DECISIONAL BALANCE MATRIX

In MI, success in treatment is largely determined by the ability of the practitioner to help the client/offender explore and resolve his/her ambivalence in favor of change

A tool that can help a client/offender explore and resolve ambivalence is the Decisional Balance or Pro's and Con's worksheet. It is used as a means of exploring the good and not-so-good things about the behavior in question. If used during a session/interview, the practitioner can facilitate the process by eliciting client/offender responses. The responses would correspond with each of the four quadrants representing differing aspects of changing the behavior or making a change.

The practitioner may use the decisional balance a number of ways: as a homework assignment, as an activity during the session, or as a virtual worksheet where the quadrants are filled in verbally. The practitioner can ask the client/offender to:

- List all the good things about the current behavior.
- List all the not-so-good things about the behavior.
- List what would be good about changing.
- List what would not be so good about changing.

If the client/offender fills out the worksheet as homework, it can be reviewed at the next session/interview. It is important to review each quadrant and explore the reasons behind each listing, eliciting the client/offender's thoughts and feelings about each item. Often the practitioner needs to prompt the client/offender for the good things about the behavior. After discussing each quadrant, a practitioner summarizes responses to the activity as a whole and asks the client/offender for any changes or additions. A wealth of information about the motivators of the behavior, the reasons for wanting to change the behavior and the barriers to quitting are often revealed with this exercise.

<u>Important to remember</u>: The officer does not suggest items that the client/offender should put in the quadrants, but instead lets the client/offender determine from his/her perspective the pertinent issues

Decisional Balance Worksheet

What are you considering changing:

Good things about behavior:	Good things about changing behavior:
Not so good things about behavior:	Not so good things changing behavior: