



Phases of Dual Recovery

Introduction

Welcome to the Phases of Dual Recovery session of the *Living in Balance* program. This session reviews the ways in which recovery for people with co-occurring disorders is a process with several different phases and the ways in which recovery affects your body, mind, relationships, and spirit.

What is in this session?

This session has two major parts: (1) Recovery as a Process and (2) Recovery and Your Body, Mind, Relationships, and Spirit.

- ✓ After participating in part 1, you will be able to
 - describe ways in which the transition from substance use and mental health disorders to recovery is a process.
 - understand how recovery from co-occurring disorders is a process with multiple phases.
- ✓ After participating in part 2, you will be able to
 - describe ways in which recovery from co-occurring disorders is a biopsychosocial process.
 - describe ways in which recovery from co-occurring disorders is a process involving improvements for your physical health, your mind, your relationships, and your spirit.



SESSION 41 HAS TWO MAJOR PARTS:

1. Recovery as a Process
2. Recovery and Your Body, Mind, Relationships, and Spirit

What will be asked of you?

You will be asked to explore various ways in which your recovery is a process that involves your body, mind, spirit, and social world. You will be asked to think about ways in which your co-occurring disorders have affected these areas of your life. You will be asked to consider that your recovery will likewise affect these areas of your life. These are deeply personal and emotional issues. Going through this session may be challenging and will take courage. However, working through this session can provide you with important information about your recovery and bring about improvement in multiple areas of your life. This information can help you to develop a stronger recovery and to live in balance.



Part 1: Recovery as a Process

Nearly everything related to co-occurring disorders is a process. A *process* can be thought of as a series of events that occur over a period of time. In other words, a process is not one big step or an on-off switch, but a bunch of little steps.

Substance use disorders, mental health disorders, treatment, recovery, and relapse are all processes, involving a series of small steps, either in the direction of health or in the direction of illness.

Recovery, which is the focus here, is not like turning on a switch and all of a sudden everything is okay. For people with co-occurring disorders, recovery means putting one foot in front of the other and taking those small steps.



EXERCISE 1

Please answer the following questions:

1. In your experience, how is recovery more like a process than one single step?

(more lines for writing on next page)



LEARNER OBJECTIVES FOR PART 1:

You will

- describe ways in which the transition from substance use and mental health disorders to recovery is a process.
- understand how recovery from co-occurring disorders is a process with multiple phases.

2. How are the idea of recovery as a process and the phrase “one day at a time” related?

Progression of Illness

When individuals first start using alcohol or other drugs, they can often do so without major problems. They may binge more on the weekends, so work or school life isn’t affected much. Their bodies haven’t yet been taxed by many months or years of use, so they bounce back more quickly from a high or hangover. However, over time, their use may intensify and related problems may develop. They may develop a compulsion to drink or use, loss of control, and continued use despite problems resulting from that use. Tolerance occurs, which means that people require more and more of the drug or alcohol to get high or drunk.

At the same time, their mental health symptoms may start to emerge and perhaps become more frequent or severe. For example, someone might binge-drink every now and then, and he or she might start having periods of depression as a consequence. This person might drink a bit more because he or she is depressed, and then become even more depressed because the alcohol upsets his or her brain chemistry.

When individuals first start using alcohol or other drugs, they can often do so without major problems. However, over time, their use may intensify and related problems may develop.

Overall, persons with co-occurring disorders may experience problems related to physical, emotional, and social health because their co-occurring disorders worsen. Again, their illness is a process that occurs over time.



EXERCISE 2

Please check the answer that seems most true in the following list and then answer the accompanying questions.

- Over time, I experienced worsening compulsion to use alcohol or other drugs.
- Over time, I experienced worsening loss of control over my alcohol or other drug use.
- Over time, I experienced worsening negative consequences from my substance use.
- Over time, I experienced worsening consequences from my mental health problems.
- All of the above.
- None of the above.

1. What were the first problems or symptoms you experienced related to your substance use—and how did these symptoms worsen or change over time?

2. What were the first problems or symptoms you experienced related to your mental health disorder—and how did these symptoms worsen or change over time?

Transition toward Recovery

People who are actively addicted often go through a transition from not recognizing that a problem exists to realizing that there is a problem that needs attention.

Initially, during active addiction, people are focused on obtaining, using, and recovering from the effects of alcohol and other drugs. In some ways, they are receiving a lot of benefit from their substance use. For instance, while drunk or high, they might not feel guilt about hurting someone. Thus, in the beginning, those in active addiction often do not recognize that they have a problem and that their substance use causes problems. They do not see any reason to seek help.

However, actively addicted people often start recognizing that their substance use causes problems for themselves and for others. They may start to realize that they have a problem with alcohol or other drugs, and they may consider that they need help for this problem. With help or pressure from family, work, or the criminal justice system, they may enter treatment.

This transition from addiction to treatment is a process. For most people, transition does not occur in a single moment in time. Rather, it is a process that occurs over months or years.



People who are actively addicted often go through a transition from not recognizing that a problem exists to realizing that there is a problem that needs attention.



EXERCISE 3

Please answer the following questions:

1. When did you start recognizing that your co-occurring disorders were causing problems in your life?

2. What “opened your eyes” to your problems?

Intervention and Treatment

As we can see, substance use and mental health disorders are processes. Treatment is also a process. The treatment process is a time during which treatment professionals will help you to stabilize and start to get better.

During this process, treatment will first address medical and psychiatric emergencies, such as detoxification. When you are medically and psychiatrically stable, treatment will address emotional and behavioral problems that prevent you from fully participating in treatment. After that, addiction treatment will focus on education, therapy, and relapse prevention.

Since your co-occurring disorders are biopsychosocial in nature, your treatment will focus on your physical and medical health, your psychological health, and your social health. Treatment will also address your spiritual health. The treatment process helps to prepare you for the recovery process.

**EXERCISE 4**

Select true or false for the following statements:

1. During the treatment process, medical and psychiatric emergencies are dealt with first.
 True False

2. It is important to deal with emotional and behavioral issues as part of the treatment process.
 True False

3. Treatment does not deal with spiritual health.
 True False

4. In the “thick” of treatment, you will receive educational materials, participate in individual and/or group therapy, and learn relapse-prevention techniques.
 True False

Early Recovery: Focus on Sobriety

If you are like most people with co-occurring disorders, you have been using alcohol or other drugs on a frequent basis. Alcohol and other drugs helped you not to feel, think, or worry, and perhaps helped reduce your mental health symptoms.

As a result, early recovery focuses on helping you become and remain sober. Only then can you start to feel, think, and behave normally. Of course, feelings and thoughts that your substance use suppressed will return. For example, you may start feeling guilty or sad. But this is normal.

Only when you can start feeling your true emotions and start thinking in ways that are healthy can you start building your recovery program, which includes participation in group therapy and self-help meetings. Only when you are sober can your physical health improve, including eating and sleeping better and exercising.

Only when you can start feeling your true emotions and start thinking in ways that are healthy can you start building your recovery program.

During early recovery, you will learn new ways to experience your feelings and thoughts without the use of alcohol or other drugs. In this way, your feelings and thoughts don't become triggers for relapse for your co-occurring disorders.



EXERCISE 5

Please answer the following questions:

1. Since you have been in treatment, have your thoughts become clearer? Please explain.

Yes No

2. Since you have been in treatment, what feelings have returned that you have not felt in a while? Please explain.

Early Recovery: Focus on Mental Health

As you start having more and more days of sobriety, your recovery will begin to include emphasis on your mental health disorder. Without sobriety, emotional issues would trigger alcohol or other drug use. Without self-esteem and stability, your sobriety can be threatened by intense feelings. With sobriety and self-esteem, you can start to deal with all aspects of recovery.

Some people will learn to address such issues as childhood physical or sexual abuse. Others will deal with the emotional aspects of anxiety or depression. Whatever your issues may be, individual and group therapy provide safe environments to experience intense feelings, share personal feelings and thoughts, and learn to address them without using alcohol or other drugs.

Remember that your substance use and mental health disorders are probably measured in years rather than in weeks or months. Thus your recovery will also be a process measured in years but taken one step at a time.



EXERCISE 6

Please answer the following questions:

1. How did your alcohol or drug use lessen your ability to experience your emotions?

2. Now that you are not drinking alcohol or using drugs, are you able to experience your emotions better? Please explain.

Yes No



The recovery process begins when you start to examine the ways in which your co-occurring disorders have had a negative effect on your life.

Early Recovery: Awareness and Acknowledgment

People with substance use and mental health disorders often have developed ways of dealing with their co-occurring disorders, such as denial. If you are like most people, you may deny to yourself that you have problems, that your problems are caused by your substance use and mental health disorders, and that these problems have a serious effect on your life and the lives of others around you.

The recovery process begins when you start to examine the ways in which your co-occurring disorders have had a negative effect on your life. This process involves exploring the ways in which you use alcohol and other drugs, the ways in which you cope with your mental health disorder, and the ways in which your life is out of control.

For many people, this soul-searching process involves working through Step One of the Twelve Steps of Double Trouble in Recovery (DTR): “We admitted we were powerless over our mental disorders and substance abuse—that our lives had become unmanageable” or working through Step One of Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA): “We admitted we were powerless over our dual illness of chemical dependency and emotional or psychiatric illness—that our lives had become unmanageable.”



EXERCISE 7

Select true or false for the following statements:

1. A common way people with co-occurring disorders deal with their problems is through denial.
 True False

2. Co-occurring disorders rarely have a serious effect on your life and the lives of those around you.
 True False

3. Recovery means taking a serious look at your alcohol and other drug use and how you cope with your mental health issues.

True False

4. Step One of Double Trouble in Recovery is a good place to begin the soul-searching necessary for recovery.

True False

Early Recovery: Considering and Acting

During early recovery, you may become willing to think about issues related to addiction and recovery. During this time, you may learn more information about addiction and the ways in which it hurts you and others. However, you may still have a lot of denial that your alcohol or other drug use causes problems or is a problem.

As you progress through recovery, you become less in denial about the realities of your own addiction. You become more aware of the ways in which it has been a problem for you and for others. You start making a commitment to deal with your addiction. You start taking steps in the direction of health.



EXERCISE 8

Please answer the following questions:

1. What prompted you to go from simply exploring issues about recovery to taking steps toward recovery?

2. Place a check mark next to any of the following steps you have taken in the direction of health. Circle one or two that you could try in the near future.

- Agreeing to enter a treatment program
- Seeing a therapist
- Taking medications (as directed) for one or both disorders
- Working on developing positive relationships with family members
- Making new friends who support my recovery
- Attending Twelve Step or other support groups
- Participating in an aftercare program
- Other: _____

Early Recovery: Learning Skills for a Life of Recovery

One of the ways in which people take steps in the direction of health is to learn recovery skills. The treatment program will provide many opportunities for you to learn skills for living, how to reduce stress and anxiety, how to communicate your feelings, how to avoid triggers, and how to deal with triggers you can't avoid. Overall, you learn how to develop healthy behaviors, healthy relationships, and new habits that help to support your recovery.

Over time, as your recovery matures, you learn to keep an eye on your feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and relationships. You learn to question whether your feelings and behaviors are helping to support your recovery. You learn to consider whether your relationships are helping or hurting your recovery. In other words, over time, you learn how to keep your recovery going, one day at a time.



EXERCISE 9

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are three recovery skills that you have learned or are learning now?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Are there any areas of your recovery that you could use help with?

Yes No

(If yes, what new recovery skills might help you in these areas? If no, please explain.)

Over time, as your recovery matures, you learn to keep an eye on your feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and relationships. You learn to consider whether your relationships are helping or hurting your recovery.



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Part 2: Recovery and Your Body, Mind, Relationships, and Spirit

As discussed earlier, addiction, treatment, and recovery are all biopsychosocial processes. In other words, addiction, treatment, and recovery are all affected by your body, mind, and relationships, and they all have an effect on your body, mind, relationships, and spirit.

As a result, your recovery from co-occurring disorders will be on multiple levels: your body, your mind, your relationships, and your spirit. And they are all related to one other.

As you recover, your body improves. As your brain begins to heal, your thinking and the way you handle emotions improve. As you recover, your relationships with other people improve. Recovery makes it possible for your spiritual life to improve.

For each of these areas (body, mind, relationships, and spirit), change in one area affects the others. Improvements in one area can help to improve the others. Not addressing one area makes it harder to improve the others.

When your body, mind, relationships, and spirit improve during recovery, you begin to live in balance.



LEARNER OBJECTIVES FOR PART 2:

You will

- describe ways in which recovery from co-occurring disorders is a biopsychosocial process.
- describe ways in which recovery from co-occurring disorders is a process involving improvements for your physical health, your mind, your relationships, and your spirit.



EXERCISE 10

Please answer the following questions:

1. How do your co-occurring disorders affect your body, mind, and social life?

2. Now, in what ways can recovery help improve your body, mind, and social life?

Recovery: Your Brain

Both substance use and mental health disorders are complex brain disorders. During early recovery, you will face many problems that are centered in the brain. These include detoxification, triggers, and cravings. Sobriety initiates a process of healing and recovering in your brain.

As your brain starts healing, you begin feeling less confused and disoriented, and your thinking becomes sharper and more normal. As your brain heals, you can learn techniques to reduce the power of triggers and cravings for alcohol and other drugs.

For some people with co-occurring disorders, as their brains heal from the presence of alcohol and other drugs (and as the result of prescribed medications), some of their mental health symptoms start to fade. For instance, an alcohol-dependent person with depression may feel less depressed as his or her brain starts to heal.



EXERCISE 11

Please check the answer that seems most true in the following list and then answer the accompanying question.

1. My co-occurring disorders have caused me to experience the following:
- Withdrawal symptoms
 - Cravings
 - Triggers

- Feeling confused
- Feeling disoriented
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Feeling emotional
- Not having feelings
- All of the above
- Other: _____

2. Now that you are receiving treatment for your co-occurring disorders, how do you think your brain is recovering?



During recovery, you will likely start paying more attention to those medical and dental problems you have been ignoring.

Recovery: Your Physical Health

If you are like most people with co-occurring disorders, you probably have medical problems that you ignored for several years. These might include nutritional problems, liver disease, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, or general medical or dental problems. Also, you have probably not exercised and have developed poor eating habits.

During recovery, you will likely start paying more attention to those medical and dental problems you have been ignoring. Recovery is also a time to start developing healthy eating habits and an exercise program. By improving your diet and regularly exercising, you greatly improve your overall biopsychosocial health. An improved diet helps your brain to heal. And exercise helps your body become stronger. All of this improves your emotional life.

When your brain heals and your body becomes stronger, you are taking important steps toward living in balance and strengthening your recovery.



EXERCISE 12

Please respond to the following:

1. How have your co-occurring disorders affected your physical health?

2. Place a check mark next to any of the following steps you have taken to improve your physical health. Circle one or two steps that you would like to try in the near future.

- Saw a family doctor or specialist for a physical or to address specific ailments
- Saw a dentist for a checkup or to address specific dental needs
- Sought advice from a nutritionist or consulted books on nutrition to improve my diet
- Made a concerted effort to eat healthier foods
- Have consulted a physician or other expert on starting an exercise program
- Have started an exercise program
- Other: _____

Recovery: Your Mind, Triggers, and Cravings

During early recovery, people with co-occurring disorders have a very important task. They need to learn how to avoid triggers and manage their cravings for alcohol and other drugs.

During recovery, you will learn to identify the cues, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that act as triggers for your substance use and mental health disorders. You will then be taught many strategies and techniques for learning new behaviors. For example, it is important for you to develop skills to identify and deal with stressors in your life.

Substance use and mental health disorders harm your thinking and feeling. Recovery helps to improve your ability to think more clearly, relax your mind, and have more normal feelings. This helps you to better live in balance.



EXERCISE 13

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are some of your triggers for substance use?
What are some of your triggers for your mental health disorder?

2. What are some of the ways in which you are learning to deal with your triggers?

Recovery: Your Mind and Your Emotions

During recovery, you have the task of addressing very strong feelings. If you are like most people with co-occurring disorders, you will feel grief, loss, shame, and guilt about facing your past. You will probably feel anxiety and worry about the future.

If you do not face and deal with these emotions, they can linger. They can hurt your ability to develop healthy relationships. They can hurt your self-esteem. They can stop you from feeling a sense of competence.

So you will be asked to experience and face your feelings. You will be asked to talk openly about your feelings in group and individual therapy sessions. Doing so helps you to be honest with yourself and others about your true feelings. And it helps to reduce the power of these strong emotions and communicate them appropriately. It is like taking a load off your back.



EXERCISE 14

Select true or false for the following statements:

1. When I stopped drinking alcohol or using other drugs, I experienced strong feelings as if for the first time.
 True False

2. The feelings I experienced in early recovery involved both shame about my past and anxiety about the future.
 True False

3. At first, I felt uncomfortable when talking about my feelings with others.
 True False

4. After learning to express my emotions to others, I experienced a sense of relief.
 True False

Recovery: Social Relationships

Another important recovery task is for you to build a new social support network that is healthy and supports your recovery.

It is often said that you can only recover if you stop seeing your old substance-using friends and make new friends who support your recovery. And this is most often true. You will find that many of the social skills you used with substance-using friends are not helpful in recovery, where openness and honesty are important.

As you go through the recovery process, you will learn that there are many people, places, and things that will support your recovery. In addition, you will learn that you have the social skills to connect with new and healthy people who can become part of your social support network.

Your recovery will include decisions about reconnecting with some friends and relatives, and the need to break friendships with others. You will learn that making healthy new friendships is rewarding and makes your recovery stronger.



EXERCISE 15

Please answer the following questions:

1. How did your old social network keep you drinking alcohol or using drugs or perhaps stop you from getting treatment for your mental health disorder?

2. How can a good social support network help you maintain your recovery?

3. Place a check mark next to the places where you have tried to meet new friends. Circle one or two places that you would like to try in the near future.

- Mutual self-help groups
- Sporting activities (e.g., a softball or bowling league)
- Book club at a library or bookstore
- Hobby or enthusiast groups
- Community education or college class
- Volunteer organizations
- Health club
- Other: _____

Recovery: Social Boundaries

An important task for your recovery is to develop a healthy sense of *autonomy*. What is autonomy? For our purposes, *autonomy* means a sense of independence and a sense that you are your own person. Developing autonomy is important because, during recovery, you need to make and keep personal boundaries so you can develop and maintain healthy relationships.

You will experience tension between the desire for closeness and the need to maintain personal boundaries. Learning to resolve this tension is necessary to keep personal relationships and make new ones.

For many people, this means making nonsexual relationships with people of the opposite gender, sometimes for the first time in their lives.



During recovery, you need to make and keep personal boundaries so you can develop and maintain healthy relationships.



EXERCISE 16

Please answer the following questions:

1. What does *autonomy* mean to you? In what ways is autonomy important for your recovery?

2. Have you had a relationship where you experienced a tension between wanting to feel close to that person *and* maintain healthy personal boundaries? Please explain.

Yes No

3. In the past, have you had any healthy relationships with people of the opposite sex? Please explain.

Yes No

Recovery: Family Relationships

If you are like most people with co-occurring disorders, your family is an important part of your substance use disorder, your mental health disorder, and your recovery. Your substance use and mental health disorders may have caused your family members pain and anger, and your family members may have knowingly or unknowingly contributed to your problems.

As you go along in the recovery process, it will be important to find ways in which your family can support your recovery. During this time, your role in the family may change. In addition, you will learn to take responsibility for your behaviors.

Taking responsibility for your behaviors helps your family support your recovery and helps you and your family heal.



EXERCISE 17

Please answer the following questions:

1. In what ways did your substance use or mental health problems cause your family pain and anger?

2. In what ways did your family contribute to your problems?

3. What are some specific ways your family members can support your recovery? For example, what would you ask them to do or not do? List five examples:

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

- d. _____

- e. _____

Recovery: Friendships

It is typical for people in early recovery to shift from the isolation of addiction to a desire for connection with other people. Like most people in recovery from co-occurring disorders, you must take a good hard look at your relationships. You have to make the difficult decisions about whether your friends can be a healthy part of your recovery or whether they will harm your recovery. Your true friends will recognize and support the change and recovery in your life.

As you progress through your recovery, you will realize that some of your old friends who have problems with alcohol and other drugs will harm your recovery, and therefore cannot be part of your life. However, you will realize that people in recovery make new healthy friends who can support recovery. In particular, people in recovery meet and make friends with similar experiences in Twelve Step programs.

As you progress through your recovery, you will realize that some of your old friends who have problems with alcohol and other drugs will harm your recovery, and therefore cannot be part of your life.

Through Twelve Step groups, you can share your experiences, learn from others' experiences, and develop social skills that support your recovery. These experiences strengthen your hope and belief that recovery is achievable.



EXERCISE 18

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you currently have certain friends who represent a risk to your recovery?

Yes No

(If yes, please list who they are and explain. If no, please explain.)

2. How can the sharing of experiences in Twelve Step groups help in your recovery?

Recovery: Treatment Support

Treatment programs differ from one another. However, most programs for people with co-occurring disorders provide opportunities for check-ins as the need arises.

As you go through the recovery process, there may be times when you do not feel confident about your ability to continue in the recovery process. This is normal. When this happens, you can contact the treatment program and ask for a brief counseling session.

For many people, a brief counseling session helps increase their confidence to continue in their recovery. These sessions are a place for people to review their recovery goals, resources, and supports.

It is important to think of your treatment program as a recovery resource, even after you have completed the program.



EXERCISE 19

Please respond to the following:

1. How can you include your treatment program as a resource in your personal recovery plan?

2. Ask about your treatment program’s policy regarding speaking or meeting with a staff member after leaving the program. Identify the person you should speak with, obtain the phone number, and learn how to arrange a phone or in-person counseling session. Write this information here:

Name:

Phone number:

Other information:

Also list the contact information for the person you'll be seeing for your mental health follow-ups.

Recovery: Your Community

In addition to your family, friends, and professional world, you live in a community. Some parts of the community may provide conditions that prompt relapse. For instance, people with co-occurring disorders sometimes experience stigma and discrimination in the community. This can be especially true if you have other identifying characteristics, such as being an ex-offender or gay or a minority.

But there are also parts of your community that help your recovery. Obviously, the Twelve Step programs are a strong source of support. (Keep in mind that some groups may provide support for problems with alcohol or other drugs but not for mental health disorders. If possible, try to connect with organizations, such as Dual Recovery Anonymous [DRA], Dual Diagnosis Anonymous [DDA], or Double Trouble in Recovery [DTR], that provide support for both of your disorders.)

In the past, you may have endangered people in your community by driving drunk or dealing drugs. To make amends, many people in recovery do volunteer work in their communities, especially in their own cultural communities. For example, if you are an African American, you might volunteer one night a week in an outpatient treatment program with a high percentage of African Americans. As a woman, you might volunteer at a women's shelter. While such work is not always directly related to recovery (for example, you might use your work skills to help others in your career field), helping other people helps you recover and makes a difference in your community. It is in the spirit of the Twelve Steps that you carry the message of hope to others in your community as well as to alcoholics and drug users.



EXERCISE 20

Please answer the following questions:

1. Have you experienced discrimination or been otherwise stigmatized in your community? Please explain.

- Yes
- No

2. How has this discrimination affected your recovery?

3. Place a check mark next to the areas of your community where you have done volunteer work. Circle one or two areas that you would like to try in the near future.

- Homeless shelter
- Food shelf
- Treatment program
- Women’s shelter
- Humane society
- Civic organization (e.g., library, parks and recreation)
- Nursing home or hospital
- Other: _____

Recovery: Life Tasks

Recovery is a chance for a new life. You need to learn new skills to survive in this new life. You may need help becoming employed, finding housing, or developing basic skills for living, such as maintaining a home.

In addition, you may need to learn how to socialize and develop a healthy sexual life without alcohol or other drugs. Some of these issues will be addressed in your treatment program, but you may need additional help.

Also, your education may have been interrupted by your substance use or mental health disorders. Thus, education may be an important part of your recovery. Many people return to school to finish their education or to pursue additional education so that they can get a better job.

Learning new skills and obtaining more education can be a very important part of your recovery program.



Learning new skills and obtaining more education can be a very important part of your recovery program.



EXERCISE 21

Please respond to the following:

- 1. How have your co-occurring disorders interrupted your education, work, or daily living?

2. Place a check mark next to the life skills you feel you need help with in the list below:

- Substance resistance
- Peer resistance
- Setting goals
- Following through on goals
- Making decisions
- Solving problems
- Verbal assertiveness
- Making requests
- Refusing requests
- Communication
- Expressing feelings
- Anger management
- Conflict resolution
- Stress reduction
- Finding employment
- Finding housing
- Other: _____

Recovery: Spirituality

Before you entered treatment—when you were actively using alcohol or other drugs and were struggling with your mental health disorder—your focus was primarily on drinking alcohol or using drugs. However, now, in recovery, you can look around and realize that there is more to life.

Recovery is a process that can help give new meaning to your life. Recovery and spirituality are both personal processes of change that help to transform your attitudes, values, beliefs, and practices. This change begins when you realize that you are imperfect, that you cannot recover alone, and that you can seek help from an outside source.

Your recovery can grow when it is connected to other people and when you seek help from a Higher Power that is greater than yourself. For many people, this Higher Power is God, but for others, it can have other meanings. For everyone, it is the recognition that you cannot recover alone and need help from some source outside of yourself.



EXERCISE 22

Please answer the following questions:

1. When you think about recovery from your co-occurring disorders, what does *spirituality* mean to you?

2. What are five ways that you can improve your spirituality?

- a.

- b.

- c.

- d.

- e.

Recovery: Spirituality and Healing

Your recovery gives you an opportunity for a process of healing, self-reflection, character building, and developing new attitudes and behaviors.

You probably hurt yourself and others because of your substance use and mental health disorders. However, your recovery is an opportunity to learn how to forgive and be forgiven.

When you realize that you are imperfect, you start learning how to forgive yourself. As you make progress in your recovery, family and friends start learning how to forgive you. Remember, this is a process, not an event when everything is suddenly better. It takes time.

When you start making restitution to people you have harmed, and as you start giving back to other people, you improve your spiritual life. You learn that spirituality is not mysterious. Rather, you can grow spiritually by practicing certain behaviors, such as helping other people.

When you start making restitution to people you have harmed, and as you start giving back to other people, you improve your spiritual life.



EXERCISE 23

Please answer the following questions:

1. How important is it for other people to forgive you? List the names of three people whose forgiveness is most important to you. How can their forgiveness help your recovery?

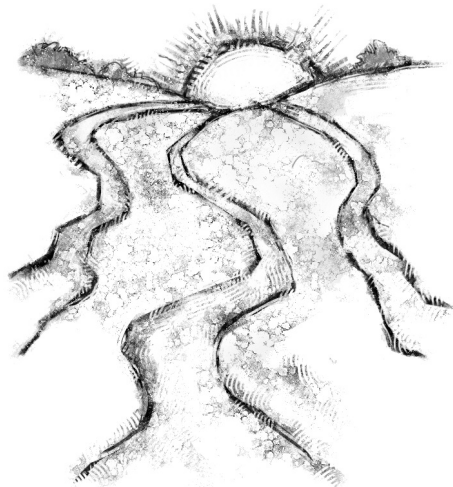
2. How can forgiving yourself help your recovery?

3. What are three specific things that you need to do to forgive yourself? List them here.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____



A visualization is a technique in which a person creates images in the mind that can influence what the mind and body do now and in the future.



**EXERCISE 24:
Visualization**

Please take a moment to read and do the following:

Your life is important and has meaning. To increase your sense of purpose and meaning, you need to remind yourself that you can get better, you are taking steps to get better, and by working through this session, you are getting better.

As you walk forward in your recovery, you can get a new sense of purpose and meaning. Recovery can help to restore a sense of hope in your life.

In this session, you reviewed ways in which recovery is a process that affects your body, mind, relationships, and spirit.

Take a few minutes to pause, be calm, and relax. Visualize for a moment one image that best expresses how your recovery is a process and is improving your body, mind, relationships, and spirit.

Now make a mental image of how you would like to be in the future.

Think about specific goals you would like to achieve. Think about ways in which you would like to grow and improve.

It may take work, time, and patience, but you can achieve these goals. Achieving these goals is now part of your purpose in life. Achieving them can give your life new meaning.



Session 41 Summary

In this session you examined various ways in which your recovery is a process that involves your body, mind, spirit, and social world. You considered ways in which your co-occurring disorders have affected these areas of your life. You considered ways in which your recovery affects these areas of your life. These are deeply personal and emotional issues.

Going through this session may have been challenging and taken courage. However, working through this session has provided you with important information about your recovery and improvement in multiple areas of your life. This information can help you to develop a stronger recovery and to live in balance.