A WOMAN’S WAY through THE TWELVE STEPS

FACILITATOR’S GUIDE
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A WOMAN’S WAY through THE TWELVE STEPS

FACILITATOR’S GUIDE

Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D.

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Contents

Program Components  xiii
Preface  xv
Acknowledgments  xvii

Program Overview

Introduction to A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps  1
Who Can Use A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps?  2
Is A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Evidence-Based?  2
Is A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Compatible
with Traditional Twelve Step Recovery Groups?  3

How to Use This Facilitator’s Guide

How Are the Sessions Structured?  5
How Is This Facilitator’s Guide Structured?  6
Must Group Participants Be Actively Involved in Twelve Step Meetings?  7
How Is A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps: Program DVD Used
as Part of This Program?  7
Conducting the Sessions  8
Required Materials and Preparation for Each Session  10
How to Set Up a Room  10
Adapting the Sessions for Use with Girls  11
Contents

Background Information
A New Understanding of Women and Addiction 13
Principles of Recovery Programs for Women 14
The Evolution of Twelve Step Programs 17
A Woman’s Way and Twelve Step Programs 18
Four Important Issues: Self, Relationships, Sexuality, and Spirituality 19
Discovering One’s Values 19
The Spiral of Addiction and Recovery 20

The Sessions

Opening Session: Beginning
A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps

Opening Session: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 22
Welcome 23
Introductions 24
Lecturette: Introduction to the Program 24
Self-Soothing Exercise: The Five Senses 27
Group Agreements 28
Activity: Collage of the Balance Scales 30
Workbook Assignments 31
Activity: First Thing in the Morning 31
Closing 32
Optional Activity: Celebrate Your Growth 33
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls 33

Session 1: Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Session 1: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 36
Opening 37
Activity: What Is Beginning to Blossom in You? 37
Review of Homework from Last Session 38
Lecturette: Introduction to Step One 38
Discussion: Awareness of Addiction 39
Session 2: Step Two

*Cam* to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to *sanity*.

Session 2: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed  48
Opening  49
Activity: Sharing Gratitude  49
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session  49
Lecturette: A Power Greater than Ourselves  50
Discussion: Trust  50
Lecturette: Visualizing a Higher Power  51
Activity: The Power of Support  52
Optional Activity: Trust Walk  54
Lecturette: Sanity  54
Activity: Collage on Sanity  55
Optional Activity: Drawing Sanity  56
Workbook Assignments  56
Closing  57
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls  57

Session 3: Step Three

*Made* a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Session 3: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed  60
Opening  61
Activity: Sharing Gratitude  61
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session  61
Lecturette: Introduction to Step Three  62
Activity: Letting Go  63
Session 4: Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Session 5: Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
Session 6: Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Session 7: Step Seven

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
Session 8: Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Session 8: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 114
Opening 115
Activity: Sharing Gratitude 115
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session 115
Lecturette: Focusing on Relationships 116
Discussion: “Persons We Had Harm ed” 117
Lecturette: Identifying Persons We Have Harmed and Becoming Willing to Make Amends 117
Discussion: Barriers to Being Willing to Make Amends 118
Activity: Checking the Seed Cups 119
Activity: Visualizing Good Relationships 120
Self-Soothing Exercise: Making a Joy List 122
Workbook Assignments 122
Closing 122
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls 123

Session 9: Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Session 9: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 124
Opening 125
Activity: Sharing Gratitude 125
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session 125
Lecturette: Making Amends—the Action Step 126
Discussion: Thinking It Through 128
Activity: Making Amends to Ourselves 129
Activity: Practicing Making Amends to Others 130
Self-Soothing Exercise: A Peaceful Place 132
Workbook Assignments 133
Closing 134
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls 134
Session 10: Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory
and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Session 10: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 136
Opening 137
Activity: Sharing Gratitude 137
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session 137
Lecturette: Continuing to Take a Personal Inventory 138
Discussion: Doing Step Ten 139
Lecturette: Admitting When We Are Wrong 139
Activity: Transformation Visualization 141
Activity: Loving Yourself 143
Activity: Positive Affirmations 144
Workbook Assignments 145
Closing 145
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls 145

Session 11: Step Eleven

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact
with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge
of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Session 11: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 148
Opening 149
Activity: Sharing Gratitude 149
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session 149
Activity: Walking Meditation 150
Discussion: Review of Step Ten 150
Lecturette: Prayer and Meditation 151
Discussion: Prayer and Meditation 153
Self-Soothing Exercise: Sanctuary Meditation 154
Activity: Support Groups 157
Workbook Assignments 158
Closing 158
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls 159
Session 12: Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Session 12: Overview and Lists of Materials Needed 160
Opening 161
Activity: Sharing Gratitude 161
Review of Workbook Assignments from Last Session 161
Lecturette: The Ongoing Step 162
Discussion: The Elements of Step Twelve 164
Activity: Slogans 165
Workbook Assignments 166
Closing Ceremony 166
Optional Closing Activity: Celebrate Your Growth 169
Optional Closing Rituals 170
Adapting the Session for Use with Girls 170

Appendix

Reproducible Handouts
  Opening Session: Group Agreements 172
  Session 1: The Downward Spiral 173
  Session 4: The Upward Spiral 174
  Session 6: Values Worksheet 175
  Session 7: Prayers 176

Notes 177
Gender-Responsive Program Materials Resource List 180
About the Author 183
The A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps program includes four components that fulfill the needs of clients and facilitators. These components can stand alone, but to achieve the best outcomes, use all four components together as a comprehensive, integrated treatment program for women and girls who struggle with substance use disorders and other addictive behaviors.

**A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps**

This book offers clients and professionals an illuminating view of how women understand and process the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is based on interviews with a diverse group of women and explores essential topics, such as spirituality, powerlessness, trauma, and the emergence of a woman’s sense of soul. For every woman who has felt that there are issues crucial to her recovery that just can’t be brought up in a mixed-gender meeting, this book brings the perspective of women to the wisdom of AA’s Twelve Steps.

Softcover book for clients and facilitators, 264 pages. Order No. 5019
A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps
Facilitator’s Guide

This text offers facilitators practical guidance regarding the most effective ways to conduct A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps sessions with clients, including when and how to use the A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps book, workbook, and DVD. This powerful guide integrates the most current research and best practices regarding women and recovery into thirteen practical group sessions.

Softcover guide for facilitators, 208 pages. Order No. 7544

A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Workbook

Designed to be used in conjunction with A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps, this workbook for clients helps to deepen understanding of essential lessons and bring them to life with simple exercises and journaling activities. It helps to empower each woman to take ownership of her recovery by documenting her growth and recovery process in a personally meaningful way.

Softcover book for clients’ use, 104 pages. Order No. 1752

A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps: Program DVD

This video is for clients, family members, and facilitators who would like to learn how women and girls can utilize the Twelve Steps in a very effective way. It also portrays the safe, nurturing, and empowering environment that is essential in order for women and girls to heal from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, as well as other addictive behaviors. The video begins with an introduction to the A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps program, followed by Stephanie Covington leading group participants through discussions and exercises. The participants aren’t actors; they are real women in recovery. Their experiences will strengthen and empower your clients. The program demonstrates a holistic perspective that treats addiction as the primary problem while also addressing the complexity of women’s issues, including shame, isolation, and histories of abuse.

DVD, 65 min., Order No. 7543
This book, A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator’s Guide, grew out of the experiences of many women in recovery. It contains information about their attitudes and expectations at the beginning of treatment, their questions and emerging points of view during treatment, and their insights as they continue their journey of recovery. It also contains my knowledge of women’s addiction and treatment, based on my education, my personal journey, and more than thirty years of helping a wide variety of women in many different settings to confront their addictions, to heal, and to begin to live productive, addiction-free lives.

This facilitator’s guide has a cover design that features the lotus flower. The inspiration for the lotus on the cover came from my great-grandmother, Mary Stewart. As a child, I called her “little Grandma” because she was less than five feet tall. She lived her adult life in Upland, California, surrounded by citrus groves. She used homeopathic (natural, holistic) remedies to help the Asian grove workers and their families, and she was given many pieces of Asian art as tokens of their gratitude. Probably as a result of her example, I, too, have an affinity for Asian art and philosophy, as well as for holistic, complementary medicine.
Several years ago, a family member gave me some packing-crate labels from the now-defunct family citrus business. Among those labels was one with an image of a lotus. I realized that the image must have been inspired by my great-grandmother, as the lotus is not a Southern California flower. I was surprised and touched because I had used the lotus as a symbol of women’s recovery for many years. (On pages 230 and 244 of *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps*, I mention the lotus.) To me, this story about my great-grandmother reflects one of the basic principles of life: We are all interconnected and, as women, we carry the spirits of the women who came before us.

When I decided to write *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator’s Guide* to accompany the book and the workbook, I knew that I wanted the cover to illustrate the beauty and power of the lotus. As we finalized the facilitator’s guide and program DVD, the people at Hazelden generously agreed to recover the existing *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* materials (the book and workbook) with the new lotus cover.

The Lotus

A picture of a lotus can be a meaningful and powerful symbol for women’s recovery. The lotus rises from muddy waters to blossom. Although it grows with its roots deep in the mud, it emerges pure and unblemished. It unfolds gradually, one petal at a time, to blossom in the sunlight.

The mud can symbolize murky beginnings, the material world, or the darkness of addiction. The water can symbolize experience, transition, or recovery. The lotus can symbolize the purity of the soul, rebirth, spiritual awakening, and enlightenment. For thousands of years, the lotus has been associated with spiritual practices in many religious traditions. It also symbolizes detachment from worldly desires and illusions.

I see the lotus as a symbol of women’s recovery. Recovery is a transformational experience. When a woman recovers, she is able to say, “Who I am today is not who I was.” The elegant and beautiful lotus flower that emerges from the mud is the beautiful woman within.
Acknowledgments

A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator’s Guide is a new addition to the existing A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps materials (book and workbook) and is available because of the commitment and support of many people. Hazelden has consistently supported my work through the years, and many people at Hazelden have shepherded this project. Sid Farrar has always been open to considering new materials; Kris Van Hoof has encouraged me to persevere; Jodie Carter has given thoughtful editorial and production advice; and Stacey Anger has developed creative marketing plans.

Others, outside of Hazelden, have also supported my work on this project. The producers of the DVD, Lynn Anderson and Joe Brandmeier of Moving Pictures Inc., were a wonder and delight to work with. Arlette Ballew and I have worked on many projects together, and her constancy and competence, coupled with her well-honed editing, make her the perfect writing partner. In addition, my colleagues and friends continue to be sources of support for all my endeavors. And, most important, the women in recovery who share their experiences, strength, and hope are the heart-center of these materials.

Thanks to all of you. I feel very grateful to have you in my life.

Stephanie S. Browne
Program Overview

Introduction to *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps*

*A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* is a program that includes four components: a book for clients and facilitators, a workbook for clients, a guide for facilitators, and an educational program DVD for clients, family members, and facilitators. The program started with the book *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps*, which was created in 1994 to provide an effective way for women to understand and use the Twelve Steps to heal from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, as well as other addictive behaviors. Other than its new cover in 2009, this timeless, groundbreaking book has not changed since its first publication. Its wisdom and guidance are still as inspiring and educational today as when it was first published.

Building upon the success of this original book, I wrote a workbook to offer women simple exercises and journaling activities that allow each woman to document and reflect on her recovery. Now *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator’s Guide* offers facilitators a practical curriculum to guide groups of women as they use the *A Woman’s Way* book and workbook. In addition, the informative *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps: Program DVD* educates clients, families, and facilitators on the basics of the *A Woman’s Way* program.
and how it can help women interpret and use the Twelve Steps to address their unique recovery needs. The DVD also provides a model for the essential environment in running groups for women and girls—safe, nurturing, and empowering.

**Who Can Use A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps?**

All four components of the A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps program are designed for use with women who are participating in a residential or outpatient treatment program for substance dependence or addiction. This facilitator’s guide also offers instructions on how to adapt the content for girls. These materials have been developed within the context of addiction-treatment programs but are equally useful when applied in criminal justice, mental health, or eating-disorder treatment programs that would also like to offer services for treating substance-use disorders and other addictive behaviors.

**Is A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Evidence-Based?**

Yes, the A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps program meets the evidence-based practice (EBP) guidelines established by the 2005 Presidential Task Force of the American Psychological Association, which states that “Evidence-based practice is defined as the integration of the best available research and clinical expertise within the context of patient characteristics, culture, values, and preferences.” A Woman’s Way meets these criteria for EBP because it is based on the Women’s Integrated Treatment (WIT) model and on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Research has been done on both of these models and their effectiveness with women has been demonstrated.

A Woman’s Way is based, in part, on the fundamentals of the WIT model I developed. The three fundamentals of WIT are:

1. the definition and principles of gender-responsive services
2. a theoretical foundation
3. a variety of therapeutic interventions

The three theories that create the foundation of the WIT model (and A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps) are Relational-Cultural Theory, addiction theory, and trauma theory. Read the Principles of Recovery Programs for
Women on page 14 of this guide for more information on the WIT model. The research on WIT shows that women do significantly better when participating in the WIT model than when they participate in treatment as usual.\(^2\)

There are some who feel that the Twelve Steps “don’t work for women,” “are bad for women,” and “do women an injustice,” but the reality is that research does not support this position.\(^3\) Several studies find that Twelve Step programs can and do work for women. This research reports that Twelve Step groups are more effective for women than cognitive-behavioral approaches.\(^4\) They increase women’s rates of abstinence,\(^5\) and they provide the meaningful social support that is needed for continuous recovery.\(^6\)

**Is A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Compatible with Traditional Twelve Step Recovery Groups?**

The A Woman’s Way program is consistent with the principles set forth in Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other recovery fellowships. Not one word has been changed in the language of the Steps. A Woman’s Way simply offers a program that can help women better use the Steps in a way that is meaningful to them.
A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator’s Guide offers valuable background information and describes a program that can help women recover from alcohol and drug use and other addictions. It offers step-by-step instructions for conducting recovery sessions with women and girls. This program was primarily developed for facilitators to use with groups of women or girls in addiction-treatment settings. The word facilitator in this text refers to anyone among a variety of practitioners with a wide range of educational experience, including counselors, clinicians, therapists, mental-health providers, and peer leaders (recovering women who serve as peer counselors and/or Twelve Step sponsors), who use this guide as part of the A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps program.

How Are the Sessions Structured?

The suggested number of group participants is between six and ten women or girls per group, but the curriculum can be adapted for larger or smaller groups, if necessary, to accommodate the treatment setting. Typically the facilitator meets with the group once a week for thirteen weeks. Each session is designed to be completed in approximately ninety minutes. This program can be used
in group formats that must stay within a sixty-minute timeline for each session, but to achieve the best outcomes, plan for ninety minutes per session.

The times indicated for activities and lectures are guidelines, but each group will have its own personality, and different groups will move through the materials at different speeds. You may need to adapt a session by using fewer activities, substituting optional activities, or shortening the lectureettes to ensure that the sessions end on time.

You will need a watch or clock for timing many of the activities. You may also want to bring a small bell or chime to use as a way to let the women know when the time is up for completing an activity. It is a soothing way to get their attention.

How Is This Facilitator’s Guide Structured?

The example below illustrates how the manual is designed. There are directions for the facilitator followed by information that the facilitator gives the group members.

Directions for the facilitator

Welcome (3 MINUTES)

As the women enter the room, acknowledge them and ask them to be seated in the circle. The women may be nervous, look hesitant, or have other feelings about beginning this program. It will help to begin each session with a few minutes of silence. When all the women are seated, welcome them and focus them on the work ahead.

What the facilitator says to the women

Welcome. Let’s take a few minutes to get settled and focus our attention on where we are. Let go of the thoughts and stresses of the day and just focus on your breathing. Perhaps it will help to close or lower your eyes. Breathe in deeply and then let it out. Let’s do that for a few moments.
Must Group Participants Be Actively Involved in Twelve Step Meetings?

Some of the group participants may already be attending Twelve Step meetings and have sponsors. Others may be reluctant to attend Twelve Step meetings or may have had negative experiences in such meetings. Some females who have histories of trauma may find it uncomfortable to be in large groups. For some, it will be important that they continue to attend their “home group” Twelve Step meetings every week in addition to attending these A Woman’s Way group sessions and completing the exercises in their A Woman’s Way workbooks. For others, this may be their only Twelve Step work at the present time or it may serve as an introduction to the Steps.

How Is A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps: Program DVD Used as Part of This Program?

The DVD is approximately sixty-five minutes long and includes two chapters.

Although this DVD was designed to support A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator’s Guide, the DVD can also be used alone to begin a discussion on how women can use the Twelve Steps in a way that speaks to them and addresses the complex issues—shame, isolation, and histories of abuse—that can complicate recovery.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 is approximately fifty minutes long and can be shown to clients, family members, and facilitators who would like to learn how women and girls can use the Twelve Steps. It provides a model for the safe, nurturing, and empowering environment that is essential in order for women and girls to heal from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, as well as other addictive behaviors. Facilitators may show all fifty minutes of chapter 1 to clients (and interested family members) as an orientation to the A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps program. Inside the DVD case is a four-page insert that offers additional information about the DVD.

In addition, facilitators may also want to show specific exercises in chapter 1 after their women’s group has completed the same exercises in their group.
This can help facilitate a group discussion about the unique issues women face in recovery.

To help you find specific activities shown on the DVD, look for the video disc icon in the table of contents of *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps Facilitator's Guide* (see pages v–xii).

Please do not show specific exercises from chapter 1 to group participants immediately before they are instructed to complete the exercises themselves, as this could create false expectations of group members who may feel that they should attempt to “mimic” the group of women shown in the DVD.

**Chapter 2**

The second chapter of the DVD is approximately fifteen minutes long and is intended to be viewed by facilitators only. This chapter includes a roundtable discussion with me and five helping professionals who discuss the *A Woman's Way* program and the challenges and successes in helping women recover from addiction.

Facilitators can also use the DVD as a self-training tool. As a facilitator, you will want to view chapter 1 and chapter 2 of the DVD before you begin conducting *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* groups. This will help you familiarize yourself with the tone and style of the group process. It is also helpful to preview specific exercises shown in chapter 1 as a way to prepare to conduct the same exercises with *A Woman's Way* group members.

**Conducting the Sessions**

Please follow the detailed instructions provided at the beginning of each session. The sequence of the material is important to the creation of a treatment dynamic that moves the client through a systematic recovery process.

**Preparation Tips**

Prior to beginning this program, please read the book *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* and the companion workbook. It is also best if you complete the exercises in the workbook for yourself, so that you know what they involve and how long they take to complete. This will prepare you to direct the group members in going through the workbook and to lead discussions.
of the exercises. Of course, you will also need to study this facilitator's guide thoroughly, so that you are prepared to conduct the sessions.

A typical session includes the following elements:

- opening (quiet time, breathing, letting go of the stresses of the day)
- welcome and sharing activity (welcome by the facilitator, personal introductions if appropriate, sharing of things the women are grateful for from the Step just completed)
- review and sharing of selected workbook exercises from the last session
- lecturettes and discussions to introduce the Step in question and how it may be adapted or interpreted to best meet the needs of women
- activities and sharing sessions to help the women to work through the Step and understand its meaning and significance; the purpose of sharing is to allow the participants to examine their personal responses to the material they have worked with and to incorporate it into their lives
- a review of the workbook assignments (homework) related to the Step in question
- closing

In each session, you will:

- Deliver one or more lecturettes (short talks) to provide background material on the Step being explored and the topics to be covered.
- Lead the group members through a variety of activities (including self-soothing exercises, art projects, and guided-imagination experiences) that help them to learn about the topics experientially.
- Guide the participants through the sharing sessions and discussions to help them express their thoughts and feelings and to progress through the Steps.
- Periodically ask if there are any questions. Although this is not expressly stated in the directions for each session, you will need to use your judgment about when to pause after a lecturette, discussion, or activity to be sure all the women in the group are equally “on board” in terms of the content or instructions. This may be particularly true when you are describing the homework (from the workbook) to be done between the sessions, because all the women in the group may not have the same levels of reading and comprehending skills.
Required Materials and Preparation for Each Session

Prepare for each session in advance by assembling the materials needed to conduct the activities. Each individual session includes detailed instructions on materials needed and preparation required. You will note that many of the activities call for the women to have paper and pens or pencils available. It is preferable to have the women do as much writing as possible in the A Woman’s Way workbook, so they have as many of their reflections and responses as possible in one place. However, there may not be enough blank space in their workbooks for all the writing activities, so you may need to hand out blank paper. As an alternative, you may want to have them write in a spiral notebook that will be their “Little Books” or journals that can be used during their Twelve Step work.

The things you will need for every session are a newsprint flip chart, an easel for holding the flip chart, a watch (clock or chime) to help keep the activities on time, and colored felt-tip markers for writing on the flip-chart sheets. You will use the sheets to write important points as you deliver the lecturettes, list important points or suggestions from the women during discussions, list instructions, and so on. You will also want to have masking tape available so you can post some of the sheets on the wall so all participants can see them. If the room you are using contains a large blackboard or a whiteboard, you may use that (with colored chalk or whiteboard pens) instead of the newsprint flip chart and easel.

You may need to modify some of the activities if you are working in a criminal justice setting. For example, if scissors are prohibited, then you may need to do some precutting before the “spiral” activities in sessions 1 and 4 and have the women tear items out of magazines for their collages.

Each session in this program can be adapted for use with girls. Specific instructions are included at the end of each session. Before you begin, please read Adapting the Sessions for Use with Girls, on the next page, for tips on how to modify this program for use with girls.

How to Set Up a Room

The best room setup for most parts of a group session is a circle of movable chairs (one chair for each participant, including yourself). For sessions that include creative activities, you may need tables or desks or floor space for the
women to work on. Try to create an environment in which everyone feels equal and one that is conducive for sharing. This often involves positioning clients in a circle, with the facilitator being one part of that circle. As a facilitator, it’s best to avoid the traditional lecture style of standing in front of a row of clients (as in a classroom) or sitting at a desk in the front of the room. This can give the impression of a school lecture, rather than a sharing environment.

When you are delivering a lecturette or leading a discussion, you may want to stand by the flip chart, which will be positioned just outside of the circle where all can see it, so that you can write down things you particularly want the women in the group to remember. At other times, such as when the women are sharing sensitive information about themselves, it is best that you sit in the circle. This will make it easier for the women in the group to accept you, identify with you, and share their feelings and opinions.

Adapting the Sessions for Use with Girls

Each chapter will contain notes at the end about adapting the session for use with teenage girls and young women (ages 13 to 18). If you will be facilitating the sessions with girls, you will also want to go through the contents with a marking pen and delete anything that is inappropriate for girls and add what you think is best. As mentioned earlier, many girls and young women have difficulty feeling connected to the Twelve Steps. Often, this is because the language seems old and outdated. Part of your role as a facilitator is to help girls understand the principles for living that are contained in each Step and to help them see the value of trying and using these principles in their everyday lives. So as you delete material from the sessions in this guide that you feel will not work with the particular girls you are helping, add language and examples that will resonate with their experiences in their lives. When girls and young women use and practice the principles of the Steps, they find their value. This program material can also be used in conjunction with Voices: A Program of Self-Discovery and Empowerment for Girls.\(^1\)

Being encouraged or required to attend Twelve Step meetings and to find a temporary sponsor as a part of treatment can be advantageous to girls in order to “get them going.” It is important for girls to understand that different meetings have different personalities and different age groups, so each girl may want to “shop” meetings to find one she likes or one that includes other young people.
It will also be useful for you to help each of the girls find a woman to be her temporary sponsor. She can attend women’s meetings with her and help explain the process of each different type of meeting. It will be helpful if you check your immediate area to find out where the women’s meetings are held and if particular meetings have more young women attending.
When Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) was founded in 1935, most, if not all, of the participants were men. Women’s use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs was hidden,¹ along with the pervasiveness of domestic violence, incest, and other forms of abuse against women. Until the 1950s it was illegal for films or advertisements in the United States to show women drinking. Before the Women’s Movement of the 1960s drew attention to the realities of women’s lives, women who attended AA meetings were often invited to make coffee but not to raise issues unique to women.

In the past thirty years, however, we have developed a strong body of research about women’s lives and women’s addictions. We now know that about 30 percent of all addicts in the United States are women.² Many women have entered recovery programs based on the Twelve Steps of AA, and we have discovered that women’s needs in recovery and their pathways to recovery differ in some significant ways from those of men.

**A New Understanding of Women and Addiction**

Historically, addiction-treatment providers have focused primarily on the addiction and assumed that a client’s other issues would be dealt with in some
other way. However, research clearly shows that a vast majority of addicted women have suffered interpersonal violence and abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional) and that this history drastically increases the chances that a woman will abuse alcohol and other drugs. Furthermore, a history of serious traumatic experiences adversely affects a woman’s physical and mental health.

Gender also plays a role in addiction. Effective treatment for women is based on knowledge of women’s life experiences and the impact of being a female in a male-based society. One of these impacts is that traditional addiction programs designed for men are not best suited to the psychological and social needs of women.

Of course, there also are differences between women, based on a number of factors, such as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Several years ago, the United Nations developed a monograph on the treatment of drug-addicted women around the world.

The women’s issues were as follows:

- shame and stigma
- physical and sexual abuse
- relationship issues
  - fear of losing children
  - fear of losing a partner
  - needing a partner’s permission to obtain treatment
- treatment issues
  - lack of services for women
  - not understanding women’s treatment

It is clear that many of the issues that addicted women struggle with are universal.

**Principles of Recovery Programs for Women**

A research-based report for the National Institute of Corrections states the basic principles that are applicable to any setting that serves women. The four principles that are most relevant to this program are:
1. Gender: Acknowledge that gender makes a difference.
2. Environment: Create an environment based on safety, respect, and dignity.
3. Relationships: Develop policies, practices, and programs that are relational and promote healthy connections to children, family, significant others, and the community.
4. Services: Address substance abuse, trauma, and mental health issues through comprehensive, integrated, and culturally relevant services.

Research demonstrates that addiction treatment services for women (and girls) need to be based on a holistic and female-centered approach that acknowledges their psychosocial needs and that addresses and responds to their unique challenges and strengths. An example of this type of treatment is called Women’s Integrated Treatment (WIT), a model I developed. It is based, in part, on three theoretical foundations: Relational-Cultural Theory, addiction theory, and trauma theory.

**Relational-Cultural Theory**

Females’ psychological development and many of their needs are different from those of males. Theories such as Relational-Cultural Theory posit that the primary motivation for females throughout life is the establishment of a strong sense of connection with others. Females develop a sense of self and self-worth when their actions arise out of, and lead back into, connections with others. For women and girls, disconnection occurs at the sociocultural level, as well as the personal level, through racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism.

**Addiction Theory**

It is important to understand the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a woman’s self, as well as the environmental and sociopolitical aspects, to understand her addiction. An addicted female typically is not using alcohol or other drugs in isolation, so her relationships with family members and other loved ones and her existence in community and society must be taken into account. For example, family members may be abusive, may be involved in drug dealing, or may be incarcerated. A holistic perspective treats addiction as the primary problem while also addressing the complexity of women’s issues, including shame, isolation, histories of abuse, and resultant medical problems.
Trauma Theory

Trauma often refers to a disordered psychic or behavioral state caused by being the victim of violent acts, by witnessing violence against others, and from stigmatization because of gender, race, poverty, incarceration, or sexual orientation. Trauma is a natural response to an overwhelmingly negative experience. In adults, the response is often intense fear, helplessness, or horror. In children, the common response is disorganized or agitated behavior. There are physical as well as psychological reactions to trauma, and these are normal reactions to an abnormal or extreme situation. The resulting behaviors can be classified as retreat, self-destructive action, and destructive action. Females are more likely to retreat or be self-destructive; males are more likely to engage in destructive behavior.9

Many women who used to be considered “treatment failures” because they relapsed are now recognized as trauma survivors who returned to alcohol or other drugs to medicate the pain of trauma. By integrating trauma treatment with addiction treatment, we reduce the risk of trauma-based relapse.

In psychiatrist Judith Herman’s three-stage model for trauma recovery, a woman’s first need is safety.10 If we want to assist women in changing their lives, we must create a safe environment in which the healing process can begin to take place.

Many trauma survivors use alcohol or other drugs to self-medicate anxiety or depression, because they know no better way to comfort themselves. We can teach these women to use grounding and self-soothing techniques, such as breathing exercises, walking, listening to soft music, meditation, and bubble baths, to help alleviate some of the symptoms of anxiety and depression, which will make it easier for them to achieve abstinence and sustain a lifelong recovery.

Although Twelve Step groups are appropriate for beginning recovery because of their focus on present-tense issues of self-care in a supportive, structured environment, Herman emphasizes that a trauma survivor who is working on safety issues needs to be in a recovery group that is female-only (including the facilitator). Women may not want to talk about sensitive issues relating to abuse or their relationships with males in groups that include men, which most Twelve Step groups do.
The Evolution of Twelve Step Programs

There are now more than 126 “anonymous” mutual-help groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, and groups that focus on gambling, workaholism, sexual and incest issues, other eating disorders, and a wide spectrum of problem behaviors.

Historically, Twelve Step programs were designed predominantly for the needs of males. Gradually, women began attending, and the programs began to be critiqued by some feminists because of the simplistic, sexist, and reductionist program language.11 Such writers were particularly concerned about the Twelve Steps’ emphasis on powerlessness as liberating. In contrasting the recovery movement with the Women’s Movement, Marianne Walters pointed out that “one movement encourages individuals to surrender to a spiritual higher power, where the other encourages people to join together to challenge and restructure power arrangements in the larger society.”12 What was often missed in such critiques is that masculine power over is what is being relinquished in order to experience the feminine power with, the power to be able—in other words, a sense of empowerment.13 The process of recovery from addiction is a process of recovering a different, more feminine, sense of power and will.

There is also confusion between surrender and submission. For example, when we submit, we give in to a force that’s trying to control us. When we surrender, we let go of our need to control. Recovery encourages surrender and giving up the illusion of control. When facilitating recovery groups for women or girls, it’s important to teach the concept of surrender in ways that also acknowledge and support individual and collective female strength and empowerment.

Three of the characteristics of Alcoholics Anonymous that were radical when it was founded in 1935 are still true. Twelve Step programs are free, a radical concept in a capitalistic society; they are nonhierarchical, a radical idea in a patriarchal society; and they are spiritual, a radical stance in a secular society.

As previously stated, females grow and develop in relationships. Throughout history, they have supported one another by sharing their experiences. Twelve
Step programs can provide growth-fostering relational contexts and can offer their members social support through the creation of a caring community. These programs can also create safe environments, which are essential elements for recovery from trauma. In addition to being free, in most urban communities, Twelve Step programs are readily available throughout most parts of the day.

Despite the original sexist language in which the Twelve Steps are couched, and the fact that the Steps do not encourage discussions of the unique social factors that may be related to a woman’s alcohol and drug dependence, many women and girls are able to use A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps to interpret the Steps and to participate in traditional Twelve Step meetings in ways that are distinctly personal, meaningful, and useful to them.

Not all geographic areas have all-female Twelve Step meetings. In addition, AA does not encourage discussions of the social factors that may be related to alcohol and drug dependence, although it may be that a woman’s or girl’s environment contributed to her addiction and deters her recovery.

Although many women have participated in Twelve Step groups for their recovery, many of them have difficulty with the predominately male language in the AA Big Book and in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Others will not attend meetings because of this language. I encourage them to read the book A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps and to participate in A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps groups. Doing so often helps women and girls relate to the Steps so they become more willing to attend traditional Twelve Step meetings, especially if no female-only meetings are available in their area. Because the pronouns and the examples used in the A Woman’s Way program are all feminine, women and girls who read these materials are better able to see themselves in the examples and to relate to the Twelve Steps. These females do not need to “translate” the material to make it relevant for them. This is particularly true for younger women and girls, because the language of Twelve Step programs appears out-of-date to many younger women who may not otherwise see its value in their lives.

**A Woman’s Way and Twelve Step Programs**

The four primary ways that A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps supplements Twelve Step programs to best suit women and girls in recovery are as follows. It:
1. Provides supportive, female-centered environments and healing tools.
2. Helps them interpret the language. The punitive and shaming language that may be heard in co-ed meetings is not appropriate for women and girls. They are more apt to recover in an environment that stresses empowerment and mutual support.
3. Provides coping skills in the form of grounding and self-soothing techniques that can be used to cope with life experiences without using alcohol or other drugs.
4. Acknowledges the trauma. It is important to assure women and girls who have suffered trauma that their responses are normal, given their experiences.

Four Important Issues: Self, Relationships, Sexuality, and Spirituality

Prior to writing *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps*, I conducted a study of women in the United States who were in recovery. This study revealed that the areas women struggled with most—self, relationships, sexuality, and spirituality—were the areas in which they had the potential for greatest change and growth. These four themes are tied to the Twelve Steps. The book *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps*, pages 193–244, describes ways to help women improve these critical areas of their lives. These four themes are also the titles of the modules in *Helping Women Recover*, another treatment curriculum I designed for women.14

Discovering One’s Values

Using the Twelve Steps as a guide, the participants in the *A Woman’s Way* program will explore what they think, feel, and believe and will connect their inner lives to their actions with other people in the world. Practicing the Steps and changing their behaviors will help them discover what their values are, how they may have acted contrary to their values in the past, and how they can act in harmony with them in the future. This experience of connecting one’s feelings and beliefs with one’s actions is what I call wholeness or integrity. The principles embodied in the Steps can help women develop integrity (expressed in the Steps as honesty, humility, and personal responsibility). The theme of the Steps is that a person’s life can be congruent with her deepest values.
The Spiral of Addiction and Recovery

The program participants will return to the theme of unifying their inner and outer lives throughout their journeys. Addiction is like a downward spiral, pulling a woman into ever-tighter circles around the object of her addiction, whether it’s alcohol, drugs, food, and so on. Progressing in recovery is like climbing a spiral staircase up and away from a life that revolved around

Figure A: The Spiral of Addiction and Recovery

the object of her addiction. In recovery, she spirals upward into ever-widening circles of self-knowledge, freedom, and connection to others. In addiction, her inner and outer lives are constricted; in recovery, her life expands. Figure A, The Spiral of Addiction and Recovery,\textsuperscript{15} illustrates this principle.
Opening Session Overview

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Lecture: Introduction to the Program
- Self-Soothing Exercise: The Five Senses
- Group Agreements
- Activity: Collage of the Balance Scales
- Workbook Assignments
- Activity: First Thing in the Morning
- Closing
- Optional Activity: Celebrate Your Growth
- Adapting the Session for Use with Girls

Materials for the Facilitator

- A balance scale drawn on a piece of flip-chart paper (a picture of a balance scale can be found on page 30 of this guide)
- Optional: soft, soothing music to play during the welcome
- Optional: digital camera or disposable camera

Materials for Each Participant

- A name tag
- A felt-tip marker to write on the name tag
- A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Workbook
- A copy of the Group Agreements handout—see the appendix, page 172, for a reproducible copy—unless the facilitator creates a large poster of the group agreements on flip-chart paper
- One or two magazines per participant that can be cut up for the collage; the magazine content should reflect the diversity of the group
- One piece of poster board (22 inches by 28 inches or similar), construction paper, or cardboard
- A pair of scissors (or several pairs for participants to share)
- A glue stick (or several sticks to share)
- Table or clean floor space where group members can work
- A pen or pencil
- Optional: the book A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps
- Optional: colored pencils, pens, or felt-tip markers to use when creating the collage
Opening Session

Beginning
A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps

Welcome (3 MINUTES)

As the women enter the room, acknowledge them and ask them to be seated in the circle. The women may be nervous, look hesitant, or have other feelings about beginning this program. It will help to begin each session with a few minutes of silence. When all the women are seated, welcome them and focus them on the work ahead.

- Welcome. Let’s take a few minutes to get settled and focus our attention on where we are. Let go of the thoughts and stresses of the day and just focus on your breathing. Perhaps it will help to close or lower your eyes. Breathe in deeply and then let it out. Let’s do that for a few moments.

Pause for a few minutes of silence.

You may find that it helps to play soft, soothing music in the background. Ask the women whether the music or the silence will best help them to settle into the session.

- Each of our sessions will begin with a few minutes in which we can just breathe and let go of tensions, responsibilities, guilt, fear, sadness, or whatever weighs us down during the day. This will allow us to bring our energy and focus into this group.
Introductions (10 MINUTES)

Gather these materials for each participant:

- a name tag
- a felt-tip marker to write on the name tag

Introduce yourself. Tell the women why you are facilitating the group and why you are qualified to do so.

Distribute name tags and felt-tip markers. Ask the women to write their names on their name tags and to wear their name tags during the session so that everyone can have a chance to learn the others’ names.

Please go around the circle and take a minute to introduce yourself by sharing your name, why you are participating in this group, and what you hope to get out of it.

Lecturette: Introduction to the Program (5 MINUTES)

Distribute these materials to each participant:

- A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps Workbook
- optional: the book A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps

Despite a history of having little political and social clout, women have always had personal and psychological power by supporting the growth and talents of others. Unfortunately, this supportive, cooperative power is often taken for granted and given little value in our culture.

There are special places where this kind of power is valued and honored. That is in Twelve Step recovery programs. There are now more than 126 mutual-help groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, and groups that focus on gambling, workaholism, sexual and incest issues, other eating disorders, and a wide spectrum of problem behaviors. These programs rely on people who are mutually supportive of one another.

However, many women have discovered that traditional Twelve Step programs, which were originally designed for men, do not always meet their psychological and social needs. Some of the language in the programs can be considered
• sexist, and some of the Steps emphasize powerlessness and surrender—which already are painful issues for many women. We also know that females develop a sense of self and self-worth when their actions arise out of, and lead back to, connections with others.

Throughout history, women have supported one another by sharing their experiences. So this program focuses on women’s power to be cooperative and supportive. We will use language that women can easily relate to. For example, instead of talking about surrendering in the sense of submission, we talk about choosing to cooperate with our better selves and with what we each envision as our Higher Power. As we go along, you will notice that the Steps always say we rather than I, this emphasizes that healing occurs in healthy connections with others.

In *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* sessions, we will work to create a safe, caring environment that is based on mutual support and growing personal power. These sessions are designed to help you interpret the Twelve Steps in ways that are meaningful and useful to you. In short, this program is intended to supplement your Twelve Step work by providing a supportive, woman-centered experience that makes it easier for you to work the Steps.

Each of our sessions will contain a mixture of information about the Step we are working on, exercises to help us work through significant parts of the Step, self-soothing exercises to help us cope with the transitions we are making, and sharing of our thoughts, feelings, questions, and insights. All participation is voluntary, and no one will be coerced into saying or doing anything she doesn’t want to. Of course, the more you try to participate, the more you will get out of these sessions.

It is expected that each of you will continue to attend your “home group” Twelve Step meetings every week and work with your sponsor, in addition to attending these *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* sessions. If you haven’t started attending Twelve Step meetings yet, or if you have previously had negative experiences at such meetings, I hope that these sessions will make it easier for you to begin attending. The Twelve Steps have proven to be healthy and effective tools for facing our addictions and turning our lives around.

As we go along, you will realize that the Steps also are guidelines for living our lives. We use them first to deal with our addictive behaviors and then we can use them to help us with the ongoing business of living, including knowing how to resolve conflict, staying present in the moment, improving our relationships with ourselves and others, and having more meaningful, productive, and peaceful lives.
Provide information about the days on which the remaining twelve sessions will be held and the opening and closing times for the sessions. State that each session will be approximately ninety minutes.

Show the *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* book and workbook as you describe them as tools to help the women deepen learning about the Twelve Steps. Give each woman a copy of the workbook along with a pencil with an eraser. If possible, also give each woman a copy of the book as a valuable tool she can refer to throughout the program.

The materials related to this program are the book *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* and the accompanying workbook. I suggest that each of you read the book *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps*, if possible, as you work the Steps. Each of you also has a copy of the workbook, and at the end of each session I will describe the exercises in the workbook that cover the Step we have been working on. I will ask you to complete those exercises before our next session. If you have difficulty writing down what you want to say, it’s okay to draw pictures instead. It is also fine if any of you want to work on the homework with others from this group.

It is important that you bring your workbooks to each session, so please try to remember them each time. The exercises will serve as the basis for many of our discussions. No one else will read what you write in your workbooks (unless you want them to), and no one will criticize or judge what you volunteer to tell us about what you have written.

A typical session will include the following things:

- a quiet opening, with time for breathing and letting go of the stresses of the day
- a time to share things we are grateful for from the Step we discussed in our last session
- a review and discussion of the workbook exercises that you completed from the last session
- an introduction to the Step discussed in this session and how it may be adapted or interpreted to best meet the needs of women
- activities and sharing sessions to help us to work through the Step and understand its meaning and significance, and to incorporate that learning into your lives
- a discussion and assignment to complete a workbook section related to the Step we have just explored in this session
If you have any questions at any time during our sessions, please let me know. I won’t always ask if there are questions, but please feel free to let me know if you don’t understand something that I’ve said.

Recommended Reading

As you turn inward you will need to search deeply so that you can use the Steps in a meaningful way. Because the Steps were written in 1939 by men for male alcoholics, the language of the Steps may appear to have little relevance for you as a contemporary woman [or girl]. While much of the AA literature has been revised and updated, the Twelve Steps themselves still appear in their original wording. Consequently, when you read the Steps today, they may rightfully seem to be from another era.

—from the book A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps, page 3

Self-Soothing Exercise: The Five Senses (10 MINUTES)

Many women use addictive behaviors to medicate their anxiety or depression because they don’t know better ways to comfort themselves. In our sessions, we will be learning simple self-soothing techniques—such as the breathing exercise we did earlier—as positive ways to cope and soothe ourselves. The workbook also contains several self-soothing exercises that you can practice on your own time. You can use these techniques on your own when you are feeling stressed or uncomfortable.

Let’s try one now. This is called The Five Senses.

Please close your eyes or lower your eyes and relax for a few moments.

For some trauma survivors it feels safer to lower their eyes and not close them.

Pause and allow a full minute for the women to relax with their eyes closed.

Open your eyes when you are ready. Silently, identify five things you can see around you.

Pause.
Now identify four things you could feel or touch.

Pause.

Identify three things you can hear.

Pause.

Identify two things you can smell.

Pause.

Finally, identify what you can taste right now.

Pause.

Take a minute to bring your focus back to the group. Now please share with us some of the things you can see, touch, hear, smell, and taste.

Allow time for sharing.

Whenever you feel anxious, it is helpful to look around the place you are in and go through these five steps, focusing on each one and naming what you can identify. This exercise can help you stay in the present. Often when we are anxious or fearful it is because we are thinking about or feeling something from the past.

**Group Agreements (5–10 MINUTES)**

Gather these materials:

- a copy of the Group Agreements handout for each participant (see the appendix, page 172, for a reproducible copy)

or

- a large poster of the group agreements, created on flip-chart paper

To make these sessions as safe and helpful as possible for all of us, there are a few group agreements that I would like everyone to understand.

Read the nine group agreements aloud.
Opening Session

Group Agreements

1. Attendance. Your commitment to attend each session is important, not only for your own benefit in understanding the Twelve Steps but also because it is necessary to create an environment of mutual support. If you must miss a session, please let me know beforehand.

2. Confidentiality. Nothing that anyone else says in this room is to be repeated outside that session. We need to know that we can trust one another, and there can be no trust if people are concerned that information about them may be shared with others or if group members gossip about one another. The exception is that I am required by law to reveal if a member's personal safety or the safety of another person is at stake.

3. Safety. For everyone to feel safe in this group, we all need to agree that there will be no verbal or physical abuse in our sessions.

4. Participation. Everybody's participation and input is important. It is not helpful if some people dominate our discussions and others remain silent. Please let other people finish what they're saying before you add your comments. If you are unwilling to talk about a particular subject, you have the option to pass. When you have something to say, please share your remarks with the whole group and refrain from conducting side conversations.

5. Honesty. Nobody will pressure you to tell anything about yourself that you don't want to talk about, but when you do talk, tell the truth about what's happened to you and how you feel. Also, please talk about your personal experiences rather than about people in general.

6. Respect. Showing mutual respect is important to the group. That means nobody is to criticize, judge, or talk down to anyone. If you think that someone is showing disrespect to someone else, please say so respectfully. Even if you feel uncomfortable at some point and don't want to participate, show your respect by not disrupting the group. You can be quiet until you feel more comfortable and are ready to participate again.

7. Questions. If you have a question about anything, please ask. Please also show respect for other people's questions.

8. Focus. Please try to stick to the topic the group is exploring. If you think that we're getting off the topic and I'm not doing anything about it, please feel free to mention that.

9. Punctuality. We'll start on time and end on time. The times of our group meetings are ______________________________ .
After you read all the items, ask if there are any questions. Check to see that all the group members understand the agreements and the reasons for them.

**Activity: Collage of the Balance Scales** *(30 MINUTES)*

Gather these materials for each participant:

- one or two magazines per participant that can be cut up and that reflect the diversity of the women in the group
- one piece of poster board (22 inches by 28 inches or similar), construction paper, or cardboard
- a pair of scissors (or several pairs to be shared)
- a glue stick (or several sticks to be shared)
- a table or clean floor space on which the group members can work
- optional: colored pencils, pens, or felt-tip markers

**Note:** If you are working in a criminal justice setting that prohibits scissors, then the women can tear out the words and pictures to create their collages.

Each of you will have an opportunity to create a collage about support. For your collages, you can use pictures and words cut out of magazines and glued to paper. You can add your own writing and artwork if you like. Imagine a balance scale.

Draw an image of a balance scale on a piece of flip-chart paper.

On one side, you can put pictures and words that represent the encouragement and support you have in your life for continuing your addictive behaviors. On the other side, you can put the pictures and words that represent the encouragement and support you have for staying sober or discontinuing other addictive behaviors and maintaining your recovery. You will have about twenty minutes to create your collages.

Distribute the art materials to the group members. After seven to ten minutes, suggest that they move from looking through their magazines to beginning their collages. Allow about ten minutes more for them to complete their collages and then give a two-minute warning. Tell the women that they may take their collages home to work more on them if they desire to do so.
Opening Session

After two minutes, call time.

Let’s each take a minute to describe our collages by emphasizing the differences between the support we have for our addition and the support we have for recovery.

When the women discuss the sides of their collages that indicate support for their addictions, emphasize that these are potential relapse triggers that they need to stay very conscious of.

One thing we will emphasize in these sessions is that it is very important for you to have at least as much support for your recovery as you have for your addictions. Often women have more support for their addictions than for their recovery. Twelve Step programs are one of the places where you can get understanding and continuing support for your recovery. This type of support is not always available from your family members or the people who are your friends while you are in your addictions. Let’s talk a little about how you might increase your support for recovery and what you may need to do about people and places that are not supportive.

Allow time for sharing.

Workbook Assignments (5 MINUTES)

The following are some things you will ask the women to do for the next group meeting.

Activity: First Thing in the Morning (5 MINUTES)

Distribute these materials to each participant:

- a pen or pencil

There are two things I’d like you to do before our next session. First, please open your workbook to page 10. In the space at the bottom of the page, please list five things you automatically do when you first wake up in the morning, including which side of the bed you get out of.

Allow two or three minutes for the women to write their lists and then call time.
Tomorrow morning, I’d like you to change your behaviors and do these things in a different order, including changing the side of the bed that you get out of. For example, if you usually get out of the right side of your bed, get out of the left side instead. If you usually wash your face and then let the dog out, try letting the dog out before you wash your face or brush your teeth. You can do things differently or do them in a different order. As soon as you can afterward, make notes about how this feels and anything that happens as a result. You can make your notes in the blank space on page 10 of your workbook or on a separate piece of paper if you are running out of room. Put that paper in your workbook and bring it to our next session. It is a good idea to keep all the work you do in your workbook, even if it’s on separate sheets of paper, because we will be using some of these things again.

Also, before our next session, please read the introduction starting on page 1 of the workbook. If you have the book A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps, please read the introduction on pages 1–5. Please remember to bring your workbook and your book, if you have one, to our next session.

**Recommended Reading**

Recovery is not a solitary process. There's no expectation that we will read program materials in solitude, reflect on them, and independently arrive at our own personalized interpretations. Instead, we are supported by others in the Twelve Step tradition: sharing experience, strength, and hope. In Twelve Step programs, there is an ongoing and deep interchange of personal information. Other people will share their stories and they will hear ours. We learn from each other.

—-from the book A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps, page 5

**Closing** (1 MINUTE)

Gather these materials for each participant:

- Optional: You may choose to provide each participant with a small spiral notebook or blank journal.
You each may want to create your own Little Book in a small spiral notebook or small blank journal. After each Twelve Step meeting you go to, you can write down whatever you heard that was meaningful to you in that meeting. Use your own words, not the AA Big Book’s words. Some women have found this very helpful, both to help them clarify their thinking and also as a way to create their own AA Little Book.

Well, we've covered a lot of material in this first session. Does anybody have any questions?

Pause.

I'd like to thank you for showing the courage and determination to show up today, and I look forward to seeing you all again next week.

Optional Activity: Celebrate Your Growth

If all the women agree to it, you may want to take a photograph of each of them individually at this point and also take a group picture. Then you can take another photo of each of them and the group at the last session and compare them to see how much they have grown (perhaps healthier and happier) since the first session.

Adapting the Session for Use with Girls

When facilitating this introductory session with girls, you will often want to change the use of the words *woman* and *women* to *girl* and *girls* or *females*. You may also find some of the language in the lecturette to be less useful with girls. This is an example of a place in this facilitator’s guide where you will want to mark out the language that you don't think will be pertinent to girls. What is important for girls is the concept of having positive tools for living—that the Steps can provide them with tools to help them make decisions, solve problems, and live their lives more comfortably. You can mention that many people do not get this kind of information from their families and how lucky they are to be getting this information early in their lives.

It is important to review the group agreements with girls. You may want to have a discussion with them about the agreements to see whether they can all agree to the list. Ask the girls if they have questions or think some other agreements need to be added. With girls, you may want to have two or three sheets of poster
board available so that they can split into groups of two or three and work together to create a poster of the agreements. When the girls engage in working on the agreements, they are more likely to buy in. Three of the activities—The Five Senses, Collage of the Balance Scales, and First Thing in the Morning—are also important for the girls to do. You will find that girls will engage in the group and with one another through the use of the experiential activities. People of all ages find it easier to learn content when it is presented in interactive, experiential activities. For girls, this is particularly important because it increases engagement and participation.

When doing the Collage of the Balance Scales activity, you may want to mention the importance of the peer group in adolescence and the positive or negative influence that a peer group can have. Many girls who are using alcohol or other drugs are doing this to feel that they are part of a group. It is very difficult for them to be with friends and at parties and not use. Also, girls who are using nicotine and methamphetamine often say that they don’t want to stop because they will gain weight. There are many social pressures on girls to use drugs, and these can be acknowledged and discussed when doing the Balance Scale activity and throughout this group process.
Session 1 Overview

- Opening
- Activity: What Is Beginning to Blossom in You?
- Review of Homework from Last Session
- Lecturette: Introduction to Step One
- Discussion: Awareness of Addiction
- Lecturette: Powerlessness and Unmanageability
- Lecturette: The Spiral of Addiction and Recovery
- Activity: Constructing Your Own Downward Spiral
- Self-Soothing Exercise: Listen for a New Voice
- Workbook Assignments
- Closing
- Adapting the Session for Use with Girls

Materials for the Facilitator

- Optional: soft music to play during the opening of this session

Materials for Each Participant

- One flower for each participant, or one flower that the participants can share and pass around the group (it is best if the flowers are the same type for all participants)
- A copy of The Downward Spiral illustration reproduced on heavy stock paper (see the appendix, page 173, for a reproducible copy)
- A pair of scissors (or several pairs for participants to share)
- A felt-tip marker
- A one-foot piece of string or ribbon
- Each participant should bring her workbook to this session; she is encouraged to bring her copy of A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps book if she has one
This facilitator’s guide offers practical guidance to deliver the *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* program, which includes a thirteen-session curriculum of experiential exercises. It describes the most effective ways to conduct sessions with clients, including when and how to use the program’s book, workbook, and DVD, along with special instructions on how to adapt the content for girls. This powerful guide integrates the most current research and best practices regarding women and recovery. It offers essential background information and describes a program that is based on research and can help women recover from substance use disorders and other addictive behaviors.

All four components (facilitator’s guide, workbook, book, and DVD) of the *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* program are designed for use with women in residential or outpatient addiction treatment programs, including correctional settings. The four components can stand alone, but to achieve the best outcomes, it is best to use all four components together as a comprehensive, integrated treatment program for women. The program is anchored by *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps*, a book that has sold more than 250,000 copies and offers an illuminating view of how women understand and process the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D., is the creator of the *A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps* program, which is based on the Twelve Steps and the Women’s Integrated Treatment model of recovery. Covington is nationally recognized as a clinician, author, organizational consultant, and lecturer. With more than thirty years of experience, she has developed an innovative, gender-responsive approach to address the treatment needs of women and girls that has been proven effective in public, private, and institutional settings.