

Dishonesty, Half-Truths & Selective Sharing

Building Honesty and Transparency in Recovery

Honesty, Maturity & Relapse Threats

Topic Studies · The Recovery Files

In this workbook: key ideas, worksheet.

The topic's scored self-assessment is in the app.

KEY IDEAS

Dishonesty, Half-Truths & Selective Sharing

Understanding Deception in Addiction and Recovery

Dishonesty, half-truths, and selective information sharing are common behaviors among those struggling with addiction and mental health issues. These behaviors can stem from shame, fear, or a desire to protect oneself or others.

The Problem: While these behaviors may feel protective in the moment, they perpetuate the cycle of addiction and hinder the recovery process. By exploring their roots and consequences, you can build a stronger foundation for lasting change.

Forms of Dishonesty in Recovery

Dishonesty in recovery takes many forms, often operating below conscious awareness:

Outright Lies

Fabricating information about substance use, behaviors, or circumstances

Half-Truths

Sharing partial information while omitting crucial details

Selective Sharing

Choosing which information to reveal based on desired impression

Minimization

Downplaying consequences or severity of addiction

Omission

Deliberately leaving out important information

The Roots of Dishonesty

Understanding why we become dishonest is essential for developing authenticity in recovery.

Common Motivations:

- Shame: Deep embarrassment about behaviors or circumstances
- Fear of Judgment: Worry about how others will perceive us
- Fear of Consequences: Avoiding punishment or negative outcomes
- Protection: Shielding loved ones from painful truths
- Self-Preservation: Maintaining access to substances or behaviors
- Identity Protection: Preserving a certain self-image
- Trust Issues: Difficulty believing others can handle the truth

Key Insight: Dishonesty often begins as a survival mechanism but becomes a habit that isolates us from the very connections and support we need for recovery.

The Cost of Dishonesty

While dishonesty may provide short-term relief, its long-term costs are significant:

Relationship Damage

- Eroded trust with loved ones
- Superficial connections
- Isolation and loneliness
- Damaged credibility

Recovery Impact

- Ineffective treatment
- Missed support opportunities
- Reinforced denial
- Increased relapse risk

The Paradox: The secrets we keep to protect ourselves become the very things that keep us sick.
"We're only as sick as our secrets."

Examples in Addiction & Recovery

Recognizing dishonesty patterns helps us address them:

1. Lying to a spouse about the extent of substance use or addictive behaviors
2. Telling a half-truth to a therapist about the frequency of cravings
3. Withholding information from a sponsor about a slip or relapse
4. Presenting a false image of progress to friends and family
5. Engaging in secretive behavior related to obtaining substances

Building Honesty in Recovery

Developing honesty is a gradual process that requires practice and support:

Strategies for Greater Honesty:

- 1.Start Small: Practice honesty in low-stakes situations first
- 2.Find Safe People: Identify trusted individuals for vulnerable sharing
- 3.Challenge Fears: Examine whether feared consequences are realistic
- 4.Practice Promptness: Address dishonesty quickly when it occurs
- 5.Embrace Discomfort: Recognize that honesty feels uncomfortable at first

The Promise: Greater honesty leads to deeper connections, more effective support, reduced shame, and a stronger foundation for lasting recovery.

WORKSHEET

Dishonesty & Half-Truths Worksheet

Building Honesty and Transparency

About This Worksheet

Dishonesty in recovery often stems from shame, fear, or a desire to protect ourselves or others. However, these patterns perpetuate the cycle of addiction and hinder healing. This worksheet helps you explore your patterns of dishonesty and develop strategies for greater transparency.

Questions for Self-Reflection

1. What are some of the primary reasons or motivations behind your dishonesty or selective sharing, and how do they relate to your addiction or mental health struggles?

2. How has dishonesty or half-truths impacted your relationships, both in active addiction and in recovery?

3. What are your biggest fears or concerns about being fully honest and transparent in recovery, and how can you address these fears?

4. In what ways do you think dishonesty or selective sharing may be hindering your progress or growth in recovery?

5. What are some of the potential benefits or positive outcomes of practicing greater honesty and transparency in your life and recovery?

Identifying Your Patterns

List specific situations where you've been dishonest or shared selectively:

Who are the people you're most likely to be dishonest with, and why?

What emotions typically trigger dishonest behavior for you?

Building Honesty Action Plan

Who are 2-3 safe people you can practice being honest with?

What small acts of honesty can you commit to this week?

How will you handle it when you catch yourself being dishonest?

What benefits do you hope to experience from greater honesty?
