

From Victim to Survivor to Offender - Where is Justice?

Introduction to the Course

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From Victim to Survivor to Offender - Where is Justice? About the Hinda Institute

This educational program is a project of the Hinda Institute.

For over 30 years, the Hinda Institute has been instrumental in improving the lives predominantly of Jews who are or have been incarcerated and their families. The Hinda institute functions as the Jewish prison chaplaincy for Illinois at the federal and state level as well as servicing many Illinois county jails.

1) Visits in Prisons and Jails in the State of Illinois

Our team of chaplains visit each of our clients in state prisons at least once a month as well as visit the Cook County Jail weekly. We offer spiritual counseling, emotional support and hope to those in despair.

2) Assisting our Clients with Re-entry into Society

We continue to offer individual counseling and contact each of our clients weekly or monthly as required when they re-enter society. Hinda is one of the only organizations which follows clients from the point of re-entry for the rest of their lives. Aside from counseling and guidance, we coordinate peer support, ethics and bible classes, and Jewish holiday events. We also help clients find meaningful employment and housing which is difficult, but critical for ex-offenders. Our integrated and holistic approach is responsible for our low recidivism rates; we have less than a quarter of the recidivism rates nationally.

3) Support for Families

When a member of a family becomes incarcerated, the impact on the rest of the family is tremendous, ranging from social stigmatism and ostracizing of the family members from schools and shuls to loss of income and family crisis. We offer help through counseling and navigating the correctional system for the families as well as social activities and free camp scholarships for the children.

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Our Sponsors - the Walder Foundation

This program is sponsored by the Walder Foundation. The Walder Foundation is a private family foundation based in the Chicago area that provides individuals and organizations with resources and tools to create more welcoming and vibrant communities. Through innovative programs focused on performing arts, advancing sustainability, immigrant advocacy, Jewish life, and science innovation, the Walder Foundation is powering a sustainable future. The Walders have been pillars of the Chicago Jewish community for the past two decades. Their philanthropic legacy has been rooted in tackling educational quality and affordability. This pilot project is in memorandum of Daniel Azari ; may his memory inspire all of us.



Thanks

We would like to thank:

- Prof, Edna Erez, Casey Harris, Chris Powell, Rafael Moreno and Mrs. Avigayil Scheiman for developing and writing the content.
- Our director - Rabbi Binyomin Scheiman for inspiration
- Mrs. Baila Grinker for her constant support
- Mrs. Rifka Varnai and Mrs. Amy Spotts for their advice vis a vis special education
- Our many facilitators, tutors, chaplains and mentors who have donated their time with kindness and generosity. You are making a difference.
- You, our students, who inspire us to do good and change the world for better.

A curriculum requires many contributors and a unified effort. All of you are invaluable to our success.

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The Texts used in this Course

This course is a modified criminology course. The texts used in this course are academic papers and articles from newspapers and magazines. There is a lot of reading involved in this course. Some of you will be introduced to academic style papers for the first time and we hope to assist you in breaking down these more complex readings, seeing the value in these texts, and finally finding them accessible and relevant.

Overview of the Course

This is a six-session course that explores the cycle of victims, survivors and offenders. The goal of this course is to understand this cycle, the factors contributing to the cycle and to brainstorm solutions. Students are welcome to share their personal life histories and experiences to develop life lessons and self-understanding. The course will also assist to improve academic literacy and writing skills as well as develop methods of analysis and interpretation of academic concepts.

The course will be facilitated by professors and graduate students from different backgrounds. Students will be expected to submit one written assignment and/or make at least one presentation. They will also be expected to complete assignments, readings, research and work outside the classroom in order to receive a certificate of completion.

The course assigns independent readings and a workbook followed by mentored discussion groups. The course requires discussion and self-reflection. Participants are asked to read and write at their level of skill. The exercises are developed by experts in special education.

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Course Objectives

This course takes a comprehensive approach to the topic.

The students will be able to:

Technical Skills

- Write a properly formatted one-page essay on a relevant topic with a logical structure and rules of grammar using a template if necessary.
- Define and use 7 new vocabulary words or terminology related to the topic.
- Read, analyze and answer questions on short academic texts.
- Prepare and present a short academic presentation.

Cognitive Goals

- Distinguish the overlap between law and morality
- Articulate in writing and/or verbally the underlying causes of harm, victimization, and ways to prevent or reduce their impact (Note the level of writing skill will be adapted to the student's skill level).
- Describe the functions and dynamics of criminal justice agencies that respond to crime and victimization.
- Recognize the cycle from victim to survivor to offender and identify strategies to escape this cycle.
- Describe the impact of race, gender and other social attributes and forces on this cycle.

Affective Goals

- Appreciate the personal pathways and choices leading to legal offenses and victimization (How did I get here? How can I get out of the cycle?).
- Empathize with the experiences of harmed individuals? (How do my actions affect others?).
- Apply ethical principles to personal choices (Was what I did justified?).
- Reflect on their life experiences based on course discussions in a class project.

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Who is this Course for?

The course is open to anybody who is interested in learning: from our clients who were incarcerated to the general population, regardless of personal background. There is no cost for the course.

Methodologies

This course uses multiple learning approaches:

1) Self-study

You will need to read the identified texts as homework before each session.

2) Writing in Workbooks

You should complete the exercises in your workbook or notebook. The exercises include reflective writing, comprehension activities, and exercises to improve reading skills.

3) Mentoring

Your facilitators will assist you. You will need to think about the discussion questions in advance. They will mark the writing assignments.

Materials for Course

As a student in this course, you can print the course materials online every week. Alternatively, we can mail the course materials to you if you do not have access to a printer. The materials include:

1) Academic readings

2) A workbook with exercises.

3) You will also need a notebook and writing instrument to diary your thoughts and write short essays. The course will be offered on Zoom. We can train you how to use Zoom prior to the course.

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Time and Duration

The course will run for 6 sessions for 6 to 8 weeks. Between sessions, you will need to read the chapters assigned, do the writing assignments and prepare the discussion questions for your facilitator. Time to do your workbook and readings will vary.

Assignments and Diploma

You will be asked to read and complete writing assignments outside the classroom in your workbook. There are two types of assignments:

- 1) Weekly short writing assignments to develop writing skills such as questions and answers, an essay or a personal diary, etc.
- 2) Research, workbook questions, exercises and readings to develop reading literacy skills.

The course assignments help you improve your reading and writing skills. The more you invest, the more your writing skills will improve. Participants who complete assignments will receive a diploma of participation.

Facilitators

The course will be facilitated by graduate students, professors, and volunteer mentors/ tutors. You will be assigned your own personal mentor.

Course Evaluation

As this course is a pilot, we want your feedback to improve the course or to let us know what went well. You will be asked to fill out surveys or participate in a focus group.

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Reading and Writing Assistance

Some of our students in this course may have challenges with reading and writing English. You may be someone who has these difficulties, and we want to try to assist you. These are important skills to help you later find a job, even jobs that are based on manual labor. It is harder for those that have records to find jobs, and having more technical skills is of great benefit to you. We have, however, seen many of our clients go on to higher-level degrees and solid careers. Reading and writing also open up whole new worlds for you whether online, through reading books, through sharing your thoughts or presenting your case or ideas.

It requires a lot of persistence to improve these skills as an adult. We cannot solve them all at once, but if you are interested, we can help you improve. It is tedious to read when you have poor reading skills; the more involved and interested you are in the material, the easier it will be. Try to analyze where you are having issues and, with the help of your tutor, brainstorm solutions and create a learning plan.

Your challenges could include:

- a) Reading and seeing words correctly
- b) Understanding/comprehending what you have read, especially in academic texts
- c) Organizing the content that you read in a logical structure or making inferences
- d) A lack of vocabulary or English as a second language
- e) Spelling or writing words, sentences or paragraphs
- f) Organizing your thoughts when writing

The texts in these courses will require close reading and careful analysis. The workbook is there to help you comprehend and organize the material in the textbook. You may also benefit from some of the other strategies listed below:

- Read more.
- When you read, stop and check your understanding
- Use a method of organizing what you read like a table, a map, pictures, underline key points or use post-its. Tables have been provided for you
- Ask yourself questions like Who? What? Where? or what is the author trying to tell me and why? You can make the subtitles in the text into questions. You can create questions for each paragraph you read or on the titles in the reading to help yourself understand better. Answer the questions
- Think out loud. Try to predict
- After you read, cover what you have read and retell
- Apply what you read to situations or to yourself

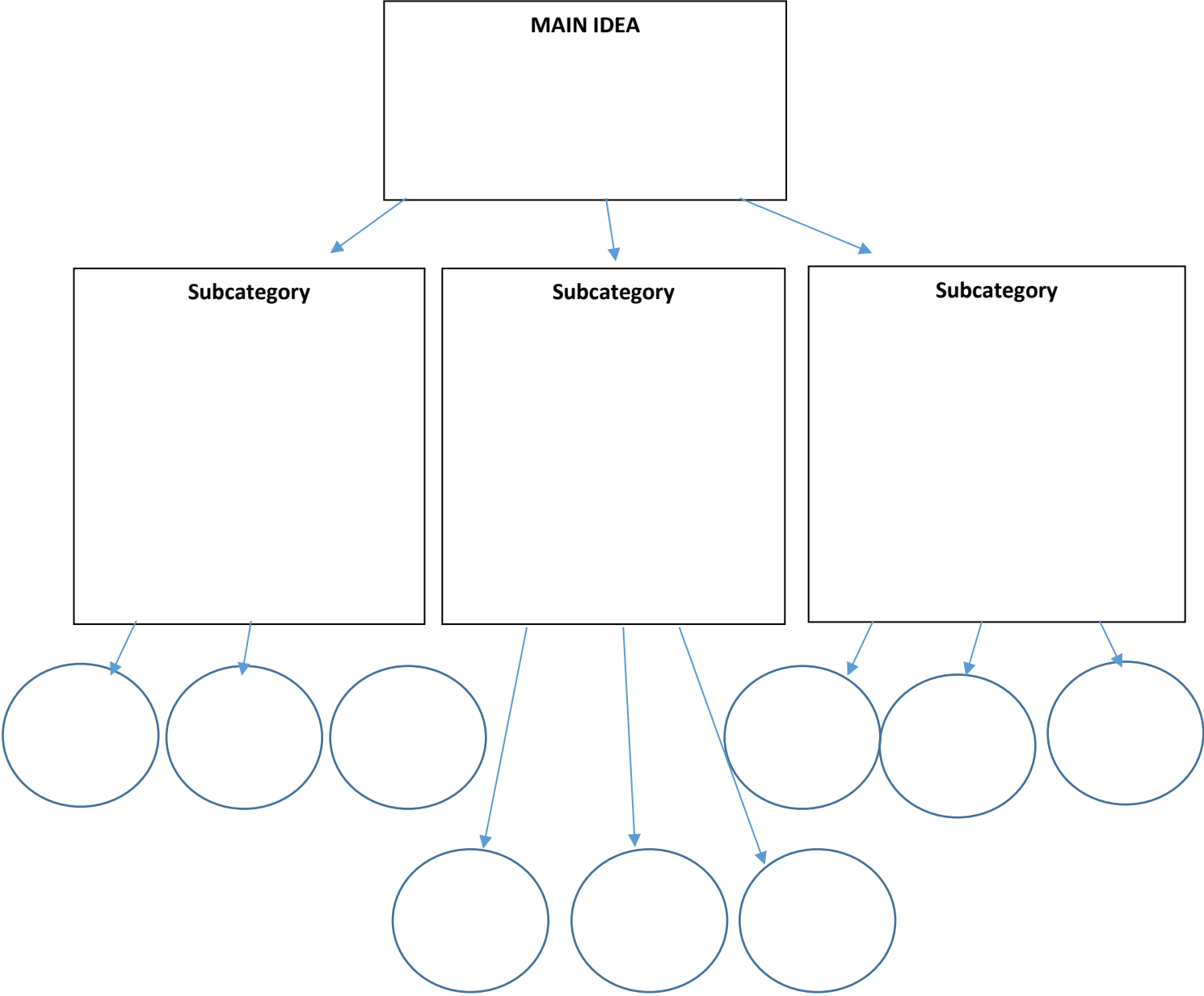
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- You will be asked to write a lot in this course whether sentences or short writing assignments; do your best, write a lot and you will improve. Your facilitator will help you by correcting your assignments. You may want to rewrite the assignments with the corrections so that you learn from your errors
- When you write a longer essay, try to organize your ideas first in an outline
- Start by writing clear sentences, then clear paragraphs then clear essays

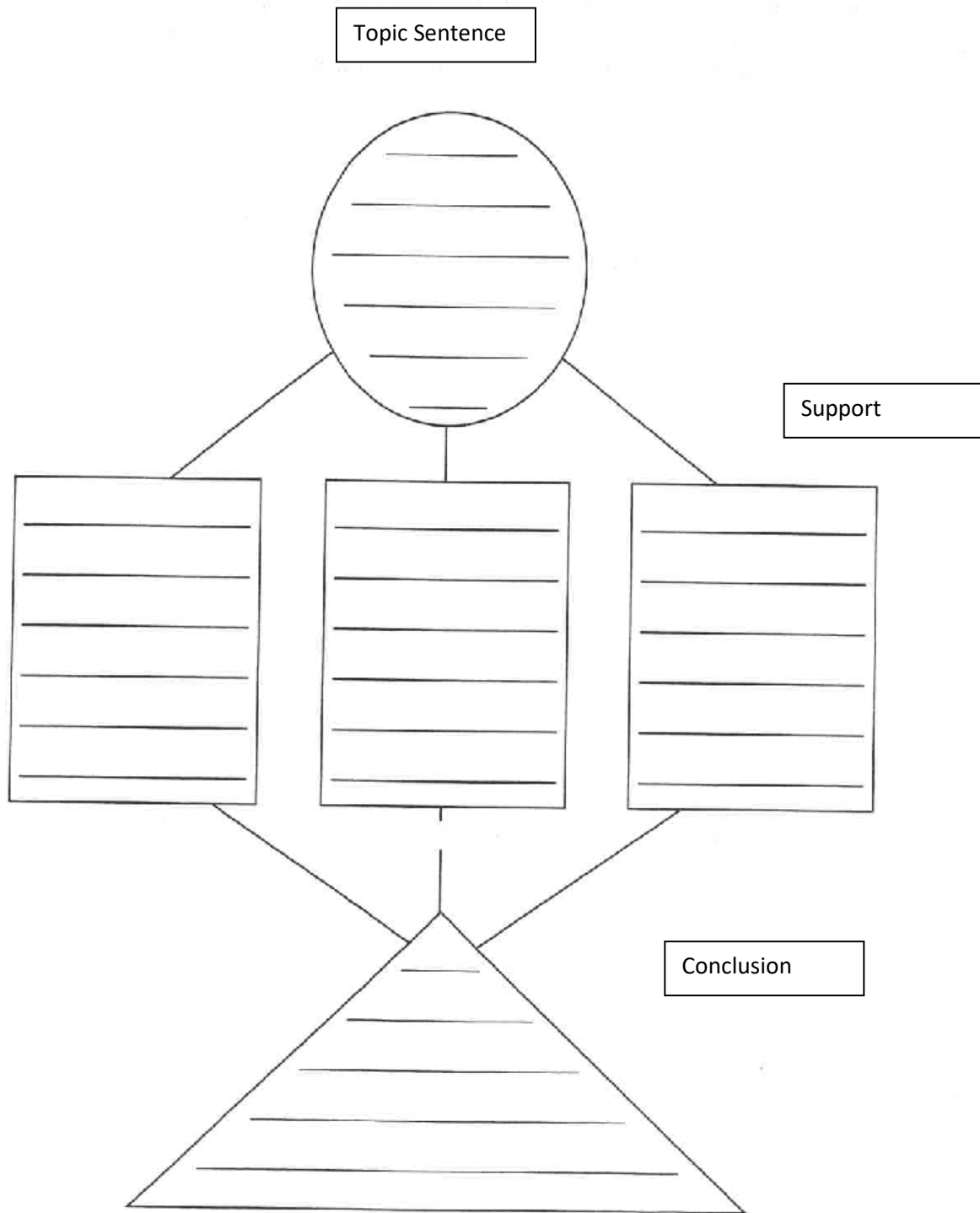
Your tutors and facilitators will assist you. They will provide you with tools to help you. ¹

¹ A big thank you to Amy Spotts and Rifkah Varnai for special education consultation.

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Hierarchical Organizer for Reading

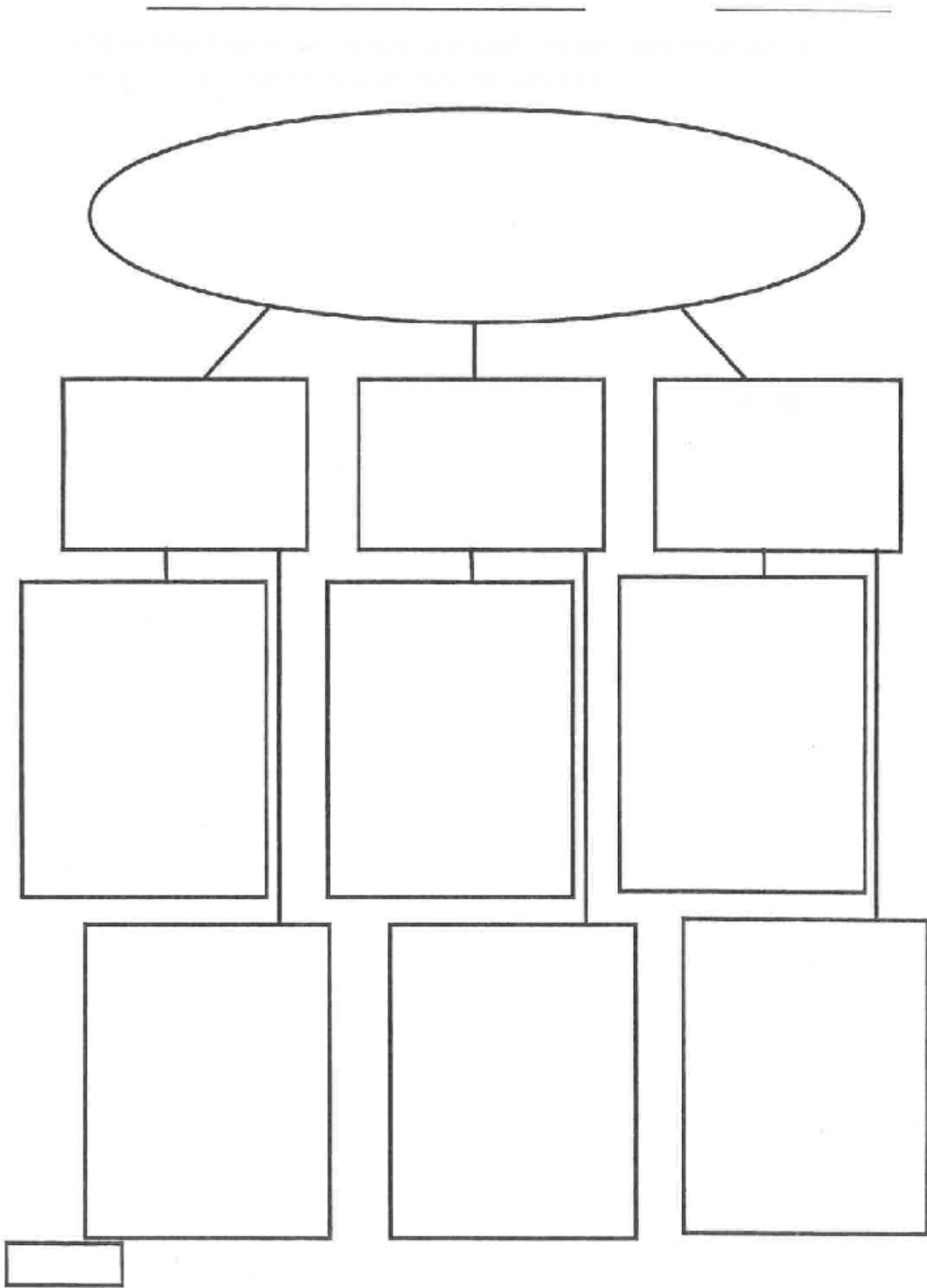


Getting Your Paragraph Organized



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Main Idea Map for Writing



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Self-Reflection

This course gives you an opportunity for reflection at a point in your life where you may be reconsidering your choices, trying to find happiness, dealing with the past or seeking understanding or spirituality. This may be a good time to self-reflect, redirect, rethink, discuss with tutors and mentors and try to find joy in your life in difficult circumstances. You may want to keep a diary of your thoughts and personal commitments. You may want to discuss with your mentor or the group. Alternatively, you may just want to hear new ideas. It is your journey, and we will try to assist you.

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LEARNING PLAN

Take some time to develop a personal learning plan with your tutor.

What are my objectives? <i>I want to be able to...</i>	What can I do well already? <i>I can...</i>	Where am I having challenges? <i>I am having difficulty with...</i>	What strategies I going to use to improve? <i>I am going to...</i>

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