Session 29: High-Risk Situations: The Personal Prevention Plan

Duration: 60 minutes • Recovery education group. Ensure all participants are seated and ready

Materials: Workbook plan table; the Session 29 handout (Saying No in Your Own Words); index cards; local meeting schedule

Learning objectives — by the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- List and rank their five highest-risk situations for the next 90 days specifically
- Write an if–then plan for each: if this situation arises, then I will do this, with this person
- Identify one situation to avoid entirely this season and the logistics of avoiding it

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 4 — Living Free. The one idea today is that high-risk situations are planned for with if–then plans that have an exit, a person, and a destination. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. Generic lists do not protect; calendars do. Today we work from your actual next ninety days — the dates, people, money, and anniversaries that are really coming — and we build if–then plans with an exit, a person, and a destination for each of your five highest-risk situations.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: “What situation — place, event, payday, person, or feeling — worries you most about the next three months? Say it plainly; the room probably shares it.” Log every craving score on the roster.

Passing is honored — you may pass any question, prompt, or practice without explanation, step out and rejoin, and choose a partner-only option where one is offered.

Teaching (20 minutes)

A high-risk situation is any circumstance where this participant's chain has historically accelerated: a holiday, a route, a particular person's visit, cash in hand, a conflict at work, a celebration, a funeral, a lonely weekend after a victory. Generic lists do not protect; calendars do. So we work from the actual next 90 days: what is coming — dates, people, money, travel, anniversaries of loss (Week 4 named some) — and we build if–then implementation plans, a technique with strong evidence behind it: 'If the cookout reaches the drinking stage, then I take my pre-arranged ride, text Marcus from the car, and go to the evening meeting.' Each plan has an exit, a person, and a destination. And one situation on almost every list earns the honest verdict: not yet. Avoiding it entirely this season — with the logistics solved in this room, rides and excuses and alternatives — is not weakness; it is generalship.

- **If–then beats willpower** A decision made once, calmly, in this room carries us through a moment when decision-making is exactly what craving disables.
- **Every plan ends with people** The destination of every escape in this curriculum is toward community, never toward white-knuckled solitude.

- **Celebrations are high-risk too** Promotions, completions, good news, 'I've earned it' — permission-giving euphoria belongs on the list beside grief and conflict, and surprises no one here.
- **Avoidance is a season, not a life sentence** Some places return to our lives later, from strength. This season's 'not yet' protects next year's possible 'yes.'

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

Relapse prevention research treats return to use as a process with identifiable warning signs and high-risk situations that can be planned for in advance (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). Key sources for this session: Marlatt & Gordon (1985); Gorski & Miller (1986); National Institute on Drug Abuse (2018). Evidence strength: Moderate. Spiritual practice: Solitude and environment change — correlates with stimulus control and craving interruption; evidence: Moderate (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). Full citations: Appendix H. The session's Scripture material is in its optional handout (Appendix I), as theological foundation, quoted from the King James Version.

'Evidence strength' grades the correlated mechanism, not the spiritual practice itself

Pause midway through teaching: ask, "What part of that sounds most like your life right now?" Take two or three answers, connect them to the teaching, and continue. Teach in your own words — the bullets are your map, not a script to read aloud.

Discussion questions (10 minutes)

1. Walk your next 90 days: what dates and events belong on the list that a generic list would miss?
2. For your top situation, dictate your if–then plan aloud — does it have an exit, a person, and a destination?
3. Which situation gets a 'not yet' — and what will you tell the people involved, in words you could actually use?
4. Who besides you knows these plans exist — and how will they know when one has fired?

Skill practice (12 minutes)

Planning workshop: participants build the 90-Day High-Risk Plan table in workbooks (situation, risk 1–10, if–then plan, person, destination, avoid-or-manage verdict). Facilitator audits a sample aloud (volunteers only) against the exit–person–destination test and helps repair thin plans. Each participant then briefs their accountability partner on their top two plans in detail — the partner's job is to ask, that week, 'is the cookout still Saturday? Walk me through your exit.'

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Brief your coach on the full plan this week. Put the relevant if–then plans on cards where the situations will find you (wallet, phone, visor). After any plan fires — used or nearly used — write the debrief in your workbook within 24 hours: what worked, what to strengthen. Participants

write it in their workbook before leaving. Facilitator: name the homework again at the door as people leave.

Facilitator notes and cautions

If a participant's highest-risk situation is their current living environment or a person in the program, do not workshop it publicly — take it to the Program Director the same day for housing/care coordination. Facilitators also watch for plans that rely on a single person for everything; every plan needs a backup name, because people get sick, move, and relapse too.

Closing (2 minutes)

A decision made once, calmly, in this room carries you through the moment when decision-making is exactly what craving disables. Brief your coach this week and put the cards where the situations will find you. Next session: the fire drill — after a slip, the first 24 hours.

Fidelity check for this session: objectives named at the start ☐ craving scores logged ☐ skill practice completed in full ☐ homework written down by participants ☐ session note filed today ☐