Smallest Willing Step

Motivation & Change | 30 minutes | 3-12 participants | Adults with appropriate facilitation

Purpose

Reduce a desired action until it matches current willingness and resources.

Materials: Paper or a printable handout, Pens or an accessible writing alternative, Optional blank cards or simple drawing materials

Invite and agree - 3 minutes

Name the purpose and the right to pass, observe, write, or use fiction. Agree that people share only their own experiences and do not promise absolute group confidentiality.

Introduce the example - 3 minutes

A character wants to reconnect with an old interest. Ask what is known and what is still a guess.

Practice: Planning workshop - 17 minutes

Reduce a desired action until it matches current willingness and resources. Sketch several possible responses, compare access and likely tradeoffs, and choose one adjustable plan with a backup.

Reflect together - 4 minutes

What version feels possible today? Ask what fit, what did not fit, and what would make the exercise more accessible. Do not interpret another person's response.

Choose a next step - 3 minutes

Invite one optional action, support request, or question to carry forward. Passing is a valid closing response. Confirm how to seek appropriate support outside the activity.

Facilitator fit and boundaries

Respect ambivalence and the option not to change. Do not use ratings to pressure compliance.

Offer observation, private writing, or a fictional example. Adapt instructions and group size to access needs. No client responses are collected by this page.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Conceptual reading: TIP 41: Substance Abuse Treatment: Group Therapy, TIP 57: Trauma-informed Care in Behavioral Health Services, TIP 35: Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment. Source links appear on the online activity page.