

## The Seven Challenges® Counselor Skills

<b>Therapist:</b>	<b>Reviewer:</b>
<b>Site:</b>	<b>Date of Session:</b> _____ group _____ individual _____

**Note:** When observing a session, there may be components of this form that do not apply. However, watch for missed opportunities to use the skills central to the Program. Choose a number for each rating and add comments as needed.

Inconsistent with Model	Fully Consistent with Model
1-----2-----3-----4	

### Component I: Program Philosophy

- Youth understands or counselor explains the role of drug counselor, and responsibility of client for making own decisions about life and about use of substances
- Youth understands or therapist explains purpose of Journals and *The Seven Challenges* reader

*Rating/Comment:*

### Component II: Session structure

- Fluidly uses a Seven Challenges introductory statement
- Check-in includes general self-report, what the client wants to work on today, and (only for those with stated goal of quitting) whether or not they have used or had close calls
- Shows balance between youth-initiated and counselor-initiated work
- *The Seven Challenges* reader is incorporated into the sessions

*Rating/Comment:*

### Component III: Seamlessly integrates Challenges into conversations

- Seamlessly connects session content with various Challenges during the session
- Session concludes with a summary statement, relating session content to Challenges
- Involves youth in making these connections

*Rating/Comment:*

### Component IV: Counselor facilitates Working Sessions

- Clients show understanding of “work” concept or counselor clarifies
- Uses support, education and finesse when clients are not working; if this fails, counselor uses authority, informing youth of the consequences for not working
- Teaches youth to pay attention to their lives and identify their “work” issues
- Conducts working sessions with youth initiated work being the norm, supplemented with activities that counselor brings

*Rating/Comment:*

### Component V: Holistic

- Focus on drug issues; co-occurring problems; life skill deficits; life situation problems
- Counselor balances client work in these realms, moving back and forth among them

*Rating/Comment:*

### Component VI: Behavior Management in Groups

- Appropriate behavior management in groups so inordinate amount of time is not spent arguing, listening to youth complain, or responding to attention seeking behavior
- Uses a review of rules, facilitating sense of safety

*Rating/Comment:*

### Component VII: Counseling skills associated with each challenge

#### **1. Challenge One: Seven Challenges Relationship Building and Trust**

- Counselor proactively undoes the expectation that it is their role to make youth quit using drugs
- Defers the rush for an abstinence decision
- Helps youth see various avenues for success in small increments
- Uses reflective listening and promotes a safe/trusting relationship

*Rating/Comment:*

## **2. Challenge Two: Drug Benefits**

- Encourages clients to talk openly about what they like about drugs
- Listens to understand; empathizes, validates and reflects back reasons for drug use
- Helps youth understand needs they are satisfying, or attempting to satisfy
- Helps youth identify co-occurring problems and life skill deficits
- Counselor serves as a problem-solving partner (can let go of drug use issue as the central focus of discussion)

*Rating/Comment:*

## **3. Challenge Three: Drug Harm.**

- Increases youth understanding about the risks and harm from drug abuse and dependence without being argumentative or increasing defensiveness
- Encourages youth to listen to feedback from others; elicits youth thoughts and opinions and allows for differences
- Differentiates abuse and dependence
- Counselor uses “I statements” when expressing strong feelings and opinions; rolls with resistance; uses “caring confrontation”; sidesteps power struggles and does not play “Go ahead, try to make me quit”

*Rating/Comment:*

## **4. Challenge Four: Responsibility/Empowerment.**

- Helps youth put their drug use and other behavior in the context of their life experiences
- Counters excessive self-blame and speaks out about injustices, and denied opportunities and privileges that youth have experienced
- Validates legitimate anger of youth, but counters tendency to simply remain angry and not take responsibility for their own behavior

*Rating/Comment:*

## **5. Challenge Five: The Future**

- Helps youth think about potential future harm from continued use of drugs, without increasing defensiveness
- Helps youth strengthen, establish, or revive hopes, dreams and goals
- Helps youth clarify their values, including spiritual beliefs they might hold

*Rating/Comment:*

## **6. Challenge Six: Decisions**

- Helps youth make informed and motivated decisions to change when ready
- If youth decides to be abstinent, counselor helps youth consider what they are giving up; understand the effort and commitment required to succeed
- Helps youth make plans for succeeding if they decide to make changes, and helps them understand the possibility of setbacks

*Rating/Comment:*

## **7. Challenge Seven: Follow Through**

- Helps youth follow through on their decisions to change with positive action
- Refers to previous work and Challenge Seven to support relapse prevention
- Models a nurturing voice and teaches self-nurturing

*Rating/Comment:*

## **Component VIII: Courtesy Relapse Prevention**

- Counselor invites, looks for, and identifies impulses to quit using drugs
- Helps clients differentiate an impulse to quit from an informed, motivated and highly committed decision to quit
- Helps youth understand effort it takes to remain abstinent when they have only an impulse to quit, as opposed to when they make an informed and motivated decision
- Counselor supports an impulse to quit with relapse prevention skills, provides a counseling structure that supports this endeavor, and also works with youth on the whole Seven Challenges process simultaneously

*Rating/Comment:*