

# Relationships Strained by Addiction

Mapping board · Recovery Timelines · The Recovery Files

Printable fill-in version: write your answers on the lines. The interactive board, its charts and your saved entries stay in the app.

# Relationships Strained by Addiction

An interactive timeline mapping board for tracing, understanding, and beginning to repair the relational damage caused by substance use — across every dimension of your life.

If You're in Crisis: SAMHSA: 1-800-662-4357 · 988 Lifeline: Call or text 988 · Crisis Text: Text HOME to 741741

This tool is designed for use alongside professional treatment and is not a substitute for clinical care.

If you are in crisis, please call 988 or visit your nearest emergency room.

## Understanding Addiction's Relational Wreckage

Addiction is sometimes called a "disease of relationships" — and with good reason. Substance use doesn't happen in isolation. It radiates outward, touching every connection in your life. This mapping board helps you trace that impact honestly, process the grief and guilt that comes with seeing the full picture, and begin building a roadmap for repair.

0 relationships mapped · 0 reflections written

### How to Use This Tool

1. Explore Relationship Categories — Begin by reading through each category in the Deep Dive. Understand the common patterns of damage in each domain.
2. Build Your Relationship Inventory — Name the specific people your addiction affected. Be thorough.
3. Map the Timeline — Walk through each phase of your addiction and identify which relationships were affected and how.
4. Plan Repair & Amends — For relationships where repair is possible and appropriate, create specific action plans.
5. Grieve What's Lost — Not every relationship can be repaired. Part of recovery is grieving what addiction took permanently.

#### Relationship Categories

☐ Romantic & Intimate Partners

0 mapped

☐ Family of Origin

0 mapped

☐ Children & Parenting

0 mapped

☐ Friendships

0 mapped

□ Professional & Workplace

0 mapped

□ Community & Social

0 mapped

□ Relationship with Self

0 mapped

## Relationship Deep Dive

Each relationship category carries its own patterns of damage, its own grief, and its own path toward repair. Take your time with each section — this work requires courage and honesty.

### 0 relationship(s) mapped

Spouses, partners, significant others — past and present. These relationships often bear the deepest scars of addiction because they involve the most vulnerability and the closest proximity to destructive behavior.

#### Common Damage Patterns

- Broken trust through lies, secrecy, and deception
- Emotional unavailability and abandonment
- Financial damage through spending on substances
- Verbal or physical aggression while under the influence
- Infidelity or sexual acting out connected to use
- Codependency patterns that enabled continued use
- Broken promises and failed commitments
- Parentification of partner — they became caretaker
- Gaslighting about the severity of the addiction
- Loss of shared dreams, plans, and future goals

### Guided Reflections

How did your addiction change the way your partner saw you? How did it change the way you saw them?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What promises did you break? Which broken promises hurt the most — and why?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Describe a specific moment when your partner realized the depth of your addiction. What happened?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How did you manipulate your partner to protect your using? What tactics did you employ?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What parts of your partner did addiction steal from — their joy, their trust, their health, their identity?

Write your honest reflection here...

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If your partner wrote a letter describing the impact of your addiction on them, what do you think they would say?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What does genuine intimacy look like without substances? What scares you about that?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

Isolation & Withdrawal

### Repair Strategies

- ✦ Consistent honesty — even about small things — to rebuild the foundation of trust
- ✦ Full accountability without minimizing, blaming, or making excuses
- ✦ Couples therapy with an addiction-informed therapist
- ✦ Transparent communication about recovery activities and challenges
- ✦ Re-learning emotional intimacy without chemical assistance
- ✦ Honoring boundaries your partner sets — even when they feel painful
- ✦ Demonstrating change through sustained action, not just words

Your Personal Repair Plan for Romantic & Intimate Partners

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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### 0 relationship(s) mapped

Parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles — the family you grew up in. Addiction often damages these relationships through shame, disappointment, and the reversal of natural family

roles.

#### Common Damage Patterns

- Causing chronic worry, fear, and sleepless nights
- Financial exploitation — borrowing, stealing, or draining resources
- Forcing parents into enabling behaviors to "keep the peace"
- Missing important family events and milestones
- Sibling relationships fractured by jealousy of attention received
- Role reversal — parents caring for an adult child
- Bringing chaos, crisis, and unpredictability into the family system
- Triangulation — pitting family members against each other
- Causing secondary trauma to family members
- Destroying family traditions and holiday experiences

#### Guided Reflections

How did your family first learn about your addiction? Describe that moment and its aftermath.

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which family member has been most affected by your addiction? How specifically?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What family events did you miss, ruin, or attend under the influence? What were the consequences?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How did your addiction change the family dynamics? Who became the caretaker, the fixer, the avoider?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Did your family enable your addiction? If so, how — and can you see that it came from love and fear?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What did your addiction steal from your parents that you can never fully give back?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How has your addiction affected your siblings' lives, relationships, or mental health?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

Isolation & Withdrawal

### **Repair Strategies**

- ✦ Acknowledge specific harm without defending or explaining away behavior
- ✦ Respect that family members may need space and time to heal

- ✦ Family therapy to address system-wide patterns
- ✦ Stop financial dependency — demonstrate self-sufficiency
- ✦ Show up consistently for family commitments — presence builds trust
- ✦ Learn about how addiction affects families to understand their experience
- ✦ Write letters of accountability (whether or not you send them)

#### Your Personal Repair Plan for Family of Origin

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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### 0 relationship(s) mapped

Your children — of any age. This is often the most painful category to explore because children are the most vulnerable to a parent's addiction. Their wounds may be the deepest and most lasting.

#### Common Damage Patterns

- Emotional neglect — being physically present but emotionally absent
- Exposing children to frightening behavior or dangerous situations
- Inconsistent parenting — unpredictable moods and responses
- Breaking promises to attend games, recitals, school events
- Creating an environment of chaos, fear, and walking on eggshells
- Modeling substance use as a coping mechanism
- Parentification — children taking on adult responsibilities
- Custody loss or reduced involvement in children's lives
- Children developing anxiety, depression, or their own addiction
- Loss of childhood innocence through exposure to adult dysfunction

#### Guided Reflections

If your child could describe their childhood in one word, what would it be? What do you wish it would be?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Describe a specific moment when you chose your addiction over your child. What happened? How do you feel about it now?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What did your children learn about coping with difficult emotions by watching you?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How has your addiction affected your child's sense of safety, trust, and self-worth?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What milestones or memories did you miss or cannot clearly remember because of substance use?

Write your honest reflection here...

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If your children are old enough, what have they told you about the impact of your addiction? If they haven't spoken about it, what do you think they would say?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What kind of parent do you want to be in recovery? What does that look like day to day?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

Isolation & Withdrawal

Repair Strategies

- ✦ Age-appropriate honesty about your addiction and recovery
- ✦ Consistent presence — show up, be reliable, follow through
- ✦ Allow children to express anger, hurt, and confusion without becoming defensive
- ✦ Family therapy with a child-informed addiction specialist
- ✦ Create new positive memories without trying to "make up for" the past
- ✦ Model healthy coping skills — let them see you handle stress soberly
- ✦ Respect that rebuilding trust with children takes longer than with adults

Your Personal Repair Plan for Children & Parenting

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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## 0 relationship(s) mapped

Close friends, longtime companions, and social connections. Addiction often sorts friendships into those who enabled use and those who were pushed away for trying to help.

### Common Damage Patterns

- Replacing authentic friendships with using relationships
- **Borrowing money and never repaying it**
- Becoming unreliable — canceling plans, no-showing, or showing up intoxicated
- Pushing away friends who expressed concern about your use
- Lying and manipulating friends to cover addiction
- Draining emotional energy — friends became crisis managers
- Betraying confidences while under the influence
- Losing the ability to be genuinely present in friendships
- Jealousy or resentment toward friends living healthy lives
- Social isolation — narrowing your world to only using contexts

### Guided Reflections

Name the friendships addiction destroyed. What made each of those people important to you?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Who tried to help you that you pushed away? How did you justify cutting them off?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How did you decide which friends were "safe" (enabled your use) vs. "threats" (challenged it)?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What does genuine friendship look like without substances involved? Can you imagine social connection without chemical assistance?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which lost friendship do you grieve the most? What would you say to that person if you could?  
Write your honest reflection here...

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How has your social circle changed since entering recovery? What feels different? What feels missing?  
Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

Isolation & Withdrawal

### **Repair Strategies**

- ✦ Reach out with honesty — not to ask for forgiveness, but to take accountability
- ✦ Develop new sober friendships through recovery community
- ✦ Learn to socialize without substances as a social lubricant
- ✦ Be patient — some friendships can be rebuilt, some cannot
- ✦ Repay debts (financial and emotional) where possible
- ✦ Practice being a reliable, present friend consistently over time
- ✦ Join group activities that build connection without substances

## Your Personal Repair Plan for Friendships

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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## 0 relationship(s) mapped

Bosses, colleagues, employees, mentors, clients, and professional reputation. Addiction can dismantle careers, destroy professional credibility, and close doors that are very difficult to reopen.

Common Damage Patterns

- Declining work performance, missed deadlines, and errors
- Absenteeism, tardiness, and calling in sick to cover use
- Damaged professional reputation and credibility
- Job termination or forced resignation
- Loss of professional licenses or certifications
- Strained relationships with colleagues and supervisors
- Missed promotions, raises, or career opportunities
- Inappropriate behavior at work events or meetings
- Financial consequences — lost income, benefits, retirement
- Burning bridges with mentors and professional advocates

## Guided Reflections

How did your addiction specifically affect your work performance? Be as honest as possible.

Write your honest reflection here...

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Did you ever go to work impaired? What risks did that create — for you and others?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How did colleagues or supervisors respond to your declining performance? Were there warning conversations you dismissed?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What career opportunities did your addiction cost you? Where might you be professionally without it?

Write your honest reflection here...

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If you lost a job due to addiction, describe that experience. What were the consequences beyond the job itself?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How did you maintain the appearance of functionality at work? What was the cost of that performance?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What professional relationship do you most regret damaging? Why?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

Isolation & Withdrawal

Repair Strategies

- ✦ Demonstrate sustained reliability and improved performance
- ✦ Address any legal or HR issues honestly and directly
- ✦ Seek professional development to rebuild competency
- ✦ Rebuild credibility through consistent, quality work over time
- ✦ If appropriate, disclose recovery status to trusted colleagues or supervisors
- ✦ Use Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for support
- ✦ Set clear boundaries between recovery needs and work obligations

Your Personal Repair Plan for Professional & Workplace

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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## 0 relationship(s) mapped

Neighbors, faith communities, social organizations, volunteer networks, and broader social connections. Addiction often leads to withdrawal from community life and damage to social standing.

Common Damage Patterns

- Withdrawal from community activities and organizations
- Damaged reputation in neighborhood or community

- Loss of trust in faith or spiritual community
- **Legal issues that became public knowledge**
- Inability to fulfill community roles or volunteer commitments
- Social stigma affecting family members as well
- Loss of belonging and social identity outside of addiction
- Strained relationships with neighbors through behavior or neglect
- Disconnection from cultural or spiritual practices
- Missed opportunities to contribute and be part of something larger

### Guided Reflections

How did addiction change your involvement in community life? What did you withdraw from?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Were there public consequences of your addiction that affected your standing in the community?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How did addiction affect your spiritual or faith life? What did you lose?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What community roles or identities did addiction take from you?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How does it feel to imagine re-entering community spaces where people may know your history?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What kind of community member do you want to be in recovery?

Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

Isolation & Withdrawal

### **Repair Strategies**

- ✦ Re-engage gradually with community activities that support recovery
- ✦ Find recovery-specific community (meetings, sober events, alumni groups)
- ✦ Volunteer or serve others as a way to rebuild social identity
- ✦ Reconnect with spiritual or faith practices that feel authentic
- ✦ Accept that community trust rebuilds slowly through visible change
- ✦ Become a positive presence rather than trying to erase the past

Your Personal Repair Plan for Community & Social

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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## 0 relationship(s) mapped

The most fundamental relationship of all. Addiction shatters self-trust, self-respect, and self-knowledge. Recovery begins when you start rebuilding the relationship with the person you see in the mirror.

### Common Damage Patterns

- Loss of self-trust — you broke promises to yourself repeatedly
- Shame and self-loathing that persists into recovery
- Disconnection from authentic identity — not knowing who you are without substances
- Loss of self-respect through behavior that violated your own values
- Damaged self-efficacy — believing you can't handle life without chemicals
- Suppressed emotions that you're now learning to feel again
- Physical health damage from sustained substance use
- Lost years, experiences, and personal growth
- Imposter syndrome in recovery — feeling like a fraud
- Difficulty distinguishing your authentic self from your addicted self

### Guided Reflections

Who were you before addiction took hold? What qualities, dreams, and values defined you?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What promises have you broken to yourself? Which ones hurt the most?

Write your honest reflection here...

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How do you speak to yourself internally? Is your inner voice compassionate or punishing?

Write your honest reflection here...

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What parts of yourself did you lose to addiction? Which parts are you rediscovering in recovery?  
Write your honest reflection here...

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What is the hardest thing to forgive yourself for? What would self-forgiveness actually look like?  
Write your honest reflection here...

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Describe the person you want to become in recovery. Not who you "should" be — who you genuinely want to be.  
Write your honest reflection here...

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What does it mean to trust yourself again? What would that feel like?  
Write your honest reflection here...

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Which Damage Patterns Were Present?

Deception & Secrecy

Emotional Harm

Financial Damage

Broken Trust

Absence & Neglect

Aggression & Conflict

Role Reversal

## Isolation & Withdrawal

### Repair Strategies

- ✦ Practice self-compassion — you survived addiction, and that takes strength
- ✦ Keep small promises to yourself daily to rebuild self-trust
- ✦ Journaling to reconnect with your inner voice and authentic self
- ✦ Physical health restoration — exercise, nutrition, sleep
- ✦ Therapy focused on shame reduction and identity reconstruction
- ✦ Mindfulness practices to reconnect with emotions and present-moment experience
- ✦ Celebrate progress without minimizing it — small wins matter

### Your Personal Repair Plan for Relationship with Self

Based on the damage you've identified and the repair strategies above, what specific steps can you take? Be concrete — who will you talk to, what will you say, what boundaries do you need to respect, and what timeline feels realistic?

Write your repair plan here...

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## Relationship Inventory

Name the specific people your addiction affected. This isn't a "blame list" — it's an honest accounting of the human impact of your substance use.

Add a Relationship

Person's Name or Identifier

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### Relationship Category

[Select category... / ☐ Romantic & Intimate Partners / ☐ Family of Origin / ☐ Children & Parenting / ☐ Friendships / ☐ Professional & Workplace / ☐ Community & Social / ☐ Relationship with Self]

Brief Description of Impact

Describe the impact...

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Current Status:

damaged

repairing

repaired

### lost

Your inventory is empty. Use the form above to begin mapping the relationships affected by your addiction.

## Addiction Timeline — Relational Impact

Trace the relational damage of your addiction across time. From early use through present recovery, every phase left its mark on the people around you.

### Early Use Period

When substance use began — the first relationships affected, often subtly.

### Escalation Period

When use intensified — more relationships began showing strain.

Peak Active Addiction

The period of heaviest use — maximum relationship damage.

## Consequences & Crisis

When the damage became undeniable — interventions, separations, job loss, legal issues.

## Early Recovery

First steps into recovery — navigating the wreckage and beginning repair.

## Sustained Recovery

Ongoing recovery work — rebuilding, amends, and new relationship patterns.

# Repair, Amends & Grieving

Recovery isn't just about stopping substance use — it's about repairing the relational damage and learning to build healthy connections.

## Amends Readiness Assessment

Not all amends are appropriate at all times. Before attempting to repair a relationship, honestly assess your readiness and the other person's receptivity.

How stable is your current recovery? Are you making amends from a place of sustained sobriety, or are you still in early, fragile recovery?

Be completely honest with yourself...

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Examine your motives honestly — are you seeking to relieve YOUR guilt, or genuinely trying to acknowledge the other person's experience and take accountability?

Be completely honest with yourself...

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Could making amends to certain people cause them additional harm? Sometimes the most loving amends is staying away. Who falls into this category, and why?

Be completely honest with yourself...

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Can you make amends WITHOUT attachment to the outcome? The other person has no obligation to forgive, reconcile, or even listen. Can you accept that?

Be completely honest with yourself...

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## Individual Repair Plans

Add relationships in the Inventory tab to create individual repair plans.

## Grieving What Cannot Be Repaired

Some relationships are permanently lost to addiction. Grief is a necessary part of recovery — not as punishment, but as honoring the truth of what was lost.

Which relationships are permanently lost? Name them. Describe what you lost — not just the person, but the potential, the memories you'll never make, the future you'll never share.

Allow yourself to feel this...

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What time can never be recovered? What milestones, experiences, or ordinary moments did addiction steal from your relationships that no amount of sobriety can return?

Allow yourself to feel this...

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How do you carry this grief in recovery without letting it destroy you? How do you honor the loss without using it as an excuse to return to substances?

Allow yourself to feel this...

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Can you find meaning in the loss? Not to minimize the pain, but to let it fuel your commitment to recovery and to the relationships you still have.

Allow yourself to feel this...

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## Unsent Letter

Write a letter to someone you've lost — through death, estrangement, or permanent separation. Say what you never got to say. You don't have to send it. The writing itself is the healing.

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## Pattern Recognition & Insights

Step back and see the full picture of how addiction affected your relational world.

Relationship Damage Heat Map

- ☐ Romantic
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Community

### Most Affected Relationship Categories

Complete the Timeline Mapping section to see pattern analysis.

Integration & Moving Forward

### Your Relational Pattern

Looking at the full map, what patterns do you see in how addiction affected your relationships? Were certain types of relationships more damaged than others? Why?

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### Repeating Cycles

Did you see the same damage patterns repeating across different relationships and time periods? What cycle kept playing out? What drove it?

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### Sources of Resilience

Which relationships survived your addiction? What made them resilient? What can you learn from the connections that endured?

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### Your Relational Commitment

Write a commitment to yourself about how you will show up in relationships going forward. Be specific about the behaviors, values, and patterns you are choosing.

## Overall Reflection — Early Use Period

Think back to when your substance use first began affecting relationships. Who noticed first? What were the early warning signs that you or others dismissed? How did relationships begin to subtly shift?

Take your time with this reflection...

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Relationship Impact During Early Use Period

## Overall Reflection — Escalation Period

As your use intensified, how did the relational damage spread? Which relationships deteriorated fastest? What lies did you tell to maintain appearances?

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Relationship Impact During Escalation Period

## Overall Reflection — Peak Active Addiction

During the worst of your active addiction, what was the state of your relationships? Who was still present? Who had left? What is the most painful thing you did to someone during this period?

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Relationship Impact During Peak Active Addiction

## Overall Reflection — Consequences & Crisis

When the consequences became undeniable — what happened? Were there interventions, ultimatums, separations, custody issues, terminations? How did these crises affect your relationships?

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Relationship Impact During Consequences & Crisis

## Overall Reflection — Early Recovery

In early recovery, what was the relational landscape? Who was willing to give you a chance? Who had given up? What amends attempts did you make, and how were they received?

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Relationship Impact During Early Recovery

## Overall Reflection — Sustained Recovery

Where do your relationships stand now? Which ones have healed? Which ones remain strained?  
What does healthy connection look like for you in recovery?

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Relationship Impact During Sustained Recovery