

GDC Session #2

The Process of Recovery: Part I

Objectives of Session

1. Identify specific effects of cocaine addiction on group members and their families or significant others.
2. Define recovery from cocaine addiction as a long-term process of **abstinence + change**.
3. Identify the various components of recovery: physical, emotional, family, social, and spiritual.
4. Define denial as one of the key psychological issues to deal with in recovery, and identify ways to work through it.

Methods/Points for Group Discussion

1. Use discussion format to review the clients' answers to the handouts and the educational material for this session. Write the major points on a chalkboard or flip chart, if desired.
2. Ask group members to share their own experiences related to this material as it is reviewed.
3. Have the group members discuss and summarize the various effects of cocaine addiction and other substance use on their:
 - Physical health
 - Behavior, mental health, and work/school history
 - Family and social relationships.
4. Ask clients to define recovery from cocaine addiction or other substance-related problems. Discuss recovery as a long-term process that involves **abstinence + change**. Abstinence from alcohol, street drugs, and nonprescribed drugs is recommended because any substance use can threaten recovery from the primary drug of abuse or lead to developing an addiction to another chemical.
5. Recovery involves making changes in oneself (internal change) and one's lifestyle (external change). Improving or developing new coping skills is essential for change to occur.
 - Physical recovery involves good nutrition, exercise, getting adequate sleep, relaxation, and taking care of medical or dental problems.

- Emotional recovery involves learning to cope with feelings, problems, stress, and negative thinking without relying on cocaine or other drugs.
 - Social recovery involves developing relationships with sober people, learning to resist pressures from others to use chemicals, and developing healthy social and leisure interests to occupy time.
 - Family recovery involves examining the affects of addiction on one's family, involving the family in recovery, and making amends.
 - Spiritual recovery involves learning to rely on a higher power for help and strength, developing a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and taking other steps to improve one's "inner life."
6. Define denial and ask clients to give examples of their own use of denial. State that a key early recovery challenge is breaking through "denial" of addiction and motivating oneself to work on an ongoing program of change.
7. Recovery is best viewed as a "we" process in which the addict uses the support of others, especially other individuals who are now sober and no longer use alcohol and other drugs.

GDC Session #2 Handouts

1. "Evaluating the Effects of Your Addiction." Adapted from *Group Drug Counseling Participant Recovery Workbook*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications, Inc., pp. 4-7.
2. "Understanding Denial."

Suggested Educational Videos

1. Living Sober Video I: *Motivation and Recovery*. Gerald T. Rogers Productions, 1000 Skokie Blvd., Suite 575, Wilmette, IL 60091, 1-800-227-9100.

GDC Session #2, Sample Handout #1

Evaluating the Effects of Your Addiction

In the previous session, you examined your pattern of cocaine and other substance use. In this session, you will take a close look at the effects your substance use has had on your life. Please answer the following.

How has your addiction affected your—

1. Physical health: *I lost weight, had poor nutrition, and didn't go to the doctor for checkups.*
2. Sexual behaviors: *I had sex with strangers and didn't always use protection.*
3. Mental health: *I felt depressed, even suicidal, at times.*
4. Behaviors: *I lied and conned people and couldn't be trusted. I quit playing sports.*
5. Family relationships: *My family is hurt, upset, and worried about me.*
6. Social relationships: *I gave up straight friends and hung with the wrong people.*
7. Work or school: *I was late a lot, didn't do a good job, and even got fired once.*
8. Economic situation: *Deep in debt.*
9. Spirituality: *Felt bankrupt spiritually.*
10. Legal status: *No problems, but I will if I don't get clean.*
11. Life in other areas not listed above: *Robbed me of my ambition and some of my good values.*

Summarize the overall effects of your addiction—

It hurt every area of my life. It also hurt my family a lot. My addiction gradually took over my life.

GDC Session #2, Sample Handout #2

Understanding Denial

An important task in recovery is to work through denial of your addiction to cocaine or other drugs. Denial is considered the “fatal aspect” of addiction. That’s because it leads to continued use of drugs, which, in turn, can cause serious medical, emotional, family, legal, financial, work-related, or spiritual consequences. Any area of your life can be harmed by continued cocaine use. In addition, your family may suffer too from being exposed to your addictive behavior, which may include using poor judgment, being selfish, ignoring the family, lying, cheating, and conning family members to get drugs or try to hide the fact that drugs are being used, etc.

Working through denial by recognizing and accepting your addiction is necessary for recovery to progress. This is not a one-time situation because even people who have done well for months or longer in recovery can experience denial again and start thinking they can “control their use” or that they “no longer have an addiction.”

Other people can feed your denial by covering up problems caused by your addiction, letting you off the hook for things you did while under the influence of drugs, or minimizing the seriousness of your addiction. You have to face the truth about your addiction head on. This requires you to take a close look at your history of alcohol and other drug use and how it has affected you and other people.

1. Give examples of how you denied your cocaine or other drug problem.

I told myself since I didn't smoke as many rocks as some other people I knew, I wasn't that bad off. Plus, I wasn't smoking every day, so how could I be an addict?

2. List two or more benefits of accepting the reality of your cocaine addiction.

If I accept my cocaine addiction, I'll stop playing games about being able to get high whenever I want. I'll have a chance to put my life back together.