Self-Defeating Cycle

Rationale
Many people find themselves making choices that seem reasonable or rational in the moment but lead to long-term difficulty. Individuals may not be aware of a self-defeating pattern of choices, or they may make the same type of choice again and again, even though they seem to understand the consequences. This can happen for a variety of reasons. For example, perhaps self-defeating patterns were modeled to them in their upbringing; or they succumb to social, peer, or family pressure; or they simply lack available resources to assist them. Self-defeating choices often make sense in the moment and are seen as a way of coping.

Successful change will most likely not occur without self-awareness of self-defeating patterns. Most people would change a behavior if the results were only negative, so helping them identify the positive aspects of negative behavior can often be helpful (for example, a person may miss work to help a sick friend; this has negative work-related consequences but positive social ones). Remember, people make mistakes. Don't make them feel bad or ashamed in this process. Help them to see you as a friend and a resource with their best interest at heart, rather than someone who is always pointing out their mistakes.

Objective
Help the Deseret Industries associate to identify and change self-defeating patterns.

Potential Discussion Items
- Help the Deseret Industries associate to identify the choices he or she makes.
  - Discuss the reasons behind his or her choices.
  - Help him or her to identify the consequences, both positive and negative.
- Diagram a cycle of behaviors and consequences. (Drawing a visual might be helpful for some people.)
- Discuss ways in which the Deseret Industries associate wants his or her life to be different.
- Help the Deseret Industries associate to plan alternative choices for the next time the situation arises.
- Help the Deseret Industries associate to identify potentially beneficial community resources.
- With the Deseret Industries associate, create action steps (for example, counseling, setting firm boundaries, isolating and controlling triggers that lead to self-defeating behaviors, studying a self-help book, and so on) that address the problem.
- Follow up daily or weekly on what the Deseret Industries associate is learning or doing and how he or she is implementing what has been learned.
- Provide support and motivation to the Deseret Industries associate as he or she makes choices that lead to desirable differences.
Suggested Resources

- Counseling from a licensed professional.
- The Deseret Industries development counselor can assist the Deseret Industries associate with motivational interviewing, solution-focused strategies, cognitive behavioral instruction, or other strategies.