

## **\*\*Tips for when you get stuck!\*\***

Consider traditional harmonic progression as your guide. (Harmonic Progression Handout)

- “What chord *would normally* come next?
- If that doesn’t work, try a substitution chord. (HP handout)
- Don’t forget retrograde, elision, tonic insertion options.
  - Retrograde (moving backwards) should return to regular motion immediately.
  - Elision (omitting or skipping a chord). Use sparingly.
  - Tonic insertion (also called Neutral Tonic) The tonic chord (“I” of the key) may be used just about anywhere without disrupting your harmonic progression.
    - From the tonic chord, you can jump to just about anywhere in the progression.

Try different chord qualities.

- Major, minor, augmented, diminished, plus sevens!
- Include the min<sup>7</sup>/flat<sup>5</sup> or “*half diminished*” chord. (Also written like this: G<sup>ø</sup>)
  - Very common in Barbershop!
- One may work where another does not.

Chromatic approach.

- This is an easy and different-sounding way to get to that odd chord.
- Just place every voice a half step lower or higher than the chord that follows.
  - Sounds very much like a tri-tone substitution (usually quicker).

Diminished seventh – THE JUMP CHORD!

- Lowering any note of a dim<sup>7</sup> chord one half-step will create a Dom<sup>7</sup>-type chord!

Example:

Start with a tonic triad

- Split the root - down a whole step/up a half step (maintain other chord tones) → dim<sup>7</sup> chord → find a Dom<sup>7</sup> that works → wind your way to new tonic!

Game: Name two separate notes. The first will be the “root” of the dim<sup>7</sup>; the second, the target.

- Can you get from one to the other?

- Exercise:
- Look at your dim<sup>7</sup> chord.
  - Find the potential Dom<sup>7</sup> resolutions.
  - Does one of them lead you quickly to your target?

\*\* All of these tips are helpful hints, but overuse will lead to your arrangement not sounding as Barbershop as you may like.