). This happens because treatment doesn’t replace or erase old learned habits – it competes with them. Setbacks are not inherently problematic. **They are a warning that we may need to reinstate or step up with implementing their recovery plan.** Setbacks can happen gradually or suddenly. They feel like we are back to where we started. We feel like failures and may want to give up, none of which is true.

