Trust Barriers in Recovery

Fear & Trust

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **Trust Barriers in Recovery** — key ideas, worksheet

Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

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TOPIC

Trust Barriers in Recovery

KEY IDEAS

Trust Barriers in Recovery

The Paradox of Connection

Trust barriers involve a pervasive assumption that others cannot be trusted with our truth, creating isolation precisely when we most need healing through relationship.

These barriers differ from healthy caution. They masquerade as protection but prevent the very connection that heals addiction.

Betrayal History

Protective Hypervigilance

Assuming others will eventually betray us based on past wounds, leading to constant monitoring and emotional distance.

We maintain defensive distance to protect against future harm, interpreting neutral behaviors as potential signs of rejection.

Confidentiality Fears

Secret-Keeping Terror

Worrying that personal information will be shared inappropriately or used against us.

This fear prevents vulnerable sharing, keeping us trapped in the isolation that perpetuates addiction-driven thinking.

Disclosure Damage

Fear of Destruction

Believing that honest sharing about character defects will damage important relationships or drive others away.

We prefer superficial relationships over risking rejection, assuming our truth is too heavy for others to bear.

Authority Distrust

Skepticism of Helpers

Struggling to trust sponsors or counselors, fearing they will abuse their power or judge us.

This prevents access to the guidance and support that experienced recovery people can provide.

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Intimacy Avoidance

Emotional Walls

Preferring surface-level sharing and maintaining emotional walls to prevent others from getting too close.

We share information strategically rather than authentically, avoiding the intimacy that could provide healing.

Exploitation Fears

Vulnerability as Weakness

Worrying that vulnerability will be seen as weakness and exploited for others' gain.

This fear prevents the mutual vulnerability that builds authentic relationships, maintaining suspicion instead of connection.

Healthy Trust

Discernment & Gradual Vulnerability

Developing the capacity to assess trustworthiness based on evidence and share vulnerability incrementally.

Trust isn't all-or-nothing. It's built through small acts of mutual reliability and respecting boundaries.

Transformation

From Isolation to Belonging

Moving from suspicion to appropriate trust, and from surface connection to authentic intimacy.

Between trust barriers and connection lies a space of choice. Choosing vulnerability creates the belonging that makes recovery sustainable.

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WORKSHEET

Trust & Relationship Worksheet

Building Bridges to Connection

PROFILE

Understanding Your Trust Profile

1. What trust barrier affects you most powerfully?

2. What specific experiences contributed to this?

3. How have your trust patterns evolved in recovery?

4. What situations intensify your trust barriers?

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology of Your Relationships

5. How does viewing barriers as 'protective adaptations' change your perspective?

6. How has family background or trauma shaped your barriers?

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7. How do different trust barriers interact?

8. What are early warning signs of emerging trust walls?

MAP

Personalized Trust Map

List specific examples for each category:

Betrayal History:

Confidentiality Fears:

Disclosure Damage:

Authority Distrust:

Intimacy Avoidance:

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Exploitation Fears:

Relationship Trauma:

RESILIENCE

Developing Skills

9. What approaches help address your trust barriers?

10. How do you practice appropriate vulnerability?

11. How can you strengthen your most challenging relationship area?

ACTION

Action Plan

Specific Trust Barrier to Address:

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Clear Goal:

Action Steps:

Accountability Measures:

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