

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

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

GROUP OUTLINE

Group 3: The Fragmented 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

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 their mental health issues.

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 mental health and well-being?

(5 Minutes) Group Discussion:

Anything left to share/discuss?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

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 and the roots of our maladaptive behaviors.

(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

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

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

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. If that is the case, 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

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 56.)

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

- What are your thoughts about it?
- What thoughts do you have about trying to control 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 57. 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 mental illness? – What is recovery? – Who are you? – What is authenticity?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

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

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 behavioral health 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

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 72.) 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 73) out loud to the group.

(10 minutes) Closing Process