



PARENTING JOURNEY

We help build stronger families.

Sober Parenting Journey

OFFICIAL SAMPLE FACILITATOR CURRICULUM

P A R E N T I N G J O U R N E Y ®

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SESSION 7: A DIFFERENT KIND OF LETTER

Purpose To establish a firm foundation for recovery by acknowledging addiction
To develop and experience self-acceptance

Objectives: To write a letter to our addiction
To process the letter to our addiction
To address unfinished business with our addictions and substance abuse/dependency & alcoholism

Overview:

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| 1. Agenda Review | (5 min) |
| 2. Recover Ritual Questions | (30 min) |
| 3. Letters to Our Addictions & Steps of Awareness | (80 min) |
| 4. Closing | (5 min) |

Preparation:

1. Meal Set Up
2. Table set for Parent
3. Tables set for resource information

Supplies Needed:

1. Food
1. Sign-In Sheet
2. Session Posters
3. Agenda
4. Calendar
5. Curriculum
6. Parent Workbook
7. Group Contract
8. Pens
9. Kleenex
10. Blank Flip Charts (Self-Stick preferred)
11. Erasable Magic Markers

Motto: Love, Nurture, Protect, Teach

Note for Facilitator:

Collect letters and parent workbooks for graduation packets.

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ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW AGENDA

- Agenda Review
- Recovery Ritual Questions
- Letters to Our Addictions & Steps of Awareness
- Closing

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ACTIVITY 2: RECOVERY RITUAL QUESTIONS

Purpose: To bring us into positive contact with ourselves, others, our strengths and resources, and the challenges we face daily.

Steps:

1. Ask each group member to share his/her responses to the recovery ritual questions in pairs (5 min. each).
2. Ask people to share one important thing, with the entire group.

Recovery Ritual Questions:

1. Describe two things you did to take care of yourself this week without using compulsive behaviors/patterns, drugs and or alcohol and how it affected your parenting and relationships.
2. Describe one positive interaction where you trusted yourself or someone else this week.
3. Describe one situation you handled well and are proud of or a situation you are grateful for.
4. Describe one situation where your behavior was unmanageable and could have been handled better.

Note for Facilitator:

Group starts during the meal.

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ACTIVITY 3: LETTERS TO OUR ADDICTIONS & STEPS OF AWARENESS

Purpose: To identify the relationship with chemical substances
To realize how our addiction (s) was responsible for the choices we made
To recognize the influence it has on how we parent(ed) our children
To find a comfortable, settled relationship with our past and to see it as a real life lesson that we are now willing to face, rather than hide from.

Steps – Introducing the Letter:

1. **READ** (use a moderate tone):

It's easy to forget what happened to us while using our drug of choice and other substances, and how the power of the substances had an impact on our decision making abilities. We need to stay aware of denial, patterns of excuses, random obstacles and our obsessive, compulsive thoughts and behaviors.

Today we are continuing on the idea of unfinished business with ourselves. Last week we looked at the perspectives and affects our parent's behaviors had on us. Now we're going to think about how our own behaviors influence us and our children when in active addiction.

Addiction is an insidious, cunning and bafflingly enemy that breaks up relationships in families and society in an ugly way. We can continue to explore the truth and face our addiction directly so that it no longer plays a distorted disturbance and creates deprivation to living a sober life style.

2. Ask group members to reflect on the statement that was read. Ask that they be mindful of their journey – then pause. Now let's begin the next step.
3. **SAY:** We will write a letter to our addiction or substance and alcohol abuse/dependency which may include risky behaviors; to help us continue our recovery.
4. Give the group 10 minutes to write their letters.

TRAUMA ALERT

If some people feel they cannot write a letter and or read it, make sure they try to participate by responding to and supporting their fellow group members.

5. Have the group take 10 minutes to write the letter. If they do not want to do this, ask them if they are willing to talk about why they did not want to write it at the end of this part of the activity. Do not have the parent explain while activity is active.

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Note for Facilitator:

Facilitator should write a letter to his or her personal experience with addiction, addictive behaviors; something that needs to change or the impact chemical substance abuse/dependency has had on another person. The letter is written along with the Sober Parenting Journey parents. This engagement ensures trust within group cohesion and unconditional acceptance amongst group members and facilitator.

This letter reading can become the power builder of empathy, honesty and healing within the group.

Note for Facilitator – Example of Letter:

Dear Addiction: (ex: compulsive thinking, heroin, alcohol, sex, cocaine, marijuana, bulimia, alcohol, etc.)

I know now know who you are. I've seen the power you've had over the lives of the people I love and the lives of parents attending Sober Parenting Journey. You've weakened their voices, interfered with our group at times, and distracted us from the real feelings and solutions that could have helped all of us at one time or another.

You've hurt their children, families, friends, pets and colleagues. The power of your deception created people to make very unhealthy and unsafe choices leading their lives to a terminal illness from being involved with you. Lives have been lost in the culture of your insidious, cunning and baffling disease.

Death is ongoing with no return to life as well. I want to say—"no more, no more, and no more". I am done with you. We will acknowledge and respect your power and we will also take hold of our own power to, in, and through the healing process of recover and, bring your misery into the light of day.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

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6. Now ask if someone would read the letters aloud.
 7. Optional: Ask those who want to speak their letter out loud to just say what they wished they'd written.
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Note for Facilitator:

After the letter is written the facilitators' should offer to share first if no one wishes to go first. Please keep the group members focused on the activity. It is easy for someone to deviate from the topic.

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Steps - Response Options:

1. After each letter is read, ask the letter-writer what kind of responses s/he wants to receive.
2. Make sure group members honor the response style that the letter-writer has asked for.
3. Examples are empathic comments, sharing relevant experiences from one's life, asking questions, no response, praising their courage, etc. Option to write these examples on a flip chart.
4. For both written and spoken letters, ask if there is a "P.S." There may be more the writer hasn't said. You may even ask permission to suggest a "P.S." yourself that seems deepening and appropriate.
5. Step of Awareness - *Use only for parents that did not write or read the letter.* **ASK:**
 - What did you wish to avoid by not using this opportunity?
 - Can you describe the feelings that were brought up in this activity?
 - What do you think you are learning?
 - Can the group give you some support?
6. Debrief. After all letters are read and steps of awareness has been completed ask:
 - What was most important to you about doing this activity?
 - Why?
 - Do you think that this letter to your addiction can continue to break you away from isolating patterns aimed towards active addiction and move you forward toward healthy relationships, including the relationship with yourself?
 - Why?
 - Take a moment and take in a deep breath then let it go. (This is a technique used to help change and/or shift the energy with group members).
 - Remind yourself that recovery from addiction and not using a drug of choice, parenting, having relationships and self-care is a one day at a time process.

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ACTIVITY 4: CLOSING

Purpose: To bring closure to the meeting
To anticipate next week's meeting

Steps:

1. **Congratulate everyone on having accomplished such a difficult task together.**
2. **ASK:** On a scale of a 1-10; [with 10 being very comfortable and o.k. and 1 being very uncomfortable and not o.k.] where do you fit on the scale as you leave this Sober Parenting Journey group today?
3. **SAY:**
 - It's important to remember to use your resources, your family mentors, go to your meetings, talk to your sponsor, connect with other supportive people and groups, and stay focused on your recovery — one day at a time.
 - I am looking forward to seeing everyone next week.
 - Will every please join me in the Serenity Prayer

EVERYONE SAYS GOOD-BYE.

Note for Facilitator:

Check in with members who report extreme upset and make certain they can access the help they need. Remember to not get pulled into a long conversation.