

Education Professionals

Teachers, professors, administrators, and counselors

Professionals Program · The Recovery Files

In the app only: Educator Identity Assessment, Classroom Trigger Assessment, Compassion Fatigue Scale, Burnout & Self-Care Assessment (scored or interactive, so they stay in the app).

The Disclosure Navigation module has its own printable workbook on the Professionals page.

Education Professionals Recovery Program

Specialized recovery support for teachers, professors, and education staff

As an educator, you've dedicated your career to nurturing growth in others. Now it's time to nurture your own recovery. This program addresses the unique challenges educators face: the weight of being a role model, managing shame and guilt, navigating credential concerns, balancing student needs with self-care, and finding purpose in teaching while healing.

Your profession doesn't define your worth, and your addiction doesn't diminish your calling to teach. Recovery can make you a more authentic, compassionate, and effective educator.

5 modules

Teaching Through Example: Recovery as the Greatest Lesson

Navigate the unique challenges of being an educator in recovery

- 1 Rebuilding Professional Credibility
- 2 Disclosure Decisions in Educational Settings
- 3 Managing Shame and Guilt as an Educator
- 4 Using Your Story to Inspire (Appropriately)
- 5 Balancing Boundaries with Authenticity

Worksheets for This Module

- Professional Credibility Rebuilding Plan 30-45 min
- Shame & Guilt Processing for Educators 40-50 min

The Classroom of Life: Applying Recovery Principles to Teaching

Integrate recovery practices into your educational career

- 1 Self-Care in Emotionally Demanding Work
- 2 Creating Recovery-Supportive Routines During the School Year
- 3 Summer Challenges for Educators in Recovery
- 4 Advocating for Mental Health in Education
- 5 Finding Purpose in Teaching While Healing

Worksheets for This Module

- School Year Recovery Routine Builder 25-35 min
- Emotional Labor Inventory 30-40 min
- Summer Recovery Action Plan 20-30 min

1 assessment

Educator Identity Assessment

Explore how addiction has affected your teaching identity

15 questions ~ 15-20 min

Start Assessment

Disclosure Readiness Checklist

Evaluate if and how to share your recovery at work

12 questions~15-20 min

Start Assessment

Burnout & Self-Care Assessment

Evaluate your current self-care and burnout risk

30 questions~15-20 min

Start Assessment

Classroom Trigger Assessment

Identify teaching-related triggers and stress points

20 questions~20-25 min

Start Assessment

Compassion Fatigue Scale

Measure emotional exhaustion and recovery needs

16 questions~15 min

Start Assessment

§strategies

Daily Recovery Integration

- Morning meditation or reading before school starts
- Lunch break check-ins (call sponsor, read recovery material)
- After-school decompression routine
- Weekend meeting attendance as non-negotiable
- Evening gratitude practice focused on teaching moments

Managing High-Risk Situations

- Faculty parties and social events - have an exit plan
- End-of-year celebrations - bring sober support
- Conference trips - schedule meetings in advance
- Stressful parent meetings - breathwork beforehand
- Grading periods - extra support and self-care

Professional Boundaries

- Clear limits on after-hours availability
- Healthy emotional distance from student struggles
- Knowing when to refer students to counselors
- Protecting recovery time from work encroachment
- Saying no to extra responsibilities in early recovery

Purpose & Meaning

- Viewing teaching as service (Step 12)
- Making amends through excellent instruction
- Modeling resilience and growth for students
- Finding daily meaning in small teaching moments
- Using education as spiritual practice

Educator Recovery Action Plan

During the School Year

Morning Routine

- Wake earlier for meditation/reading
- Arrive at school 15 min early for centering
- Set daily recovery intention

During School Day

- Lunch break for sponsor check-in
- Breathing exercises between classes
- Boundaries with emotionally intense situations

After School

- 10-minute decompression before leaving
- Leave work at work (no grading all night)
- Evening meeting or phone call

Weekends

- Attend weekend meetings
- Recovery-focused social activities
- Prepare for week ahead mindfully

Summer Break Strategy

- Increase meeting attendance (you have more time)
- Volunteer or work on service commitments
- Work through intensive recovery workbooks
- Plan structured days to avoid excessive free time
- Address financial stress proactively (budget, summer work)

Resources

Teacher Assistance Programs

- State-specific teacher assistance programs
- NEA Member Assistance Program
- AFT wellness resources

- School district EAP services
- Credential board recovery support

Educator-Specific Challenges

- Managing credential/license concerns
- Background check disclosures
- Workplace monitoring agreements
- Return-to-classroom protocols
- Student safety considerations

Recovery & Teaching

- Balancing student needs with self-care
- Managing triggering student situations
- Supporting students without compromising recovery
- Creating recovery-compatible classroom environment
- Professional development in sobriety

National Support Resources

Professional Organizations

- NEA Member Assistance Program: 1-800-424-2406
- AFT Wellness Resources
- State-specific Teacher Assistance Programs
- Higher Education Recovery Groups
- School Counselor Wellness Programs

Recovery & Credentialing

- State teaching credential board resources
- Return-to-teaching protocols
- Monitoring agreement navigation
- Background check management
- Legal protections for educators (ADA)

Continue Your Journey

Interactive Worksheets

- ☐ Take Assessments ☐ Connect with Educators in Recovery

Remember

"Teaching is not about being perfect—it's about being present, authentic, and committed to growth. Your recovery journey models the very resilience and courage you hope to inspire in your students."

You are not less of an educator because of your addiction. You are becoming a more authentic, compassionate, and effective one through your recovery.

Teaching Through Example: Recovery as the Greatest Lesson

1Rebuilding Professional Credibility

Understanding the impact of addiction on your teaching career

Addressing gaps in employment or performance history

Demonstrating renewed commitment to students and profession

Building trust with administrators, colleagues, and parents

Using your recovery as a strength (when appropriate)

☐ 2Disclosure Decisions in Educational Settings ☐ 3Managing Shame and Guilt as an Educator ☐

4Using Your Story to Inspire (Appropriately) ☐ 5Balancing Boundaries with Authenticity

Teaching Through Example: Recovery as the Greatest Lesson

☐ 1Rebuilding Professional Credibility ☐ 2Disclosure Decisions in Educational Settings

Legal protections for educators in recovery (ADA, state laws)

When and how to disclose to administration

Managing student questions and boundaries

Protecting your privacy while being authentic

Balancing openness with professional appropriateness

☐ 3Managing Shame and Guilt as an Educator ☐ 4Using Your Story to Inspire (Appropriately) ☐

5Balancing Boundaries with Authenticity

Teaching Through Example: Recovery as the Greatest Lesson

☐ 1Rebuilding Professional Credibility ☐ 2Disclosure Decisions in Educational Settings ☐ 3Managing Shame and Guilt as an Educator

The "role model" burden and perfectionism

Processing guilt about past performance

Separating professional identity from addiction

Self-compassion for educators in recovery

Rebuilding your teaching identity

☐ 4Using Your Story to Inspire (Appropriately) ☐ 5Balancing Boundaries with Authenticity

Teaching Through Example: Recovery as the Greatest Lesson

☐ 1Rebuilding Professional Credibility ☐ 2Disclosure Decisions in Educational Settings ☐ 3Managing Shame and Guilt as an Educator ☐ 4Using Your Story to Inspire (Appropriately)

Age-appropriate sharing with students

Supporting students struggling with substance use

Recognizing warning signs in students

Connecting students to resources

Modeling recovery without oversharing

Being real without being inappropriate

Professional boundaries in recovery

Managing emotional involvement with students

Self-care while caring for others

Knowing when to refer vs. support

Education Professionals · Worksheet

Professional Credibility Rebuilding Plan

Rebuilding trust with administrators, colleagues and families

Credibility comes back through consistent actions over time, not through one big explanation. This worksheet helps you take stock of what was affected, decide what you will share, and plan the steady behaviors that rebuild trust.

☐ 1. Where my credibility was affected ☐ 2. Who I am rebuilding trust with ☐ 3. Consistent actions ☐ 4. Checking my progress

Checklist

Where my credibility was affected

Tick the areas where addiction affected your work or reputation.

- ☐ Attendance or punctuality
- ☐ Lesson preparation or grading
- ☐ Relationships with colleagues
- ☐ Trust with administrators
- ☐ Communication with parents
- ☐ A leave, gap or job change in my employment history
- ☐ My licence or certification
- ☐ My own confidence as a teacher

Reflect

Who I am rebuilding trust with

Which administrator, colleague or family relationship matters most to rebuild, and why?

What does that person most need to see from you — not hear — to trust you again?

Is there a gap or incident you will need to explain? What is the shortest honest account you could give?

Plan

Consistent actions

Choose specific, visible behaviors you can keep up week after week.

Reliability: what I will do every day without fail

For example: in the classroom 15 minutes early; grades returned within a week.

Communication: how I will keep administrators and families informed

A weekly email, a standing check-in, prompt replies.

Contribution: one way I will add value beyond the minimum

A club, a colleague I support, a project.

How I will use my recovery as a strength, if and when appropriate

Consider talking this through with your sponsor or counselor first.

Checking my progress

Signs that trust is returning

What would you notice in 3 months?

Who will help me stay accountable to this plan

Name and how often you will review it.

Shame & Guilt Processing for Educators

The role-model burden, past performance and self-compassion

Educators are expected to be role models, and many carry heavy guilt about the students and colleagues affected by their addiction. Guilt says "I did something wrong"; shame says "I am something wrong." This worksheet helps you hold the first honestly and loosen the grip of the second.

- ☐ 1. Guilt and shame ☐ 2. How shame shows up for me ☐ 3. Sorting guilt from shame ☐ 4. Rebuilding my teaching identity

Read

Guilt and shame

Guilt is about behavior. It can be useful: it points to amends and to change. Shame is about identity. It tells you that you are not fit to teach, not fit to be trusted, not worth recovering. Shame rarely leads to change; it tends to lead to hiding — and hiding is where addiction does best.

The "role model" burden can make shame stronger. If you believe a teacher must be flawless, every past mistake becomes proof you never belonged in the classroom. In reality, students learn a great deal from adults who make mistakes, take responsibility and grow.

Key points

- Guilt is about what you did; shame is about who you think you are
- Guilt points to amends; shame points to hiding
- Taking responsibility and growing is itself something worth modelling

Self-check

How shame shows up for me

Rate how often you experience each of these.

1 = Not at all · 5 = Almost always

I feel like a fraud standing in front of my class

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I replay past mistakes with students or colleagues

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I avoid colleagues who might know about my addiction

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I believe I do not deserve to be a teacher

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I hold myself to a standard I would never hold a colleague to

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Sorting guilt from shame

Write down one specific thing you feel guilty about from your time teaching in active addiction.

What would a fitting amends or change look like for that — something you can actually do?

Write down one shaming belief you hold about yourself as a teacher. Then write what you would say to a colleague in recovery who believed the same thing about themselves.

Rebuilding my teaching identity

What I still value about being an educator

The reasons you chose this work.

One self-compassion practice I will use when shame shows up

A phrase, a call, a pause.

Who I will talk to about this

Sponsor, counselor, a trusted colleague in recovery.

The Classroom of Life: Applying Recovery Principles to Teaching

1Self-Care in Emotionally Demanding Work

Recognizing emotional labor and its impact

Setting boundaries with students and parents

Managing compassion fatigue

Daily self-care practices for educators

Preventing burnout in recovery

□ 2Creating Recovery-Supportive Routines During the School Year □ 3Summer Challenges for Educators in Recovery □ 4Advocating for Mental Health in Education □ 5Finding Purpose in Teaching While Healing

The Classroom of Life: Applying Recovery Principles to Teaching

□ 1Self-Care in Emotionally Demanding Work □ 2Creating Recovery-Supportive Routines During the School Year

Before-school recovery practices

Integrating meetings into the school schedule

Managing stress during peak periods (report cards, parent conferences)

After-school transition and decompression

Weekend recovery reinforcement

□ 3Summer Challenges for Educators in Recovery □ 4Advocating for Mental Health in Education □
5Finding Purpose in Teaching While Healing

The Classroom of Life: Applying Recovery Principles to Teaching

- ☐ 1Self-Care in Emotionally Demanding Work ☐ 2Creating Recovery-Supportive Routines During the School Year ☐ 3Summer Challenges for Educators in Recovery

Loss of structure during summer break

Managing increased free time

Financial stress during unpaid months

Maintaining recovery momentum

Summer as growth opportunity

- ☐ 4Advocating for Mental Health in Education ☐ 5Finding Purpose in Teaching While Healing

The Classroom of Life: Applying Recovery Principles to Teaching

- ☐ 1Self-Care in Emotionally Demanding Work ☐ 2Creating Recovery-Supportive Routines During the School Year ☐ 3Summer Challenges for Educators in Recovery ☐ 4Advocating for Mental Health in Education

Reducing stigma in educational settings

Supporting colleagues struggling with substance use

Creating wellness-focused school culture

Modeling healthy coping for students

Being an advocate while protecting your privacy

Reconnecting with your calling to teach

Using education as part of your recovery

Making amends through excellent teaching

Finding meaning in daily work

Teaching as spiritual practice

School Year Recovery Routine Builder

Recovery that fits the rhythm of the school year

The school day leaves little room to breathe, and the year has its own pressure points: report cards, conferences, testing season. Build a routine that fits around the bell schedule so recovery does not depend on having spare time.

- ☐ 1. My school day ☐ 2. My weekly anchors ☐ 3. Peak periods ☐ 4. My commitment

My school day

Before school

A short recovery practice before the first bell — reading, prayer, a check-in text.

During the day

A breathing reset between classes, lunch away from your desk once a week.

After school transition

How you will decompress before going home.

Evening

Meeting, call, family time, a firm stop to grading.

My weekly anchors

Tick the anchors you will build into each week.

- ☐ At least one recovery meeting or group that fits my schedule
- ☐ A regular call or meeting with my sponsor or counselor
- ☐ One evening with no grading or school email
- ☐ A weekend recovery practice
- ☐ Physical activity at least twice a week
- ☐ Time with people outside of school

Peak periods

Which times of the school year are hardest for you (report cards, conferences, testing, holidays)?

What has happened to your recovery routines during those periods in the past?

What will you add or protect during the next peak period?

My commitment

The one routine I will not drop, even in the busiest week

Make it small enough to keep.

Who will notice if I start to slip

And how you will ask them to say something.

Emotional Labor Inventory

Recognizing the emotional cost of teaching

Teaching asks you to manage your own emotions all day while responding to everyone else's — students in crisis, frustrated parents, demanding administrators. That emotional labor is real work, and unacknowledged it can drain recovery. Take an honest inventory.

- ☐ 1. My emotional load ☐ 2. Where it comes from ☐ 3. Boundaries I can set ☐ 4. Putting the load down

My emotional load

Rate how often each is true for you in a typical week.

I hide frustration or sadness to keep the classroom calm

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I carry students' problems home with me

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Difficult conversations with parents leave me drained

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I feel I cannot show any weakness at school

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I have nothing left for my family or my recovery by the evening

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I feel numb or detached toward my students

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Where it comes from

Which situations at school cost you the most emotionally?

How did you used to cope with this load in active addiction?

What do you do now at the end of a hard day, and does it actually help?

Boundaries I can set

Tick the boundaries you are willing to try.

- ☐ **Set hours for answering parent emails**
- ☐ Refer students to counselors rather than carrying everything myself
- ☐ Leave school work at school at least two nights a week
- ☐ Ask for support from a colleague or administrator after a hard incident
- ☐ Take my full lunch break once a week

Putting the load down

My daily "putting it down" practice

Something you do between school and home.

The boundary I will start with

And when you will start.

Who I can talk to after a hard day

Someone who understands both teaching and recovery, if possible.

Summer Recovery Action Plan

Keeping structure and momentum through the break

Summer can be a relief and a risk. The structure of the school day disappears, free time grows, and for some the paychecks change. Plan the summer before it starts so the break strengthens your recovery instead of loosening it.

- ☐ 1. My summer risks ☐ 2. My summer structure ☐ 3. Summer as a growth opportunity ☐ 4. Returning in the fall

My summer risks

Tick the risks that apply to you.

- ☐ Loss of daily structure
- ☐ Long stretches of unplanned time
- ☐ Financial stress during unpaid months
- ☐ Social events centered on drinking
- ☐ Travel or time away from my usual meetings
- ☐ Losing touch with my recovery supports

☐ Boredom or restlessness

My summer structure

My wake-up time and morning practice

Keep it close to your school-year routine.

My weekly meetings and check-ins

Including any while traveling.

How I will use free time with purpose

Service, learning, exercise, family, a project.

My plan for financial stress

Budget, summer work, who you will talk to.

Summer as a growth opportunity

What recovery work have you been putting off that summer would give you time for?

Who would you like to reconnect with this summer?

How do you want to feel walking back into school in the fall?

Returning in the fall

When I will restart my school-year routine

A week or two before school begins.

Who will check in with me during the first month back

Name and how often.
