



AUTHORIZED PROGRAM  
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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# Conscious Recovery Overview

Conscious Recovery is a groundbreaking and effective approach to viewing and treating addiction that will transform your clients' lives.

Conscious Recovery moves beyond simply treating behaviors and symptoms. It focuses on the underlying root causes that drive destructive patterns, while providing clear steps for letting go of core false beliefs that lead to addictive behaviors.

## The 5 Basic Principles of Conscious Recovery

- Underneath all addictive behavior is an essential self that is whole and perfect
- The addiction itself has never been the “problem” but was a strategy that has lost its effectiveness
- Treating addiction must go beyond treating symptoms and get down to the underlying root causes of destructive behavior
- The root causes of addictive behavior are unresolved trauma, spiritual disconnection, and toxic shame
- There is a pathway to permanent freedom through the adoption of spiritual practices and principles

# Conscious Recovery

## Authorized Program Facilitator's Guide

The purpose of *Conscious Recovery* is to offer a spiritual perspective that can assist your clients in addressing the underlying root causes of their addictive behaviors. It is intended to enhance any program, therapy, or other support system in which they are currently engaged. Its aim is *not* to provide definitive answers, but to introduce questions that can assist your clients in accessing their own inner wisdom and rediscover their true nature. They are their own best teacher, and they hold the key to ending their own suffering. *Conscious Recovery* can assist them in deepening their understanding of addiction, provide them with a roadmap toward liberation, and offer tools to assist them in living their most dynamic and connected life.

This curriculum is designed to be a companion to the books *Conscious Recovery*, and *The Conscious Recovery Workbook*, but can certainly stand on its own as a recovery tool. It's intended to assist you in helping your clients break the cycle of their addictive behavior and heal the root causes of their destructive patterns.

You may notice certain concepts repeating throughout the curriculum. This is intentional. This repetition will allow these concepts and practices to be understood and integrated from different levels of awareness as you and your clients progress through the curriculum and shift the trajectory of their recovery and healing.

# The Outer-Focused Life

(A modified excerpt from Conscious Recovery)

When we look at addiction, we might automatically think of dependence on drugs or alcohol. We might imagine a person who is utterly down and out, someone who has lost their job and their relationships and is destitute and homeless. While that is indeed one face of addiction, the definition I'd like to work with is much broader.

Many of us live with a sense of emptiness or disconnection. We feel broken and empty inside, and we look outside ourselves for a solution. Or we're uncomfortable with what we see when we look within. If we cannot bear to be with our self, to look at that inner "edge" where our darkest feelings and memories reside, then we may turn outward for something that will seem to pull us back to safety. In any case, the pain of what's inside causes us to look outside for relief. Now, that outward-seeking might not in itself be an addiction. But as we look elsewhere to fix what feels broken, empty or uncomfortable inside, we can begin to depend on those outside sources to feel safe or whole. When we use an external solution repetitively so that it becomes a habit for us, a need, then we're developing an addiction. From this perspective, addiction fits the Buddhist concept of aversion (to pain) and clinging (to relief).

So, addiction can be viewed simply as the outer-focused life. Rather than doing the inner work of healing that which feels broken or meaningless, we focus on something outside of ourselves to resolve, numb, or avoid a sense of psychic pain. And it's a solution that can work for a long time. Our solution can be drugs and alcohol, but it can also be other things. We can be dependent on our own thoughts, using them as a strategy for resolving or alleviating our inner conflict. We can be addicted to ideas, to other people, even to our recovery program. We can use religion, focusing on the idea that there's a God up there, or a set of laws, and if we can just surrender ourselves to these, then everything will be OK. For example, one phrase that is commonly heard in recovery circles is: "We have a God-shaped hole inside of us." The meaning of this is that we are walking around with a sense of inner emptiness that only God can fill. I want to offer a different perspective here. Saying that God needs to "fill" this hole is still an addictive thought. What if, rather than imagining that it needs to be filled, we can learn to walk with it, and "be" with it in the world? This is how we can shift from looking for something or someone *else* to ease the pain, and begin to integrate and accept our felt sense of inner emptiness. This is how we can learn to be with ourselves in a new and more accepting way.

# Holistic and Integrated Recovery

(A modified excerpt from *Conscious Recovery*)

How do we break free from the addictive self? Just as there is a spiritual aspect to addiction, so there is a spiritual aspect to recovery. A holistic and integrative recovery acknowledges and utilizes the power that resides in all four rooms of the human experience: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual.

The physical room gives us the insight that addiction is a disease, and working from that insight has offered us many powerful tools and approaches. I have benefitted from these insights and tools in my own recovery, but I am not an addiction medicine physician or a psychiatrist. So, I will leave the physical to these health care professionals, and encourage you again to enter this room regularly. Moving on through the rooms: The mental room gives us the insight that our thoughts and ideas, our assumptions and our worldview, have an enormous role in both addiction and recovery. We will be entering this room often as we progress through *Conscious Recovery*. And the room of the emotions shows us that how we respond to our feelings—whether we are overcome by them, disengage from them, or somewhere in between—is a factor in our addiction. Healing emotional trauma and acknowledging our dependence on old emotional patterns can be a large part of recovery.

What the spiritual room reveals is that addiction stems from fragmentation; it is a strategy for dealing with the pain of disconnection from our essential self. When we reframe our approach to addiction in this way, we can see that the underlying problem is not the addiction. The problem beneath the symptoms of addiction is spiritual and psychic disconnection, the fragmentation of self. Recognizing this allows us to start to identify and let go of old core beliefs, to let go of those solutions that are no longer working, and to move toward a place of wholeness and perfection.

Thus begins this incredible voyage inward. On this journey, we are not looking for something independent of ourselves, we are turning inward and recognizing that this pathway can lead us to return to the essential self. The spiritual perspective allows us to make an important internal shift. When we move from an outer-focused life to an inner-focused way of being, we can start to recognize and engage our wholeness, our inherent perfection. And when we are willing to look within and do the work of inner clearing, removing the false ideas, perspectives, and stories we have about our lives, we can open to this new way of being.

# The Power of Presence

**Quantum Mechanics** – Science is now measuring what spiritual teachers and mystics have been saying for centuries. And that is, that there are infinite possibilities in every situation, and, that the observer has a profound effect. How does this relate to our work as clinicians? We can literally shift our clients' ability to access their own inner-wisdom when we make the commitment to view them through the lens of wholeness rather than brokenness. And we then create a higher possibility and probability for true healing, simply by the way we are viewing and "holding" our clients.

**Holding Space** – *"Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity."* – Pema Chödrön

What happens we generate a non-judgmental, compassionate, and openhearted space for our clients? We create a safe container for our clients to access their own innate ability to heal. And, in that way, we can remain open and available to the present moment and follow the energy in the room rather than being stuck in viewing them *only* from a mental or physical paradigm. Diagnosing and treating has its place, but a deeper, more profound possibility is available to us when we authentically practice genuine presence and openness.

**Doing Our Own Inner-Work** – Staying present and curious requires us to do our own inner healing work. We cannot possibly allow our clients to go any deeper than we have gone ourselves. Therefore, the greatest way we can assist our clients is by participating in the healing of our own trauma, disconnection, and shame.

**The Energizing Quality of Presence** – And, the great news is simply this: remaining open and engaged is quite energizing for both the clinician and client. The behavioral health field is one that has a great deal of burnout, and this can be minimized by shifting our awareness away from what's "broken" and needs to be "fixed," and toward the infinite possibilities for healing that exist in every moment.



# Our Group Philosophy

***Addressing Different Learning Styles*** – In traditional education systems, students are supposed to learn and retain information by sitting still and listening to a lecture or reading material. This works great for only a small percentage of clients, due to issues related to stages of recovery, cognitive ability, as well as differing learning styles.

Conscious Recovery groups offer variations in teaching and learning styles to engage all types of clients – those who are more visual, auditory, or kinesthetic in their learning style, regardless of where they are on their recovery path.

***Keeping Things Moving*** – We like to get the clients up and moving around. This keeps the energy flowing, and keeps clients engaged. Breaking up into small groups or dyads allows all types of clients, including introverts and extroverts, to interact with one other and feel included.

This is also a great way to build relationships between clients and allow for deeper connections beyond what they would experience in a traditional psycho-educational or lecture-style group.

***Willingness to Abandon the “Set” Curriculum*** – If an exercise feels like it is falling flat, you don’t have to always stick with exactly what’s written. For example, if clients are resistant or not offering up much discussion, it’s ok to shift to the next exercise, use the journaling questions, or give them another question or activity. To the best of your ability, please stick to the curriculum; however, you can also deviate if necessary. This allows for more spontaneity and engagement.

***Presence and Curiosity*** – Staying present and curious will allow you to let go of any attachment to an agenda or expectations about how the group “should” go. If you’re truly committed to remaining present and curious about what the group needs, you may go deeper into a particular exercise, where you might miss an opportunity if you have the mindset that you “need” to get through all of the group exercises and activities.

# Key Elements of Group

Each of the 12 groups in the curriculum focuses on one of the key principles from the *Conscious Recovery* book and *Conscious Recovery Workbook*. All the groups follow the same basic format, and include a combination of these components:

**Meditation (10 minutes)** – We start with a 10-minute meditation at the beginning of group to get people grounded and centered. We find that many clients cannot stay focused for that long in silent meditation, so we often do a guided meditation. We have included a PIES guided meditation in the back of this manual (see Appendix), or you are welcome to use your own.

**Check-In (10 minutes)** – Have each client state their name and say one thing about the topic for that group. This is to get everyone oriented to the subject and for you to get an idea of what views the clients already have on the topic. For Conscious Recovery groups, check-ins do not include things such as “how was your day?” or “what are your craving levels?” The check-in format is designed to simply engage clients at the beginning of group.

**Other Group Processes (generally 5-20 minutes each)** – These varied group activities and group processes may take several forms, including:

- **Brainstorming** – Exploring the topic together as a large group. May involve writing ideas on a board or flipchart. You will want to always have writing materials available for yourself and the clients
- **Reading Discussions (Small or Large Group)** – Taking an excerpt from the book or a given quote and discussing it in more depth in small groups or together as a large group
- **Topic Discussions (Small or Large Group)** – Discussing a given topic in greater depth in small groups or together as a large group

- **Dyads or Trios** – Group members get together in pairs or trios to address different learning styles and keep clients engaged. This is particularly useful for clients who may seem to struggle with sharing in larger groups
- **Interactive Processes** – Exercises that may involve group activities or more of an internal process, done individually, in dyads, or in the full group
- **“Front of Room” Reporting** – This is for when clients have been working together in dyads or groups. They choose one person as the representative to report back on their discussion to the large group

When there are multiple Group Processes, there may not be enough time to complete all of them; in this case, do not try to rush or force them, simply focus on completing whatever you can. It’s more about depth and quality over quantity.

**Closing Processes (10 minutes)** – This may take any number of forms, including each group member acknowledging another, each person stating what they learned from the group (perhaps a key “a-ha” or awareness they received), one word to describe how they’re feeling right now, etc.

We have included a full list of possible closing exercises in the Appendix.



# *Conscious Recovery*

## GROUP CURRICULUM



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 1: What is Conscious Recovery?

### Group Focus: Balance

**Group Objective:** To explore what it means to live a balanced life.

**Key Teaching Points:** This group will explore the “four rooms” of existence (physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual) and provide tools for living a balanced life, by focusing on recovery in each of the rooms.

**Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart, large drawing paper, tape, markers.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** *“Everyone is a house with four rooms, a physical, an intellectual, an emotional and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time, but unless we go into every room, every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person.” - Indian Proverb*

If you have been in recovery for any length of time, you know that addiction can be considered from any of these rooms. All four: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual, are present in any addiction, and they can be utilized in your recovery. Most commonly contemplated, perhaps, is the physical approach to recovery, with its attention to the physical symptoms of addiction and physical healing (e.g., the disease model, studying brain chemistry and genetics, considering medications, changing diet and exercise patterns, and so on). People in recovery also spend time in the mental and emotional rooms, with help from therapists, sponsors, and support groups. Living in all four of these rooms can bring us a long way along the road to recovery.

But as the proverb tells us: *“Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time.”* Often neglected in recovery work is the spiritual room, from which we can consider the spiritual questions involved in recovery: What is the root cause of addiction? What is the underlying condition of fragmentation and disconnection that leads people to addiction and addictive behaviors? How can sitting in the room of Spirit bring us to a place of deeper healing and peace? Of course, the four rooms are not cut off from one another; they are all part of the same house, connected by doorways and hallways. We are integrated beings, and addressing the spiritual aspects of addiction will bring us into the other rooms, especially the rooms of thought and emotion.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 1: What is Conscious Recovery/Balance

(Preface and Introduction from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-in: Everyone says their name and something about balance.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(5 minutes) Introduction of Topic: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Spiritual: The Buddhists call it the "four rooms." Here are the key talking points. (You might want to write them on the board):

- We are like a house with four rooms (P, I, E, S).
- We need to spend at least some time in each room
- What does balance look like?

(15 minutes) Group Brainstorming (Flipchart): What are some examples from the four rooms? List the attributes and activities for each of them. (For example, exercise lives in the physical room, etc.)



**(15 minutes) Group Process:** Have 4 large pieces of paper hanging on the wall and label each paper with one of the “four room” titles. (You will hang and label these before the group starts.) Have every client draw something that represents each of the rooms. (Each client draws four pictures, one on each large piece of paper.)

**(10 minutes) Group Discussion:** Which room do you tend to live in most often? (Have each group member identify which room is their “default” room).

**(15 minutes) Group Process (Small Groups):** Have people break into small groups based on the predominant room they tend to live in and have them discuss the following points. (You might want to write them on the whiteboard or flipchart for them to see.)

- Where did this tendency originate?
- Which room would you like to develop?
- What are some of the ways/tools you can utilize to develop the “new” room?

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 2: The Spiritual Lens

### Group Focus: Perception

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of perception as a recovery tool and introduce clients to the possibility that most of life is perspective.

**Key Teaching Points:** Introducing clients to the possibility that they can change their perception and therefore change their life. The group is intended to provide tools to help clients shift the deeply held beliefs that impact their wellbeing and lead to addictive tendencies.

**Materials Needed:** Chair and various other items.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** All spiritual power is based on a shift in perception, and the fundamental insight that ultimate reality, the invisible, is more powerful than relative, or visible, reality. As we grow in awareness, we develop the ability to shift how we interpret the circumstances of life and what we call reality. Our powers of perception get clearer. How much of life is perception? All of it. We each see the world through our own lens. Multiple people in the same situation will each have a different experience of it, based on the lens through which they see it. It's not that one person sees the truth and the others are wrong. It's that our perception colors our experience. As our understanding of this increases, our suffering diminishes. If we live as if there is a reality out there, a truth that's external to our perception, if we're holding on to the idea that things are happening to us, we will suffer. Suffering comes from living in duality, in the idea of a separate self, in a belief in "us" and "everyone and everything else." From this perspective, we continue to plant the seeds of separation.

Here's a simple way to view this: Let's say it's 75 degrees and sunny outside. Many people will experience that as "good weather," as "a beautiful day." Conversely, we tend to judge cold and wet weather as "bad weather" or "a miserable day." What happens when we shift our perception and see sun and rain as equally suitable? A sleet storm and a cloudless sky as equally beautiful? From that modification in perception, our experience also shifts. Rather than fighting against the rain, we could appreciate its moisture. Rather than complaining about the cold, we could feel the bite, welcome the iciness, and see what is there for us to experience. In that way, we can empower ourselves to create a life filled with awe and curiosity, regardless of outer circumstances.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 2: The Spiritual Lens/Perception

(Preface and Introduction from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-In: Everyone states their name and says something about perception. (For example, you might ask the question: "How much of life is perception/perspective?")

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(5 minutes) Introduction of Topic: You can say that life's challenges are a result of misperception. It boils down to "I create the meaning in my life." (Car window analogy): Say this to clients: "If you are in a parking lot on a bright sunny day and you walk up to a car window, what will you see?" (They should say "your reflection.") Then add: "If you concentrate, is it also possible to look beyond your reflection and see what's inside the car? Would you say that either perspective is wrong? No, it really just depends on where you put your focus."

(5 minutes) Group Process: Share this quote. (Ask a client to write it on the board for discussion): "*When we are willing to look within and do the work of inner clearing, removing the false ideas, perspectives, and stories we have about our lives, we can open to a new way of being.*"

**(15 minutes) Group Discussion:** Simply lead a discussion with the group related to the quote.

**(30 minutes) Group Activity-Circle of Honor:** Ask participants to make a circle, standing in order of newest people to elder members. Honor each group by stating that each person has a different point of view based on how long they have been in the program.

Place a chair with multiple items on it in the center of the circle. (That you prepared before group started.) Ask people to describe it from their different perspectives, starting with the person who has the most obstructed view. Then ask if anyone else sees something that wasn't mentioned. You might want to add: "Would you say that anyone is "wrong" about what they can see in the chair, or might it be more about their viewpoint.

**Teaching Point:** Every perspective is valid. Every viewing point is incomplete. Ask clients to use this as a metaphor and have a brief discussion regarding the different factors that create our point of view. (Age, race, gender, family history, etc.)

**Brief Discussion:** What are the different ways we can know what's in the chair? (Change your position in the circle, move the chair, ask someone else who has a better view.)

**(Remain standing)** Ask them to shift to a new place so they can get a new perspective.

**(10 minutes)** Now, ask clients to come up with some ideas about how they might begin to shift their perspectives. (One way is to question those perspectives.)

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 3: The Fragmented Self

### Group Focus: Acceptance

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of acceptance as recovery tools and create a safe space for clients to embrace self-love and acceptance.

**Key Teaching Points:** People often fear that if they accept themselves as they are, they won't be able to make positive changes in their lives. This group will investigate the possibility that self-love and acceptance are actually more powerful "change agents than self-criticism or judgement.

**Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart, markers, "yes" and "no" signs, masking tape.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** Early in my recovery I heard someone say, "Recovery is not about changing yourself—it's about loving and accepting yourself." At the time this made no sense because all I could see was how much was wrong in my life and how much I needed to change. What I couldn't see at the time is this: Love and acceptance are much more powerful change agents than judgment. Miraculous things can happen when I shift my approach from changing this or that about myself—from "What's wrong here? What needs to be fixed?"—to radical self-love and acceptance, or "What's right here? What can be celebrated?"

This approach focuses on what the addiction is authentically about, what it tells us. If we add to this the spiritual perspective, we receive even more. Recovery from the room of Spirit can help us see that what we're genuinely seeking is love and connection, which are found when we turn inward, to our essential nature. Spiritual recovery encourages us to be fully present, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. It gives us the safety we need to be in the moment and feel whatever it is we're truly feeling. Looking at what is truly being sought in the addictive behavior can be a powerful tool for us as we begin to unravel how our search for love and connection has been derailed and moved to the external realm by our core false beliefs about ourselves and the world. So, we shift from an outer-focused life to an inner-focused way of being and seeing. Again, it's a shift in focus.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 3: The Addicted Self/Self-Love and Acceptance

(Introduction from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-In: Everyone states their name and says something about acceptance. (What is acceptance, etc.)

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(15 minutes) Group Process (Dyads): Ask clients to get into pairs to discuss this question: "What do self-love and self-acceptance mean to you?"

(30 minutes) Group Process – Continuum: For this exercise use a large open room. Place a sign that says YES on one wall, and a sign that says NO on the opposite wall. Then, with masking tape make a line down the middle of the room. Let clients know you will be making 6 different statements.

Ask them to stand wherever they are on the continuum regarding the statement. (If they totally agree with the statement, they will stand all the way toward the "yes" sign, if they completely disagree, they stand by the "no" sign, etc.) Ask a couple of people to share why they are where they are on the continuum, then ask if anyone wants to change where they are standing as a result of what they have heard. Repeat for all 6 statements.



### **Statements:**

- I sometimes feel like I am broken
- I sometimes criticize myself
- I'm willing to find a new way to view myself
- I know my purpose
- No one is against me
- I love myself exactly as I am

### **(15 Minutes) Group Process – Turing it Over Practice:**

Ask everyone to get a blank piece of paper make a dot in the center of the page. They then draw a large circle around the outside of the paper and make “spokes” that connect the dot with the circle. On each of the spokes, they write something that is troubling them. This could be a person’s name, or a situation that is currently difficult for them.

Once they have filled up the page, have them stand in front of the group and say: “These are the situations in my life I am ready to release. I am now choosing to let go of trying to control them.” Invite them to use their own language. Once they have read them all, ask them to tear up the paper and dispose of it.

**(Time Permitting) Group Discussion:** How was that? Any insights? Any observations?

### **(10 minutes) Closing Process**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 4: Unresolved Trauma

### Group Focus: Resilience

**Group Objective:** The purpose of this group is to explore unresolved trauma as a possible root cause of addiction.

**Key Teaching Points:** Traumatic events by definition overwhelm our ability to cope. This group will provide an opportunity for clients to identify what trauma means to them, and will provide some tools to assist clients in beginning their healing journey.

**Materials Needed:** Copies of handouts (one per person), Pens and paper, flipchart or whiteboard with markers.

#### **Readings from Conscious Recovery:**

***What is Trauma?*** – Traumatic events by definition overwhelm our ability to cope. When the mind becomes flooded with emotion, a circuit breaker is thrown that allows us to survive the experience fairly intact. That is, without becoming psychotic or frying out one of the brain centers. The cost of this blown circuit is emotion frozen within the body. In other words, we often unconsciously stop feeling our trauma part way into it, like a movie that is still going after the sound has been turned off. We cannot heal until we move fully through that trauma, including all of the feelings of that event. Trauma is something that overwhelms our ability to cope. And unresolved trauma continues to hurt us because we are stuck in the traumatic experience.

#### ***Physical/Intellectual/Emotional/Spiritual/Vicarious Trauma:***

***Physical Trauma*** – Physical Trauma encompasses many different experiences, including physical abuse, domestic violence, assault, self-injury, natural disaster, an automobile accident, or battlefield trauma, to name a few. Medically speaking, physical trauma is a severe injury to the body, whatever the cause. If we experience this sort of trauma, it's going to affect how we perceive ourselves and our world. Even if the physical wounds are mended, there is a psychological and a spiritual impact that gets stored in the body and is harder to heal. Thus unresolved physical trauma can be a root cause of addiction, because walking around with that kind of pain often leads us to turn to substances and behaviors that ease our suffering, but can also become addictive.

***Intellectual Trauma*** – The vast majority of us experience some degree of mental trauma in childhood simply by receiving repeated messages of untruth. As children, most of us learn lies about ourselves and our world instead of the truth of our inherent wholeness. Being taught a worldview that assumes that the world is governed by limitation, fear, separation, or aggression can make us believe, at a fundamental level, that the world is not safe. This mental trauma is an injury to our understanding of the world. These lies are traumatic. They injure us because they enter our psyches and distort the way we see ourselves. They become our core beliefs, our core *false* beliefs. When we walk around believing things like, “The world is not safe,” or “Life is a struggle,” or “I’m fundamentally unworthy,” then it makes sense to live in a permanent state of fight, flight, or freeze response. For us to expand outside of our comfort zone can often feel disorienting and frightening. This is because we’ve unconsciously created a safety zone that on one hand seems to keep us feeling safe, but on another hand, keeps us absolutely stuck in limited ways of seeing ourselves.

***Emotional Trauma*** – Emotional trauma can be inflicted by a primary caregiver who is in their own addiction and not able to offer the love and connection we need. It can also come from teachers, ministers, and the like who are still operating from their “woundology.” It can be caused by peers; the proverbial “kid on the playground” acting as a bully. Being repeatedly mocked, insulted, and criticized can make us feel, at a fundamental level, that we are less than, not good enough, and/or unlovable. This is emotional trauma—injury to our emotional well-being. Our psyches can still hold the emotional trauma and hurts from our past. The traumatic event is no longer occurring, but our “freeze” instinct still believes we need protecting. We need to work out the emotional scars associated with the original trauma in order to be free.

***Spiritual trauma*** – Spiritual trauma is inflicted when we are not seen as the deepest truth of who and what we are. It is all too common to be taught ideas about ourselves and the world that are counter to this fundamental truth of our being. When we are not seen in this authentic light, we have what is called spiritual disconnection, which is a separation from our essential self. When that message about our fundamental brokenness and dependence is repeated over and over again, when it’s illustrated and lived by an authority and an institution that our parents and others around us respect and follow, then it naturally seeps into our spirits and breaks down our relationship with the fundamental truth of who we are. This is spiritual trauma; it is an injury to our spirit.

***Vicarious trauma*** – Vicarious trauma, simply put, is witnessing a traumatic event or ongoing trauma perpetrated on someone else. This can be witnessing a horrific accident, or seeing someone physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually abused once or over an extended period of time. This type of trauma can sometimes get overlooked, because someone might say a variation of “But, he never abused me,” or “I only saw it happen, I was not hurt.”

The truth is, this type of trauma can be very agonizing because there might be multiple layers to the experience. For example, someone might carry guilt or shame because they were not able to prevent the accident, or they believe they “should have” done something to stop the violence. One example of this is when children witness one parent abusing the other one. These incidents can leave very profound wounds that need to be addressed in order to find resolution and freedom from vicarious trauma.

***Consequences of Unresolved Trauma*** – Trauma lives in our bodies. If we have unresolved trauma, the responses of fight, flight, or freeze, which are very hard on our nervous systems, can be triggered by everyday physical experiences, and over time this chronic stress takes a toll on our bodies and spirits in addition to the direct physical effect of the trauma. Trauma can take up residence in the body, in effect reinjuring us each time it’s activated. It also has been linked to multiple physical diseases. Whether it’s physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual injury that we experience, unresolved trauma can result in a sense that something is fundamentally wrong or broken. And that a feeling can get buried deep in the subconscious (the part of our psyche that is not easily accessible to the conscious mind). If you’re walking around with the unconscious or subconscious belief that you’re not lovable, you may very well try to find all sorts of experiences to counter that.

You may become addicted to relationships, love, or sex. You are searching for something outside of yourself to try to undo the core false belief that you’re not lovable. The deeply held feeling tone that you’re not lovable works on an unconscious level to attract people who only confirm that negative core false belief. Conversely, you also may tend to be attracted to these very people, in a kind of self-sabotaging reinforcement of those false beliefs. The core false beliefs that result from unresolved trauma can trap us in a limited and limiting reality that keeps us from true healing.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 4: Unresolved Trauma/Resilience

(Chapter 1 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about the connection between trauma and addiction.

**Review Shared Agreements**

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(15 Minutes) Small Group or Dyad Process: Handout

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (Handout on page 33)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

What stood out that wants to be shared with the whole group?

### **(15 Minutes) Group Process – Trauma Exercise (Brainstorming):**

Simply have everyone brainstorm anything they would consider to be traumatic (whether they have experienced them or not). Once they have the list made, ask them to reflect back on their own life and ask them what traumatic experiences they endured in their own life. Now have them choose ONE of them to work with.

### **(15 Minutes) Group Process – Dyads:**

Have clients get into pairs and discuss the following questions. Here are the questions. (You might want to write them on the board):

- Are you aware of any ways in which you have locked trauma in your body?
- What emotions, pain or suffering might be stuck in there?
- What effect has that had on your addictive behavior?

### **(5 Minutes) Group Discussion:**

Anything left to share/discuss?

### **(10 Minutes) Closing Process**





# HANDOUT

## Reading from *Conscious Recovery*

Traumatic events by definition overwhelm our ability to cope. When the mind becomes flooded with emotion, a circuit breaker is thrown that allows us to survive the experience fairly intact. That is, without becoming psychotic or frying out one of the brain centers. The cost of this blown circuit is emotion frozen within the body. In other words, we often unconsciously stop feeling our trauma part way into it, like a movie that is still going after the sound has been turned off. We cannot heal until we move fully through that trauma, including all of the feelings of that event. Trauma is something that overwhelms our ability to cope. And unresolved trauma continues to hurt us because we are stuck in the traumatic experience.

How does trauma relate to an addicted life? Remember, we're talking about addiction as a brilliant strategy that's no longer working; using something outside of ourselves to try to fix something that feels broken within. The connection is simple: If trauma has led us to walk around with a sense of brokenness, then we naturally turn to things outside ourselves to try to fix that feeling of brokenness. The trouble is, if we've allowed the trauma response to get buried in our subconscious, then it begins to run the show. The trauma defines us and colors all our experiences. We come to believe that we are, fundamentally, victims. Let me be clear: This does not mean that we weren't victimized when the trauma happened. I'm not saying that the trauma you underwent was your responsibility, or your fault. Not at all. What I am saying is that, because of the trauma, we can sometimes take on the *identity* of a victim.



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 5: Spiritual Disconnection

### Group Focus: Self-Compassion

**Group Objective:** To explore deeply held core false beliefs that lead to addictive tendencies and behavior.

**Key Teaching Points:** Unconscious beliefs and the programming we received growing up often lead to addictive behaviors. This group will provide practices that will allow clients to explore the origins of these beliefs, question their validity, and release them in an interactive process.

**Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart, flat river rocks, markers, paper, and pens.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** If we're born with a solid connection to our divine nature, what happens to that connection? Most of us come into a world that teaches us about fear, separation, and competition. We learn things about ourselves and our world that are contrary to the fundamental truth that we are whole and perfect. Adults, often well-meaning, try to prepare us for the world by teaching us to fight, to wall off our emotions, to criticize. These lessons are based on lies that I call "core false beliefs." The deepest root of addiction is this: we learn and we appropriate core false beliefs, which break the connection with our true nature. This fragments us and pushes us to turn outward for validation, love, and peace of mind.

Our core false beliefs, which frequently stem from generalized unresolved trauma and spiritual disconnection, may leave us feeling broken. In response, we might look for things to make that feeling go away. That is often the foundational malady of addictive behavior. I have seen it repeatedly: What is most often at the core of addictive behavior is this sense of brokenness within and the search for something outside ourselves to help us manage the resulting discomfort. Looked at in this way, addictive behavior can be seen as a strategy, even a brilliant strategy, for survival. When our sense of self is fragmented, when we see ourselves as fundamentally broken, that's a very, very painful way to live. We feel like we're surviving rather than thriving, walking around with a sense of separation, a feeling of fear, a belief that we can't reveal our true selves because there's something wrong with us.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 5: Spiritual Disconnection/Self-Compassion

(Chapter 2 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-In: Everyone states their name and says something about self-compassion. (What compassion means to them, etc.)

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(10 minutes) Teaching Point: Draw a picture of the "seed and tree" and talk about how the seed represents our unconscious beliefs. (We can spend time "trimming and decorating" the tree but nothing really changes unless we get down to the seed). Ask: "If you plant a maple seed, you will get a maple tree, right?" Share with them that the seed represents the unconscious beliefs we have about ourselves and the roots of our addictive tendencies.

(5 minutes) Group Process: Identify one core false belief. Go around the circle and have everyone simply say their belief. (No feedback or comments). Core false beliefs usually start with "I am..." or "I am not..."

(15 minutes) Group Process (Dyads): Have participants interview each other regarding their chosen core false belief using the following four questions. (You might want to write these on the board for discussion):

- Where did this belief originate?
- How do you feel when you believe it?
- When does it arise?
- What would it take to be free from it?

**(30 minutes) Group Project:** Have everyone write their core false belief on a flat rock. Now, walk to a place (woods, body of water, etc.) to throw the rock while saying some version of "I now release this belief/lie, etc."

**OR**

Have them write their core false belief on a piece of paper. They can either make a paper airplane, or simply crumple it up. Then one at a time, ask clients to throw the paper while saying some version of "I now release this belief/lie, etc." (Obviously, you want to choose a place where it is safe for them to throw the paper and you'll also want to instruct them not to throw it at anyone.)

Depending on the logistics of your program, and what is clinically appropriate, you can also walk clients to an outdoor space (woods, park, etc.) and have clients bury the paper.

You may want to say: "People often ask if it is really as simple as writing the belief on a piece of paper and throwing it. My answer is this: Maybe, but for most of us it is simply a reminder that if we find ourselves returning to the critical thought, we can remind our self that we 'threw it away.'"

**Group Discussion (Time Permitting):** How was that? Any insights? Any observations?

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 6: Toxic Shame

### Group Focus: Authenticity

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of authenticity as a recovery tool and create a safe space for clients to share deeply in a supportive environment.

**Key Teaching Points:** People often fear that if they show their true self they will be judged, criticized, or abandoned. This group is intended to create a reparative experience by demonstrating the closeness people most often feel in the presence of truly authentic sharing.

**Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart, markers.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** How many times have you felt obligated to respond positively when someone says, “Hi, how are you?” Many of us answer “Great!” or “Blessed!” or “Awesome!” even when we’re not feeling any of those things. That’s a *surface* example of what many of us feel internally: that what’s important is to look good on the outside, to hide our suffering. We sometimes feel it’s an act of weakness to be honest and talk about what’s truly happening. This kind of inauthenticity is at the root of addiction. The strategies we use for hiding, for keeping secrets, for avoiding honesty, can lead to addictive behaviors. One of the root causes of addiction, as we saw in Part 1, is toxic shame, and shame needs inauthenticity to survive. It needs secrecy and silence. The addiction that inauthenticity creates can create chaos in your life and the lives of others, and it can even kill you. As Brené Brown stated in her groundbreaking book, *The Gifts of Imperfection*: *“Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It’s about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen.”*

Even when we’re coming out of addiction, often we’re still hiding, we’re not ready to be wholly ourselves, to honor the full range of who and what we are with others, or even with ourselves. Many people I work with who are entering recovery will say things like, “If you really knew me, you could not possibly love me.” That’s toxic shame, which can lead to separation and can create the cycle of addiction. On a spiritual level, though, recovery calls us to be authentic, to bring our whole self into the room. We experience a deeper healing when we’re not so caught up in the fear of “looking bad” or in the desire to “look good.”

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 6: Toxic Shame/Authenticity

(Chapter 3 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-in: Everyone states their name and says one thing about authenticity.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(20 minutes) **Group Process (Dyads):** Let clients know, for this process, they can close their eyes or leave them open. Now say: "Think of a time when you were really authentic, really yourself. How does that feel? What are the sensations in your body? Now, think of a time when you were really inauthentic. How does that feel?" Notice how each of those feel in your body. Have them get with a partner and describe what came up during that process. (Each person shares while other person listens.)

(15 minutes) **Group Process (Whiteboard or Flipchart):** Iceberg metaphor. Draw a picture of an iceberg. (Showing that most of the iceberg is "below the waterline.")

**Teaching Point:** All we can see is what is "above" the waterline. What is "below" the water line that we are afraid to show?



**Group Brainstorming:** (Write all answers on board or flipchart) Point: Not everything below the water line is "bad." There are dreams, goals, etc.

**Brief Discussion:** Why are we afraid to be authentic and show people what is below the waterline?

**(20 minutes) Group Process: "If You Knew Me..."**

Ask: "Are you willing to practice authenticity?"

**Important points:**

- Say: "Only go as deep as you feel safe doing so"
- You will set the stage by how deep you go in the beginning
- Get an agreement of confidentiality before the process begins
- Do not allow any feedback, questions, or comments about what people are saying—simply keep the process moving

Invite participants to come together in a circle. (As close together as they are willing to sit.) You begin the process by saying "If you knew me, you would know\_\_\_\_\_..." (Tell them something about yourself.) Then, one at a time, everyone in the circle also completes the phrase "If you knew me, you would know\_\_\_\_\_..." Tell them ahead of time that there will probably be three or four rounds and that you will let them know when it is the final round. The second round is "If you REALLY knew me, you would know\_\_\_\_\_..." The third round is "If you REALLY, REALLY knew me, you would know\_\_\_\_\_...", and so on.

**(5 minutes) Group Discussion:** Ask the questions: "Do you feel closer or further away from people in the circle?" and "How do you feel about what you shared?" (Too much...too little, etc.)

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 7: Creating Safety

### Group Focus: Trust

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of inner and outer safety as a recovery tool and create a safe space for clients to share their experiences and perspectives related to trust and safety.

**Key Teaching Points:** Conscious Recovery recognizes safety as an important first step in early recovery. This group is intended to create an environment of investigation related to the practice of discovering inner-resources that will help clients step more fully into trust and safety.

**Materials Needed:** The four quotes (found on pages 46-49), tape, index cards, pens.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** When we break trust with someone, we need not only apologize, but we also need to change our behavior and begin to become trustworthy. And being trustworthy means being able to say what we mean and mean what we say. It means our actions start aligning with our intentions. Perhaps that's the greatest definition of trust: The sense of ourselves, who we are, is in alignment with what we say and do. It's more difficult to create this alignment when we focus on fixing what's "wrong," because that focus doesn't encourage us to totally trust ourselves. When we are working from a perspective of self-judgment and criticism, it is the opposite of trust. But, when we perceive ourselves and others through the lens of love and acceptance and focus on what's working and what's truly behind our addiction, we start to reveal who we authentically are. When we see what's fueling our addictive behavior, our motivations become clearer. When we become aware of our self-talk, our inner dialogue, we can take responsibility for it. And that's a more solid foundation for building authentic trust. We can then be well on our way to rebuilding trust with ourselves and others.

It may take time to rebuild trust with the people in your life. Remember, you have probably said to them, on many occasions: "This time it will be different," or "I'm going to stop forever, I promise." So, they may not be ready to believe you when you say this, one more time. Perhaps a more useful way to approach this conversation is to honestly let them know what you're doing to support your recovery. You can be compassionate about the fact that it may take time for them to commence to trust you again.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 7: Creating Safety/Trust

(Chapter 4 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-In: Everyone states their name and says something about safety or trust.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

### (10 Minutes) Group Process 1 – What is Trust Process:

Ask participants to speak answers "into the circle" to the question: "What is Trust?" You simply ask the question, and then allow clients to share whatever comes up. I encourage you to allow for space to see what emerges. (Let them know it's ok if there is silence or if people speak at the same time.)

(10 Minutes) Group Process: – Four Corners: Tape the four different quotes (found on pages 46-49) to the wall in different parts of the room. Have everyone walk around and read them. Then ask them to stand by the one that they most resonate or identify with. Once everyone has chosen their quote, they sit in small groups (based on the one they selected).

**(15 Minutes) Group Process:** Each group spends time discussing why they choose that particular quote. (Each group chooses one person to summarize the small group discussions.)

**(15 Minutes) Group Process:** One person from each group stands up in front of the room and “reports” the highlights from their small group discussion.

**(10 minutes) Group Process (Dyads):** Each person shares and then listens. (You might want to write these questions on the whiteboard.)

- What is one difficulty you have experienced in the last month?
- How did you handle it?
- What were the consequences of your actions?
- What were the hidden INNER resources?

Now write the INNER resource on an index card. (Some examples of INNER resources are, gratitude, acceptance, courage, etc.)

**Group Discussion (Time Permitting):** How was that? Any insights? Any observations?

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**

*Your task is not to seek for love,  
but merely to seek and find all  
the barriers within yourself that  
you have built against it.*

— *Rumi*

*The more you trust your intuition,  
the more empowered you  
become, the stronger you  
become, and the happier you  
become.*

*— Gisele Bundchen*

*Trust in yourself. Your perceptions are often far more accurate than you are willing to believe.*

*— Claudia Black*



*The best way to find  
out if you can trust  
somebody is to  
trust them.*

*— Ernest Hemingway*



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 8: Unlearning

### Group Focus: Change

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of life-changing moments and recognize the “positive” and “negative” impact of those moments.

**Key Teaching Points:** There are certain moments in our lives that have a profound impact. This group will provide an opportunity to reflect on one of those moments.

**Materials Needed:** Basic art supplies (paper, colored pencils, pastels, etc.)

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** Have you ever realized that it’s time for a U-turn? T- Is it time to make a radical change in your life? Sometimes we find ourselves going in a direction in which we’re not content. When we recognize this, we generally make small adjustments in direction or maneuver slightly to change our trajectory. Most of the changes we make are small because we’re more comfortable with what’s familiar, and we don’t want to move too far into unfamiliar territory.

These small shifts can be valuable. Maybe we’re wanting more time for meditation, so we start getting up twenty minutes earlier. This gives us what we want without making a huge disruption in our lives. But occasionally we’re ready for a bigger, more significant shift. This is what I’m calling a U-turn. It’s not a subtle shift; it’s taking life in a distinctively different direction. Maybe we’re in a dead-end job or in an unhappy relationship, or we’re coming up against the limits of our addictive behavior. Whatever the circumstances, a U-turn is that moment not only of clarity but of courage and willingness to make a major change.

Those of us who have lived with addiction are familiar with the U-turn. For many of us it’s mandatory; our recovery will not work if we take only small and subtle turns. We need to turn it around completely. And we know that making the U-turn can be a process. It starts with the awareness that the change is necessary, but it doesn’t end there. The change won’t happen if all we have is the awareness. We also need the courage and the willingness to make the modification. And as we enter the change, we find that it is manifest in different ways in various areas of our lives.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 8: Unlearning/Change

(Chapter 5 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-in: Everyone states their name and says something about change.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(30 minutes) **Group Activity (Art):** Have each client draw a life-changing moment. (This can be something they consider to be "positive" or "negative.")

Ideally, they will spread out so no one else sees what they are drawing.

\*Important note: Based on your clinical judgment, there might be certain drawings that are not clinically appropriate for group. We suggest that you gently steer them in a different direction, in a private conversation.

When each client is finished, tape the drawings up on the wall without letting other clients see who drew it.

**(30 minutes) Group Process:** One by one, have clients guess what the life-changing moment is and who drew it. (If clinically appropriate.)

After everyone guesses, have whoever drew it to stand in front of the group and explain their drawing and about the life-changing moment.

**(Time Permitting) Group Discussion:** How was that? Any insights? Any observations?

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 9: Practicing Spiritual Principles

### Group Focus: Presence

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of presence as a recovery tool and create a safe space for clients to examine the role of spirituality in their lives.

**Key Teaching Points:** Many people have been conditioned to focus on the past or future. This group is intended to create a space for your clients to examine the role of presence in their recovery, and through an interactive process, examine the role of questioning as a spiritual practice.

**Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart, markers, handouts (one per client), pens.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** Many of us have spent a great deal of time developing all sorts of strategies to not be present, to not live right here in this moment. That's partly because of our approach—most of us have been taught to go through life identifying problems and seeking solutions. This means, essentially, that the current situation is never OK. "If only I could get that promotion, then things will be OK," "If she could just understand me, then things will be better." With this worldview, there's always something out there to strive for. There's always somewhere better than here. Our job, even our purpose, is to control, to improve, to "fix" our circumstances.

This is a focus on the future, on what might be "if only." The flip side of this future focus is looking back on the past. From that perspective, we regret actions we took, or didn't take. Here we might criticize ourselves for failing, not doing the "right" thing, not seeing the problem or finding the solution. So again, we get stuck in patterns of shame and judgment. If we've been living life this way, it can be difficult to wrap our heads around the experience of mindfulness or presence, which is about relating to ourselves right in this moment. We've gone so long without being aware of what's happening in the present that we can't even tell what we're feeling or experiencing right now.

What if presence is our natural state, but we've been programmed to not be in the moment, to be constantly reliving the past or worrying about the future? From this perspective, maintaining presence involves unlearning more than learning. Once we come to the point where the strategy of future/past focus no longer works for us, we can unlearn our un-present way of being.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 9: Spiritual Principles/Presence

(Chapter 6 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-In: Everyone states their name and says something about presence.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

**(20 Minutes) Group Process – Non-Resistance Exercise (Dyads):** Have clients think of a situation in their life that has been causing them anxiety or worry, then have them interview each other using the following questions. (Give each client the handout with the questions on page 58.)

Related to the situation that has been causing you anxiety or worry:

- What are your thoughts about it?
- What thoughts do you have about controlling the outcome?
- In what ways are you asking yourself "what if?"
- In what ways are you obsessing with worst case scenarios?
- What would it take for you to shift your thinking?



Now, ask them to sit in silence and bring their awareness to the present moment. Ask them to repeat quietly to themselves some version of the following statements:

- I am perfectly OK in this moment.
- The future has no power over me.
- I have the tools to navigate life.

**(20 minutes) Group Activity (Small Groups):** Living in the Question. Each client gets the handout on page 59. Have members of the small group read handout out loud and discuss.

**(20 Minutes) Group Process - Living in the Question Activity (Dyads):** We recommend that you demonstrate this in the middle of the room with a volunteer so your clients can actually see this process.

Have clients sit and face each other. Choose one of the questions below. Person A asks person B the question and listens for an answer. Person B gives a *short* one word or one sentence answer. Without responding, person A then repeats the *same* question, and so on, for 3 minutes. (You will set a timer and let them know when to start and stop). Now, repeat but reverse the roles within the pair. (Choose a different question)

Some suggested questions: What is addiction? – What is recovery? – Who are you? – What is reality?

**(10 Minutes) Closing Process**

# HANDOUT 1

**Related to the situation that has been causing you anxiety or worry:**

What are your thoughts about it?

What thoughts do you have about controlling the outcome?

In what ways are you asking yourself "what if?"

In what ways are you obsessing with worst case scenarios?

What would it take for you to shift your thinking?

Now, sit in silence and bring your awareness to the present moment.

Repeat quietly to yourself some version of the following statements:

I am perfectly OK in this moment.

The future has no power over me.

I have the tools to navigate life.

# HANDOUT 2

## Living in the Question

I like to say that “Ego seeks answers, Spirit asks questions.” A shift happens when we release the need to find definitive answers to our questions about life and the world around us. Have you ever noticed that the primary function of the mind seems to be finding answers? We are trained from a young age that there is a right answer to every question. Our entire educational system is based on memorizing information and being able to regurgitate the answers come test time. In one reality, there is a correct answer to some of life’s questions. However, even in that version of reality, those answers sometimes change based on new information or new ways of seeing the situation. I am reminded of how much our “factual” world has changed over time. Science is continuously revealing how things are not as solid as we once believed.

How willing are we to live with, and in questions, recognizing them as potentially more important than the answers? When we grasp too tightly onto answers, it shuts down our process of inquiry and puts limits on our capacity to understand. Willingness to live in a question opens us up to deeper and greater knowing. It opens us up to infinite possibilities rather than staying stuck in our normal way of seeing things. It allows us to expand beyond our previous limits of comprehension. When we live within a question, we dig deeper into our internal exploration of what’s possible, rather than reaching for an answer that is already known. Living in the question invites us to travel into mystery. Spirit loves the unknown. It loves mystery. The mind is constantly seeking answers. That’s its function. However, the answers it comes up with keep us separate from the truth of who we really are.

**An excerpt from Conscious Being  
by TJ Woodward**



# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 10: Owning Your Power

### Group Focus: Forgiveness

**Group Objective:** To explore the power of making peace with the past as a recovery tool and create a safe space for clients to explore forgiveness.

**Key Teaching Points:** People often believe that making peace with the past and forgiveness are difficult, often because they are stuck at a level of awareness that is deeply entrenched in “right and wrong” and “good and bad.” This group will offer tools to open to a new way of viewing and working through forgiveness.

**Materials Needed:** Paper and pens, clipboards (or something to write on).

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** Forgiveness is a very powerful tool in letting go of the perspectives that keep us in a limited and limiting way of seeing and being. Forgiveness allows us to move more deeply into the truth of who and what we are, to eradicate our stories of separation, powerlessness, and being stuck in blaming and victimization. Many of us have a terrifically hard time with forgiveness. We feel that terrible things have happened in our lives, and we are unable to let them go.

So, let’s start there, with the experience of forgiveness that many of us have had. When we’re stuck in unconscious reactions, forgiveness is next to impossible. The beliefs we hold about ourselves and our world become the lens through which we view the world, the way we frame our stories. They limit our perspective and block us from freedom and authenticity. When we’re living at this victim/martyr level of consciousness, hearing about the need to forgive can push us further into limitation.

If we are holding the idea that we’re fundamentally a victim, then “forgiveness” may look like admitting that we are “wrong” or “bad,” that we “deserve what we get.” Or it can look like giving up, admitting that the other person is stronger or better and that we cannot ever win. From this level of awareness, forgiveness supposes that we’ve been harmed, or have lost, and that we need to forgive the person who harmed us, which can feel like basically admitting that the person who hurt us has won. From the perspective of a victim, forgiveness might also mean pretending that things that happened in the past never happened. This requires forgetting, and burying things deep in the shadow.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 10: Owning Your Power/Forgiveness

(Chapter 7 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-in: Everyone says their name and something about making peace with the past.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(15 minutes) **Group Activity:** Ask clients to think of a person they are having trouble forgiving. Have them write out the details of the situation. (For this exercise, they cannot work with self-forgiveness.)

Have them get with a partner and share what they wrote. (No feedback for this process and definitely no "solution" seeking.)

(15 minutes) **Group Activity:** Now, have them write about the same situation, but from the OTHER PERSON'S perspective.

They will the get with the SAME partner and share what they wrote. (Again, no feedback for this process and definitely no "solution" seeking.)

**(15 minutes) Group Activity:** Now, have them write about the same situation, but from their HIGHER SELF (or higher power's) perspective.

**Time Permitting:** They will the get with the SAME partner and share what they wrote. (Again, no feedback for this process and definitely no "solution" seeking.)

**(15 minutes) Group Process:** Have each person read ONLY their third version. (Without telling the "story.")

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**





# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 11: The Great Remembering

### Group Focus: Accountability

**Group Objective:** To explore the possibility that no one and nothing “outside” of someone has the power to make them relapse.

**Key Teaching Points:** Often people say that they feel “triggered” by someone’s behavior or by something that happens to them. In this group, we will practice changing the word “trigger” to “activation” and reframe the belief that someone or something has the ability to control us or make us relapse.

**Materials Needed:** Copies of Handouts (one per person), whiteboard/flipchart, markers.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** We may sometimes still experience pain, but we will no longer blame anyone or any situation as the cause of the pain. We will be accountable for our own experience. It may be that a wound within us is touched by what happened, and in that case, it’s important to discover how it might help us grow beyond that trigger. As a matter of fact, we no longer focus on triggers at all, but acknowledge that something is activated within us that is wanting to heal. In that way, we can welcome every situation as an opportunity for our own growth and expansion. When we come to see that what other people do or say doesn’t impact the truth of who and what we are, and we recognize they are acting out of their own “woundology,” we don’t make ourselves victims to anyone else’s behavior. We no longer blame anyone else for our experiences. We become able to respond to them rather than reacting out of our old programming. In this way, we can be at peace regardless of outer circumstances.

As we embody this dynamic new paradigm, new possibilities open in our consciousness and in our lives. We recognize that because we have grown in conscious awareness, we can naturally access and activate a deeper blueprint for our lives. We can embrace a life filled with connection and joy. We find ourselves living from a perspective of continuous awe and wonder. Life becomes immensely simpler over time, and we move into a way of being that even feels *effortless*. This is because we have awakened into a new way of seeing ourselves and the world. We have been returned to our original perfection. Because of this, our lives continue to open to greater opportunities. As we grow our level of consciousness, the outer world responds.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 11: The Great Remembering/Accountability

(Chapter 8 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 minutes) Meditation

(10 minutes) Check-in: Everyone says their name and says something about what one of their "triggers" are.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(5 minutes) Introduction of Topic: In the addiction treatment field, the word "trigger" is used to describe something (a person, place, etc.) that causes someone to relapse. This is implying the something or someone "out there" is the cause of their pain. But it is really a "button" that was touched INTERNALLY and that is where the focus needs to be.

(5 minutes) Group Discussion: Read (or write on board) and discuss this quote: "It is not your words that hurt me, it's that you touched a wound that has not healed." - Don Miguel Ruiz

(20 minutes) Group Process (Small Groups): Have people break into three small groups and read one of the readings (out loud) and discuss.

**(15 minutes) Group Process:** Have one person from each group “report” to the larger group regarding the discussion in their group.

**(15 minutes) Group Discussion (Flipchart):** Line down center of flipchart. On one side brainstorm and list “TRIGGERS” on the other side “ACTIVATIONS.”

**Key Points:**

- There is a deeper way to approach a “trigger”
- It is really a “button” that is touched INTERNALLY that’s the issue
- The “button” is getting activated in order to heal
- In this way we are no longer giving our power away

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**

## READING 1

### From *Conscious Recovery*

We may sometimes still experience pain, but we will no longer blame anyone or any situation as the cause of the pain. We will be accountable for our own experience. It may be that a wound within us is touched by what happened, and in that case, it's important to discover how it might help us grow beyond that trigger. As a matter of fact, we no longer focus on triggers at all, but acknowledge that something is activated within us that is wanting to heal. In that way, we can welcome every situation as an opportunity for our own growth and expansion. When we come to see that what other people do or say doesn't impact the truth of who and what we are, and we recognize they are acting out of their own "woundology," we don't make ourselves victims to anyone else's behavior. We no longer blame anyone else for our experiences. We become able to respond to them rather than reacting out of our old programming. In this way, we can be at peace regardless of outer circumstances.

## READING 2

### From *Conscious Recovery*

Imagine a permanent shift in your neural network, in which you don't constantly identify yourself as broken or addicted. Imagine going into a place that used to be filled with triggers, a place that formerly would have looked like a temptation or a trap, and walking through it with ease and grace. Imagine your life as free of "the problem of addiction" and as filled with potential. Imagine that you are truly free to move in whatever direction your inner knowing points. That's the power of the quantum leap, the U-turn in consciousness. Imagine now that, because you are recognizing your oneness with Source, you can absolutely trust its direction. That's the promise of many spiritual practices—that through openness and acceptance, you will develop an unshakable relationship with your inner life, and allow it to gently guide you.

## READING 3

### From *Conscious Recovery*

Imagine that someone makes a “negative” remark to you. Practicing nonresistance, you can simply observe and notice: How are you judging this situation? What is your judgment about this person?

Then you can take that more deeply inward: You can observe what that statement activates internally.

Maybe you feel a tightness in your throat or your chest or your stomach, maybe you experience the urge to react, to lash out, to judge. So you can observe your reaction, and recognize your desire to judge. And then you can go even deeper: What is your judgment about *yourself* in this moment? What are you saying about yourself when you judge this person or situation? What are you believing about yourself to be true?

# PREPARING FOR GROUP

## Group 12: Awakened Living

### Group Focus: Purpose

**Group Objective:** To explore what it means to live on purpose.

**Key Teaching Points:** Often people think that purpose is an “action” or a role they play. This group will explore the possibility that purpose is actually a quality or an inner resource. (The take-away is that when we are living our inner qualities, we naturally experience a deeper sense of purpose both internally and externally.)

**Materials Needed:** Copies of handouts (one per person), pens, clipboards (or something to write on), index cards.

**Reading from Conscious Recovery:** When we talk about purpose, we generally refer to something in the outer realm, something we want to *do*. We tend to believe that if we achieve this thing or that thing, then we will acquire what we want, whether that’s fulfillment or happiness or a better standard of living. We often look at our goals and achievements as effort, striving, even as struggle. What we’re discovering together in this book is the power of the inward-looking approach. Tapping into our wholeness, into our divine nature, is our most fundamental purpose. Our primary purpose is simply to awaken. Being grounded in that space of essential wholeness makes pursuing any intention in the outer realm much easier, more powerful and connected. When we tap into the truth of who and what we are, life naturally becomes purposeful. There’s no striving to achieve something beyond us. We are simply guided in a very powerful way to what’s already there.

I want to examine two levels of purpose: our common inner purpose and our individual, outer-directed purposes. Our fundamental purpose is simply to awaken—to become conscious of our inherent wholeness, to live in a state of presence, to become aware of our oneness with Source. And as we grow in awareness of this purpose, it becomes manifest in all our outer-directed purposes. This isn’t about figuring it out. It isn’t about latching onto a new set of beliefs or perfecting our spiritual technique to do it correctly. It’s about deepening the awareness of our essential wholeness. It’s also about moving from our head, into our heart, and ultimately living in a deep awareness of our intuition. It is shifting from feeling trapped by our thoughts and ego-driven goals into experiencing a deeper, more authentic feeling tone.

# GROUP OUTLINE

## Group 12: Awakened Living/Purpose

(Chapter 9 from *Conscious Recovery*)

10 Minutes) Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-in: Everyone says their name and one thing about what it means to live on purpose.

### Review Shared Agreements

- One Person Speaks at a Time
- Confidentiality
- Share the Air
- No "Fixing"
- "I" Statements
- Feedback Upon Request

(20 Minutes) **Group Activity:** Have each group member write two or three core false beliefs on an index card. Have each of them stand in front of the room and read the cards. Now ask them to tear the card up and throw away. (Into bowl.)

IMPORTANT: They are not processing, giving feedback, or discussing. Invite them to notice how it feels when they hear people read their core false beliefs.

(15 Minutes) **Group Activity:** Make a list of seven people...three qualities...have participants fill out sheet. (On page 74.) Let them know it's ok if words repeat. When they are finished filling out the sheet, ask them to circle any words that repeat. Ask them to write down the THREE words that repeat most often on an index card.



**Teaching Point:** We can only recognize traits in others if you have them in yourself. "You spot it, you got it."

**(10 Minutes) Group Activity:** Have participant make two lines facing each other. Each person will read their card to the person standing in front of them saying: My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I AM \_\_\_\_\_. Now a person from one side moves to the other end of the line, and everyone on that side "slides down" a person. Repeat this process until everyone from side "A" reads and listens to everyone from side "B."

**(10 Minutes) Teaching Point:** When we are "living on our card" (practicing the three words) we are living on purpose. (Practicing authenticity.)

**Symptoms of Authenticity:** Satisfaction, Fulfillment, Meaning, and Harmony

**Symptoms of IN-Authenticity:** Frustration, Defensiveness, Conflict, and Judgment

Say something like: "When we are living on our cards, we experience the symptoms of authenticity. If you find yourself feeling frustrated, getting defensive, etc. you can simply read your card and remind yourself of who and what you really are.

**(5 minutes) Closing Reading:** Simply read the excerpt from Marianne Williamson (page 75) out loud to the group.

**(10 minutes) Closing Process**

# SEVEN PEOPLE YOU ADMIRE AND RESPECT

NAME

THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THEM (They are...)

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

# OUR GREATEST FEAR

## Marianne Williamson

It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,  
talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

You playing small does not serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other  
people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,  
we unconsciously give other people  
permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear,  
our presence automatically liberates others.

# Appendix

## PIES MEDITATION

This is an outline for a (Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Spiritual) meditation. It is intended to offer a basic structure. You can simply read it verbatim (slowly with pauses) or use your own style.

I invite you to sit in a comfortable and receptive position. You can gently close your eyes, or leave your eyes slightly open, with your gaze focused downward. Sit on the floor or in a chair with your spine as straight as you can make it. Now, begin to breathe in deeply, then exhale. Simply pay attention to how the breath moves into and out of your body. With each exhale, allow yourself to settle in, and open to this present moment experience. Begin by simply noticing any sounds or sensations you are experiencing in your environment. Take a few deep breaths in this present-moment awareness and simply notice. (Allow for at least 15 seconds of silence here.) Now, shift your awareness back to the breath. I invite you to consciously choose to slow your breath down. Now notice what happens as you choose these slower inhales and exhales.

Next, we shift your awareness inward, starting to check in with yourself. Begin by checking in with yourself physically. Do you notice any tension in your body? As you breathe, with each exhale release that tension, gently. Allow your shoulders to drop, your jaw to soften, and trust that you can let go and feel supported in this very moment. Picture yourself really sinking into the floor or chair, and really give yourself permission to let go, and open up to this now moment. Now, bring your attention to any thoughts that are present. And see if you can simply witness those thoughts without attaching to them. You might imagine them floating by on a cloud or coming and going as gently as a wave. If your mind starts to wander, simply bring awareness back to your breath and begin witnessing the thoughts again.

Now, shift awareness into your heart region, becoming aware of the emotional inner landscape that is present in this moment. Breathe in and out again, keeping the focus on your heart. Do this for several moments. As you keep your attention on your heart, notice any emotions that are present. See if you can become intimate with the emotions and even make friends with whatever is present. Then ask yourself the question: “Does this emotion hold a message for me?”

Finally, shift awareness even more deeply inward, discovering that place within yourself that is still and calm. Simply allow yourself to settle into that place of inner spaciousness now as we take one minute together in the silence. (After One Minute) Now, slowly begin to bring your awareness back into the room and gently open your eyes.

## CLOSING PROCESSES

- Go around the circle and have each person briefly share their “take away” from today’s group
- Go around the circle and have each person acknowledge, or offer a word of gratitude for another group member
- Go around the circle and have each person share one thing they are grateful for
- Go around the circle and have each person share one thing they are going to do to support their recovery in the coming days



















































Thank you so much for taking this journey with us.



Sending you love and light!

*TJ Woodward*

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