

GROUP OUTLINE

Res. 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? Divide the whiteboard or flipchart into four quadrants. 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

Res. 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

Res. Group 3: The Fragmented Self/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 – Turning 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

Res. 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

Have clients get into pairs or small groups, read the handout out loud from *Conscious Recovery* (found on page 31), and spend 15 minutes discussing in their pairs or small groups.

(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 – (Group Discussion):

Lead a group discussion with clients using the following 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

Res. 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 or a rock 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

Res. 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

Res. 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

Res. 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.

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

Res. 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

Res. 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.)

****Important note:** Based on your clinical judgment, you might opt to have clients remain in the larger group rather than breaking into pairs, due to the potentially sensitive subject matter. If this is the case, you might simply ask for volunteers who want to read what they wrote with the group.*

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

They will then get with the SAME partner (or stay in the large group if you deem more clinically appropriate) 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.

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

(10 minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Res. 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 revert to maladaptive behaviors. 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 (found on pages 67-69) 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

Res. 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

GROUP OUTLINE

OP Group 1: A Fresh Perspective on Mental Health

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about the root causes of 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 (page 82)

- Reading from Conscious Recovery (out loud)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

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

(20ik Minutes) Discussion/Brainstorming (Whiteboard or Flipchart):

What is mental illness?

(15 Minutes) Dyads:

Discuss how your maladaptive behaviors (coping mechanisms) were once brilliant strategies and answer the questions: In what ways are they still working? In what ways are they not working?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 2: The Spiritual Lens

(Preface and Introduction from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about spirituality as it relates to mental health.

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 (page 88)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

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

(5 Minutes) Group Process 1 - Four Corners:

Tape the four different quotes from *Conscious Recovery* (found on pages 90-93) on 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 2:

Each group spends time discussing why they choose that particular quote. (Each group chooses one person to summarize the small group discussions.)

(10 Minutes) Group Process 3:

One person from each group stands up in front of the room, reads the quote, and "reports" the highlights from their small group discussion.

(5 Minutes) Group Discussion:

Anything left to share/discuss?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 3: The Fragmented Self

(Introduction from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about what mental health means to them.

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 1 (page 98)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- 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 1 – Core False Beliefs (Dyads):

Have clients get into pairs. Give each client the handout (page 100) Have everyone circle any of the core false beliefs they, on some level, are holding or believing about themselves. (They are free to add their own.)

Now invite them to have a discussion with their partner, using these questions. (You might want to write these on the board.)

1. When did you first start believing these ideas about yourself?
2. How have these beliefs contributed to your mental health issues?
3. Can you think of some examples of times when you believed the opposite?

(15 Minutes) Group Process 2 – Reframing Process:

Have clients come back to the larger group. Ask them to reflect on the beliefs they circled on the handout. Now ask them to choose one to work with for this next exercise. Invite them to come up with the opposite of the belief and write it on an index card.

Go around the circle and have clients read **ONLY** the new (opposite) belief from their card and share how it's true about them.

(5 Minutes) Group Discussion:

Anything left to share/discuss?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 4: Unresolved Trauma

(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 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 1 (page 108)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- 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 1 – (Handout):

Have clients write their answers to the following questions (using the handout found on page 111):

- In what ways have you taken on the identity of a victim?
- In what ways has this left you feeling powerless and hopeless?
- How has this impacted your life?

(15 Minutes) Group Process 2 – (Pairs)

Have clients find a partner and simply discuss what they wrote.

(5 Minutes) Group Discussion:

Anything left to share/discuss?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 5: Spiritual Disconnection

(Chapter 2 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about the relationship between connection and 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 1 (page 116)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

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

(20 Minutes) Group Process 1 – Brilliant Strategies Exercise:

Simply have everyone write out their answers to the following questions using the handout (on page 119):

- What coping strategies did you learn that are no longer working for you?
- What was brilliant about them at the time you used them?
- What would it take for you to let them go?

Now, have them read through what they wrote. Set a timer for three minutes. Ask them to sit quietly for the three minutes on what they wrote. Sit with how the answers *feel* in their body. Instruct them to notice any thoughts, physical sensations, and emotions that show up.

(15 Minutes) Group Process 2 – Dyads:

Have them get with a partner and share what came up during the silence. (They can read each other's answers if they would like.)

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 6: Toxic Shame

(Chapter 3 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about the relationship between shame and mental health.

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 1 (page 124)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- 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 Dyads Process 1 – Toxic Shame Exercise: (Handout)

“Toxically shamed people tend to become more and more stagnant as life goes on. They live in a guarded, secretive, and defensive way. They try to be more than human—perfect and controlling—or less than human—losing interest in or stagnated in some addictive behavior.”

Have them get with a partner and share (don't write out) answer to these questions (using the handout found on page 127):

- What does this quote mean to you?
- In what ways do you relate to it?
- In what ways have you lived in guarded, secretive or defensive ways?
- Have you ever tried to cover up shame by using control in your life?

(20 Minutes) Group Process 2 – Releasing Practice:

Have participants think of a few core false beliefs they are, on some level, believing to be true about themselves. Have each group member write these core false beliefs on an index card. Then, have each of them stand in front of the room and read the cards. Now, ask them to tear the card up and throw it 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.

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 7: Creating Safety

(Chapter 4 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about the importance of safety in early recovery.

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 1 (page 132)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

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

(10 Minutes) Group Process 1 – What is Safety Process:

Ask participants to speak answers “into the circle” to the question: “What is safety?” 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.)

(15 Minutes) Large Group Discussion – Rebuilding Safety

Have a client write these questions on the board, then simply have a large group discussion about them.

- In what way do you want to build a safe relationship with yourself?
- In what way do you want to build safe relationships with others?
- How might you begin that process?

(10 Minutes) Group Process 3 – Brainstorming:

Have a client come up and facilitate a brainstorming on these questions: What is community? What are some ways to build community? What are some recovery focused communities?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

Outpatient Group 8: Unlearning

(Chapter 5 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In: Everyone states their name and says something about learning and unlearning.

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 1 (page 138)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- 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 – Group Discussion:

Have a client write this quote on the board, then simply have a large group discussion about it.

There comes a point when it's time for us to unlearn the stories, the beliefs, the ideas that we have gathered up but no longer fit our lives.

(20 Minutes) Group Process 3 – Inner Critic Process (With a partner):

Say some version of this: Share with your partner some of the ways your inner critic speaks to you. Now think of a situation that is challenging. Describe the situation to your partner. Then have your partner “externalize” your inner voice. First, have them use some of the negative talk you shared with them. For example, they may say: “Why even bother, you never succeed anyway...” Check in and see how that feels. Sometimes, simply hearing these things said out loud rather than having them in your head can be a powerful experience.

Now “shake that off” and have your partner use a gentle, more compassionate voice. They may say something like “I know this situation is challenging, but you have the strength to get through this. I believe in you...” Now, notice how that feels. Really “be with” the difference. Share with your partner how this felt.

Time Permitting: What are your take-aways from this process?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 9: Spiritual Principles

(Chapter 6 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about spiritual principles and spiritual practices.

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 1 (page 144)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

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

(20 Minutes) Group Process 1 – Judgments Exercise:

Simply have everyone write out their answers to the following questions using the handout (on page 147):

- What judgments do you have about *yourself* and how things “should” be?
- What judgments do you have of *the world* and how things “should” be different?
- What if right now nothing needs to change? What would that bring you?

(15 Minutes) Group Process 2 – Dyads:

Have them get with a partner and share what they wrote. (They can read each other’s answers if they would like.)

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

PREPARING FOR GROUP

Outpatient Group 10: Owning Your Power

(Chapter 7 from *Conscious Recovery*)

Summary: The purpose of this group is to explore how participants can tap into and own a deeper sense of conscious awareness and to provide methods for moving their lives from powerless to power-full.

Materials needed: Copies of handouts (one per person), paper, and pens.

Key teaching points:

1. *The Power of Perception* – 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.

The power of perception is simply this capacity to recognize that there is an endless variety of lenses through which we can view the world. And it's also the ability to change our perspective, to play with different lenses and see what happens to our experience of what we call reality. It's the ability to choose a perspective that's more open to love and connection. We have power to shift our perception and therefore shift how we experience life. When we let go of our self-limiting beliefs and expand our awareness, things look different and so they become different. We move into power.

2. *The Power of Forgiveness* – 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.

We may think of forgiveness as making peace with the past. That means different things from different perspectives. From a place of non-judgment, the past is what it is. The past cannot be different—we cannot go back and change what happened. But we can alter the way we see it.

When we arrive at the mystical level of consciousness, of recognizing our oneness with life, there is no longer anything to forgive. This place of alignment with ultimate reality acknowledges that the cause of anyone's harmful behavior is separation from their essential self. When we reach a state of oneness with Source, we recognize that there's nothing to forgive because we can see that everything that's happened in our life has played a part in our transformation; it's been useful in getting us where we are. And as we grow in conscious awareness, forgiveness becomes more of a natural process. At this level of awareness, we shift from forgiveness to compassion and gratitude.

3. The Power of Authenticity – 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 mental health issues. The strategies we use for hiding, for keeping secrets, for avoiding honesty, can lead to maladaptive behaviors. One of the root causes of mental health issues, as we saw in Part 1, is toxic shame, and shame needs inauthenticity to survive. It needs secrecy and silence. The issues 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."*

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." In conscious recovery, it's not about eradicating what we consider "bad" or "negative," it's about embracing it, allowing it to be, and recognizing that it is not the ultimate truth of who and what we are. The power of authenticity becomes evident when we witness our darkness from a place of wholeness and perfection. "The spiritual journey is not about 'getting good;' it's about becoming more and more *real*." That's authenticity.

4. The Power of Gratitude – Gratitude may be one of the most talked-about spiritual principles there is, and many of us have learned that gratitude is a powerful tool for spiritual awakening and recovery. What would it be like to be grateful for all aspects of ourselves—not just those things that look like love and light but also the aspects of our shadow?

Those parts of ourselves that we would like to change or shift can be helped by holding a space of gratitude, rather than trying to bury them. The more we can be grateful for it *all*, the less blocked we are by shame and blame.

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 11: The Great Remembering

(Chapter 8 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about remembering the truth about themselves.

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 1 (page 160)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- Small group or dyad discussion of reading

(10 Minutes) Large Group Discussion:

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

(20 Minutes) Group Process – 4 Small Groups:

Each group gets an excerpt from the chapter and discusses. (Excerpts found on pages 160 -163)

(5 Minutes) Group Process – Group Reports:

Have one person from each group report back to the larger group about the discussion that emerged in their small group.

(15 Minutes) Group Process Dyads – Shift Happens Technique (Handout 3):

Have clients read the paragraph on the handout and discuss.

Then they answer these questions with a partner. (Don't have them write their answers.)

- What would your life be like if you were free from the problem of "mental illness?"
- What direction is your inner knowing pointing you?
- What would it take to trust your inner knowing more fully?
- How could you strengthen your openness and acceptance and allow your inner knowing to gently guide you?
- How would this change your life?

(10 Minutes) Closing Process

GROUP OUTLINE

Outpatient Group 12: Awakened Living

(Chapter 9 from *Conscious Recovery*)

(10 Minutes) Opening Meditation

(10 Minutes) Check-In:

Everyone states their name and says something about what it means to live an awakened life.

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 1 (page 172)

- Reading from *Conscious Recovery* (out loud)
- 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 – Embracing Happiness Activity:

(This is an exercise adapted from the powerful book *How We Choose to Be Happy* authored by my friends Rick Foster and Greg Hicks.) Set a timer for four minutes. During the four minutes, make a list of everything that makes you happy. List anything that comes to mind by speedwriting. This means you write as fast as you can without stopping. Include things both large and small. Don't judge your answers. The idea here is to allow internal “stuff” to surface. When the timer sounds, stop writing immediately. Make a note of how you feel. Often, making the list will actually change your body chemistry. Many people have a feeling of lightness or exhilaration after speedwriting their list. Some feel relaxed and others may experience sadness. At this point, it doesn't matter what you've put on your list; what is important is experiencing the process of identifying what brings you happiness and how it makes you feel. Study your list.

(20 Minutes) Group Process – Dyads (Handout 2):

Have clients share with their partner: How do you feel about what you've written? Surprised? Frustrated? Was it difficult for you to come up with things? Did you freeze as you wrote? How much of the list reflects who you really are? Now, ask yourself what it would take for you to create more happiness in your life.

(10 Minutes) Closing Process