

Addiction Recovery Group:

The Importance of Friendship in Recovery

Session Objective:

To explore the role of friendship and social support in addiction recovery and to provide strategies for building and maintaining supportive friendships.

Duration: 90 – 120 minutes

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Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Greet participants and introduce the session's topic.
2. Briefly explain the importance of friendship and social support in addiction recovery. [See notes]
3. Check in – Participants encouraged to check in using the theme of 'friendship'.

Icebreaker Activity: "One word" (15 minutes)

1. Suggest each participant share one word or phrase that describes the type of support they need from friends in recovery. (Write words on whiteboard?)
2. Encourage participants to listen actively and offer words of affirmation to one another.

Understanding the Importance of Friendship in Recovery (20 minutes)

Facilitator led discussion:

1. Explore the ways in which friendships can impact addiction recovery, including providing emotional support, accountability, and companionship. [See notes]
2. Share personal anecdotes or examples of friendships that have positively influenced recovery journeys.

Group Discussion: "Identifying Supportive Friendships" (15 minutes)

Break participants into small groups and ask them to discuss:

1. What qualities make a friendship supportive in the context of addiction recovery?
2. How can individuals identify and cultivate supportive friendships during recovery?

Reconvene as a larger group and share insights from the discussions.

Personal Reflection: "My Support Network" (15 minutes)

Invite participants to reflect on their current support network and friendships in recovery. Ask guiding questions:

1. Who are the supportive individuals in your life?
2. How do these friendships contribute to your recovery journey?
3. Are there any friendships that may be detrimental to your recovery?

Building and Maintaining Supportive Friendships (20 minutes)

Facilitator led presentation:

Discuss strategies for building and maintaining supportive friendships in recovery, such as:

1. Open communication and honesty
2. Setting boundaries
3. Offering support
4. Participating in sober activities together
5. Being a positive influence in each other's lives

Encourage participants to share their own experiences and insights.

Group Activity: "Friendship Cards" (15 minutes)

Each participant to choose a card at random from a selection of cards each with an affirmation about friendship in recovery [see resources]. Participants to offer *their* opinion, positive or negative, about the statement on their chosen card.

Goal Setting for Building Supportive Friendships (10 minutes)

Guide participants in setting one realistic and achievable goal for building or strengthening supportive friendships in their lives.

Emphasize the importance of actively nurturing and investing in friendships during recovery.

Closing Thoughts and Resources (5 minutes)

1. Review key points discussed during the session.
2. If available, provide resources for further reading or support related to building and maintaining friendships in recovery.
3. Thank participants for their active participation and commitment to their recovery journey.
4. Close the group in the usual way.

Note: Throughout the session, create a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere, allowing participants to share openly and honestly. Encourage active participation and peer support, and emphasize the importance of building a strong support network in recovery.

NOTES

Friendship and social support are integral components of addiction recovery. They provide a safety net of encouragement, accountability, and understanding, which are essential for navigating the challenges of recovery and maintaining long-term sobriety. Building and nurturing supportive friendships enriches the recovery journey and promotes overall wellbeing and resilience.

Friendship and social support play a crucial role in addiction recovery for several reasons:

1. **Emotional Support:** Friends provide a source of emotional support during the challenging moments of recovery. They offer encouragement, empathy, and understanding, which can help individuals navigate through difficult emotions, cravings, and setbacks.
2. **Accountability:** Friends hold individuals accountable for their actions and decisions. They can serve as a sounding board for making healthy choices and provide gentle reminders of the commitment to sobriety. This accountability fosters a sense of responsibility and commitment to staying on the path of recovery.
3. **Reduced Isolation:** Addiction often leads to social isolation, as individuals may withdraw from friends and family members. Reconnecting with friends and building new social connections in recovery helps combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. Social support networks provide a sense of belonging and connectedness, which are essential for overall wellbeing.
4. **Positive Influence:** Surrounding oneself with supportive friends who prioritise sobriety and wellness can have a positive influence on behavior and lifestyle choices. Friends who model healthy habits, engage in sober activities, and provide encouragement reinforce the values and goals of recovery.
5. **Stress Reduction:** Friendships provide opportunities for relaxation, enjoyment, and stress relief. Spending time with friends in supportive environments can reduce stress levels and promote overall emotional wellbeing. Engaging in enjoyable activities with friends also distracts from cravings and negative thoughts associated with addiction.
6. **Empowerment:** Supportive friendships empower individuals to take control of their lives and make positive changes. Friends offer practical assistance, guidance, and resources that facilitate the recovery process. Knowing that one has a network of friends who believe in their ability to succeed can boost confidence and self-esteem.