

Syracuse Interim Comprehensive Plan

The Concept

It is confusing when we keep doing things that hurt us. Why do we stay in bad relationships? Why do we procrastinate until we panic? Why do we worry when it solves nothing?

The hard truth is this: **Every behavior has a payoff.** Even destructive behaviors provide some hidden benefit, usually safety, control, or avoidance of responsibility.

"We don't do anything unless it works for us in some way."

— Unknown

Deep Reflection: Common Hidden Payoffs

The Payoff of Worry

"If I worry, I feel like I'm doing something. It makes me feel prepared and prevents me from being blindsided."

The Payoff of Depression

"If I stay in bed, I can't fail. No one expects anything from me. I am safe from criticism."

The Payoff of Anger

"When I'm angry, I feel powerful instead of vulnerable. It keeps people at a distance so they can't hurt me."

The Payoff of Procrastination

"If I wait until the last minute, I have an excuse if it's not perfect. I protect my ego."

Your Payoff Analysis

Identify a behavior you want to change but can't seem to stop. Ask yourself: "What does this behavior save me from? What does it allow me to avoid?"

The Behavior:

The Hidden Payoff (The "Good" Reason):

Be honest. Does it keep you safe? Does it mean you don't have to try? Does it get you sympathy?

The Cost:

What is this "safety" costing you in the long run?

Syracuse Integrative Psychiatry

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