

## **GDC Session #12**

### **Maintaining Recovery**

#### **Objectives of Session**

1. Stress the importance of keeping recovery plans up-to-date and working at long-term recovery.
2. Discuss the importance of continuing to adhere to one's recovery goals and how effective this can be in maintaining abstinence.
3. Reinforce the need for continuing to participate in self-help groups and using the "tools" of recovery on a daily basis.

#### **Methods/Points for Group Discussion**

1. Use a 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. Ask the group members to identify the benefits of ongoing participation in a recovery program following completion of professional treatment. Some examples include:
  - Can receive continued help and support from others in recovery.
  - Actively working at a program of recovery reduces relapse risk.
  - Involvement in recovery, especially support groups, is a constant reminder of the seriousness of addiction and the importance of following the "disciplines" of recovery.
  - Staying sober puts the recovering person in a position in which he or she is able to continue to make positive changes in self and lifestyle.
  - Many problems and issues emerge over time, even if one is sober from alcohol or clean from drugs. Participating in a recovery program can make the person feel better prepared to handle these issues or problems.
4. Discuss the length of time one should stay involved in a recovery program such as AA, NA, or CA. This varies considerably among recovering individuals, with many staying involved for years or even throughout their lives.
5. Ask the group to identify the "tools" of recovery that they can use on a regular basis, once they are finished with the group sessions. These tools may include the following:
  - Attending AA, NA, CA, or other self-help meetings.
  - Spending time at a recovery club or clubhouse.
  - Talking with a sponsor or other members of self-help programs.

- Sharing social or recreational activities with friends.
  - Avoiding high-risk people, places, or situations when possible.
  - Attending aftercare group counseling sessions or talking individually with a counselor or therapist.
  - Using techniques learned to fight off thoughts of drinking alcohol or using other drugs or to fight off strong cravings.
  - Using positive affirmations by reminding oneself of the benefits of sobriety and that all the time and effort put forth is worth it.
  - Getting physical exercise.
  - Attending religious services.
  - Praying or using one's higher power.
  - Focusing on one of the 12 steps.
  - Repeating and thinking about a recovery slogan.
  - Reading specific recovery literature or a meditation guide.
  - Writing in a recovery journal or workbook.
  - Participating in pleasant activities that don't involve alcohol or other drugs.
  - Doing something nice for someone else as a way of "giving back".
  - Reviewing one's plan for recovery at the beginning of each day.
  - Evaluating how the day went to review positive growth and identify problems needing attention.
  - Regularly reviewing relapse warning signs to catch them early.
6. Group members can also state how these various recovery tools can help their ongoing recovery, such as the following:
- Motivating the client to stay disciplined.
  - Helping the client identify problems and warnings signs early.
  - Reminding the client of behaviors and strategies to help in recovery.
  - Helping the client use the support of others in recovery.

### **GDC Session #12 Handouts**

1. "Recovery Tool Checklist." Adapted from *Group Drug Counseling Participant Recovery Workbook*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications, Inc., pp. 26-27.
2. "Coping with Stressful Situations." Adapted from *Recovery Training and Self-Help: Relapse Prevention and Aftercare for Drug Addicts*, National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1993.

### **Suggested Educational Videos (L4)**

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

## GDC Session #12, Sample Handout #1

### Recovery Tool Checklist

You improve your chances of staying away from cocaine and other drugs if you regularly use your “tools” of recovery. The tools of recovery are the activities you engage in or the steps you take each day to structure your time and keep your recovery a high priority. It is best to use some of your recovery tools every day because they help protect you against relapse.

Your tools of recovery lay the foundation for a drug-free lifestyle. You must actively work your recovery plan if you expect to stay clean and make positive lifestyle changes.

For each day of the week, place a check (✓) next to the recovery tools that you used. Finish this every week for the first 3 months of recovery.

<b>Recovery Tools</b>	<b>Mon.</b>	<b>Tues.</b>	<b>Wed.</b>	<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Fri.</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Sun.</b>
<i>Attending AA, NA, CA, or other self-help meetings</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Spending time at a recovery club or clubhouse</i>							✓
<i>Talking with a sponsor or other members of self-help programs</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<i>Sharing substance-free social or recreational activities with friends</i>					✓		
<i>Avoiding high-risk people, places, or situations when possible</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Using group counseling sessions or talking individually with a counselor or therapist</i>				✓			
<i>Using techniques learned to fight off thoughts of drinking alcohol or using other drugs or strong cravings</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Using positive affirmations by reminding oneself of the benefits of sobriety and that all the time and effort put forth is worth it</i>							✓
<i>Getting physical exercise</i>		✓		✓			✓
<i>Attending religious services</i>							✓
<i>Praying or using one's higher power</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Focusing on one of the 12 Steps</i>						✓	
<i>Repeating and thinking about a recovery slogan</i>							
<i>Reading specific recovery literature or a meditation guide</i>	✓	✓				✓	
<i>Writing in a recovery journal or workbook</i>			✓				
<i>Participating in pleasant activities that don't involve alcohol or other drugs</i>					✓	✓	
<i>Doing something nice for someone else as a way of "giving back"</i>						✓	✓
<i>Reviewing one's plan for recovery at the beginning of each day</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
<i>Evaluating how the day went to review positive growth and identify problems needing attention</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓
<i>Regularly reviewing relapse warning signs to catch them early</i>							

As a result of using these or other recovery tools, I experienced these benefits this week:

*I stayed clean, got through some rough spots, could see my efforts were paying off, felt good about myself, and feel more hopeful about my future.*

## GDC Session #12, Sample Handout #2

### Coping With Stressful Situations

Stressful situations can pose a danger for addicts who are not prepared to handle them. We can usually see stressful situations heading our way well before they arrive. One reason that they are so stressful is that we often see them early enough but do little more than worry over them or try to imagine them away until they are right on top of us. In the face of such challenges, we need determination and strength. However, real strength means much more than merely being determined. It means being prepared.

**TIPS** is an acronym formed from the words Truth, Information, Priorities, and Support. Applying the **TIPS** principles whenever there's a difficult situation ahead can help you get through stressful times without resorting to drugs. **TIPS** stands for what you need to get yourself prepared. Here's how:

**TRUTH:** The first need is to be honest about how you feel. If you are afraid or ashamed or want to get high or hide, whatever, that's OK. Share it with someone. Keeping things inside will only add to your stress and worry. Sharing it with others will usually bring them closer to you, help relieve the bad feelings, and also allow you to see more clearly what you need to do.

**INFORMATION:** Ignorance is not bliss when your welfare is on the line. What are the facts about the situation? Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? If we're stressed and nervous, we can neglect to gather accurate information and can distort reality due to fear. It's a lot easier to cope when you know what you're coping with.

**PRIORITIES:** Keep your priorities, or purpose, clear. Number one, **don't use drugs**. Beyond that, in any tough situation, keep your goals simple. For example, at a party you can't expect to act cool, talk intelligently, dance like a pro, pick up a date, and not drink or get high when you're uptight. Just staying straight and meeting a new, positive person makes more sense if parties are tough for you. Decide in advance what's most important and concentrate on those few things.

**SUPPORT:** Use your network of friends. Let them hear your needs and concerns. Ask their advice. They can relate. Is the situation going to be really tough? Ask someone to be with you. Might you be very emotional afterwards, including either very happy or very sad? Ask someone to be with you then, too. If you don't **have** to face a troubling situation alone, don't.