



# Introduction

## How to get the most out of this program

It's best to move through the **Making Time Count** (MTC) program in the order that it is presented in this workbook. Sometimes you will be directed to read a chapter from the book *Houses of Healing*. Sometimes you will be asked to do a worksheet before moving on. Sometimes you will be asked to do certain exercises every day. Just choose the best time for you and do the best you can. **It is best to plan to complete 1 session a week – and no more than 1 session a week.**

If you're doing MTC as a self-study course then no one is checking up on whether you do the assignments but like most of life, you get out of it what you put into it.

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Each session starts with a section called "**Doing Time.**" These don't directly connect to topics covered in *Houses of Healing* but they offer advice about how to make your time count. Most of these sections offer support from people who have done time.

This is followed by "**Session Notes.**" This offers an overview of the topics in that session and provides some encouragement and suggestions on how to work with the lessons.

The pages titled "**Self-work**" give you the assignments for the week, as well as worksheets that are part of the assignments.

As you will see, only certain chapters in *Houses of Healing* are assigned in this Making Time Count (MTC) Program. For those of you who are just starting your sentence, we didn't want to overload you with all of the topics. You're encouraged to read as much of the book as you want but this course requires that you read less than half of it. If you're not ready or interested in reading more of it while participating in MTC, we hope that you will return to the book in the future and read all the chapters.

Exactly how challenging it is for each person depends on many things. Some of these things include: how restrictive your housing situation is; how long you will be/ or have been there; and your emotional state/mental health when you were put in that situation. Other factors include whether or not you have a cellmate and if you get along with them; whether there are others around who you can communicate with; whether you have a TV to pass some of your time; and what access you have to books. Other key issues include the quantity and quality of mental health and medical services when you need them; how you feel you are treated by staff and others around you; whether you have support from people on the outside as well as whether you receive visits and can make phone calls to people who are important to you. **The most important factor, however, is your emotional state / mental health and what support and skills you have for managing your stress (anxiety, frustration, anger, etc.).**

In MTC, you'll learn many skills for managing stress – skills that have been scientifically proven to guard against, minimize, or slow down a downward spiral – tools that, if you practice them, will keep you more in control of your life and personal power. These are skills that can be useful wherever you are. You'll be encouraged - again and again - to **give this program your best effort.**

"I consider the actions I've made throughout life some of the worst crimes possible. I felt like I didn't deserve to live. This course has helped me see my actions and where I went wrong and I now understand that my actions don't define who I am but how I carry myself today is who I truly am. If I can change so can anyone else."

Chaz

## **IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT PAST TRAUMA:**

Many people in jail or prison have had a lot of trauma and abuse in their past. You may be one of these people – and just doing time can make many people feel on shaky ground emotionally. The chapters in *Houses of Healing* that deal directly with past trauma are not assigned in this 6-session Making Time Count program. Some of the exercises and topics in these chapters can bring up painful emotions and memories. **DO NOT** delve into any topic or participate in any exercise if it brings up painful emotions that you don't feel ready to deal with at this time. If you do feel ready and willing, you are encouraged to read these chapters even though they're not part of this course.

As you will read in *Houses of Healing* and in this course, BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF.

Just start at the beginning of this MTC workbook, as you are already doing, and keep putting “one foot in front of the other.” The course is clearly laid out for you. Give yourself the gift of seeing this program through to the end so that you can move into the future holding on to more and more of your personal power.

“If you take charge of your time, you are much less likely to experience the “doomed” outlook and feelings that can be easy to fall into when you don’t take charge of your life.”

Dr. David Alexander, trauma expert

## Ways to Use Making Time Count

Making Time Count can be used in many ways:

- 1) First, Making Time Count (MTC) can be used as a self-study course. With this workbook, the *Houses of Healing* book, and a pen or pencil, you have everything you need to move forward. If your movement is restricted and/or out-of-cell programs aren’t available, MTC can provide a powerful program right where you are.
- 2) When possible, MTC can be used in groups. Participants can do the Self-work on their own during the week. In group, you can discuss the concepts, practice the relaxation exercises and meditation together, and share and discuss the completed worksheets. (If available, the Houses of Healing Video Series can add to the power of the program.)
- 3) You can also use the Making Time Count program more informally by working through it with one or two other people – whether it is a cellmate, someone else inside, or even by mail with a mentor, friend or family member.
- 4) If you are in an existing group focused on recovery, violence prevention, victim awareness, or anything else geared to emotional growth and healing, you can share the exercises in MTC and support others in learning from your insights.

“Participating in this course has impacted me in ways I really didn’t think was possible. It’s given me peace of mind. I learned a lot of meaningful skills and concepts that I use on a daily basis now. I notice a big change in my attitude and behavior. Like for others, the course gave me a new outlook and a new direction.” Ray