

Inconsistent Attendance Patterns

Building Reliable, Committed Participation

Presence & Engagement in Recovery

Topic Studies · The Recovery Files

In this workbook: key ideas, worksheet.

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

KEY IDEAS

Inconsistent Attendance Patterns

Various ways we maintain some recovery contact while avoiding the deeper benefits that come from reliable, committed participation—creating a false sense of adequate engagement.

The "Partial Presence" Trap:

- Treading water maintaining enough contact to prevent disconnection
 - Insufficient consistency for transformative progress
 - Perpetual beginner's experience preventing deeper healing
 - Masks inadequate engagement as sufficient involvement
- ✓ The most profound benefits—identity transformation, emotional growth, stable connection—emerge through consistent, long-term engagement.

Crisis-Driven & Recovery Tourism

Crisis-Driven Attendance:

Participating primarily during struggles rather than as consistent practice.

- Attending meetings only when struggling or in crisis
- Increased participation during difficult periods
- Using recovery as emergency resource, not prevention
- Reactive rather than proactive approach

Recovery Tourism:

Sampling various approaches without committed participation.

- Trying many groups without regular attendance at any
- Moving to new meetings when novelty fades
- Preferring diverse experiences over depth
- Maintaining "visitor" rather than "member" mindset

Both patterns prevent the depth that comes from sustained engagement with consistent community.

Minimum Compliance & Erratic Participation

Minimum Compliance:

Attending primarily to satisfy external expectations.

- Attending just enough to satisfy others
- Participating to demonstrate commitment
- Tracking minimum necessary attendance
- Viewing activities as requirements, not opportunities

Erratic Participation:

Inconsistent, unpredictable attendance without established patterns.

- Attendance lacking consistent pattern or schedule
 - Making spontaneous rather than planned decisions
 - Participation varying significantly without reason
 - Difficulty establishing recovery routines
- ✓ Developing intrinsic motivation and predictable routines transforms recovery participation.

Obstacle Vulnerability & Selective Engagement

Obstacle Vulnerability:

Allowing minor challenges to prevent attendance.

- Minor inconveniences frequently preventing attendance
- Scheduling conflicts taking precedence
- Weather, traffic determining participation
- Easily finding justifiable reasons to miss

Selective Engagement:

Participating in comfortable aspects while avoiding challenging ones.

- Attending comfortable activities only
- Preferring larger, anonymous meetings
- Engaging socially but avoiding structure
- Maintaining compartmentalized involvement

Abandoned Commitments

Initially establishing recovery patterns that gradually erode over time—a cycle of enthusiasm followed by disengagement that prevents sustained growth.

Common Manifestations:

- Initially committing to regular attendance but failing to follow through
 - Volunteering for responsibilities without reliable fulfillment
 - Making and breaking attendance promises to oneself
 - Establishing routines that gradually erode
 - Beginning initiatives with diminishing enthusiasm
- ✓ Solution: Make realistic attendance agreements and develop sustainable practices that can be maintained long-term rather than relying on temporary enthusiasm.

Building Consistency Practices

Developing effective strategies for reliable, committed participation that creates cumulative growth.

Balanced Motivation:

- Attend during both difficult and stable periods
- View recovery as preventative maintenance
- Maintain attendance despite need fluctuations
- Connect to long-term goals beyond immediate needs

Routine Establishment:

- Schedule activities at consistent times
- Develop specific attendance routines
- Plan other commitments around recovery
- Make attendance more automatic

Obstacle Management:

- Anticipate and plan for barriers
- Develop strategies for common obstacles
- Distinguish legitimate barriers from excuses
- Problem-solve rather than surrender

Sustainable Commitment:

- Make realistic attendance commitments
- Follow through reliably on responsibilities
- Honor personal attendance agreements
- Develop strengthening routines

The Power of Consistency

Consistency is a skill that develops through practice

Not a personality trait you either possess or lack—an ability that grows stronger with each attendance choice and becomes progressively easier as it transforms from deliberate action to established habit.

Each consistent attendance experience builds upon previous experiences, creating a cumulative effect that sporadic participation cannot produce. The most profound benefits of recovery emerge through this reliable, long-term engagement.

Between the impulse toward inconsistency and the choice for reliable participation lies a space where lasting recovery is built—one consistent choice at a time.

✓ "Bring the body, the mind will follow" requires regular, reliable attendance—each choice strengthens the foundation for transformation.

WORKSHEET

Inconsistent Attendance Worksheet

Mapping Your Attendance Patterns

About This Worksheet

This worksheet helps you identify your specific inconsistent attendance patterns, understand what drives them, and develop personalized strategies for building reliable, committed participation that creates cumulative growth in recovery.

Your Personalized Inconsistent Attendance Map

For each inconsistency category, write your specific examples that affect you personally:

Crisis-Driven Attendance

Example: I attend meetings regularly for 2-3 weeks after a relapse but then gradually stop going

Recovery Tourism

Example: I've tried 12 different groups in the past 3 months without returning to any more than twice

Minimum Compliance

Example: I attend exactly the number of meetings my treatment program requires, no more

Erratic Participation

Example: I decide whether to attend meetings based on how I feel that day rather than a set schedule

Obstacle Vulnerability

Example: I regularly skip meetings when it rains because transportation becomes slightly more difficult

Selective Engagement

Example: I attend discussion meetings but avoid step-work meetings that require deeper reflection

Abandoned Commitments

Example: I volunteer to chair meetings but often cancel at the last minute

Understanding Your Inconsistent Attendance Landscape

1. What category of inconsistent attendance (crisis-driven, recovery tourism, etc.) affects you most powerfully, and why do you think that is?

2. What specific inconsistency patterns have you noticed that don't seem to fit neatly into any category or that surprise you with their subtlety?

3. How have your attendance patterns evolved or changed throughout your recovery journey?

4. What obstacles consistently interfere with your attendance, and what does this reveal about your recovery priorities?

5. Are there specific types of recovery activities where your attendance is more consistent, and what might this indicate about your preferences or needs?

The Psychology of Your Inconsistency

1. How might your inconsistent attendance patterns reflect deeper beliefs about recovery, yourself, or your needs?

2. In what ways might your specific addiction history have shaped your particular attendance patterns?

3. How do your different inconsistency patterns interact with each other? For example, does crisis-driven attendance reinforce your recovery tourism?

4. What early warning signs might indicate you're slipping into inconsistent patterns before major disengagement occurs?

5. How might co-occurring conditions affect your attendance consistency vulnerability?

Developing Your Consistency Practices

1. What specific consistency practices have proven most effective for your most challenging inconsistency category?

2. How do you distinguish between healthy flexibility in recovery and problematic inconsistency?

3. What role does advance planning play in your approach to maintaining consistent attendance?

4. What recovery support resources have been most helpful in establishing consistent participation?

5. How might you strengthen your response to the inconsistency category you identified as most challenging?

Building Consistency Resilience

1. How has your relationship with attendance consistency changed throughout your recovery journey?

2. What practices help you maintain regular participation even during periods of low motivation?

3. How do you balance consistency with other life demands while maintaining recovery as a priority?

4. What would it look like to view consistency as a skill to develop rather than a personality trait you either have or lack?

5. How might sharing your consistency journey benefit both your own recovery and potentially help others?

Action Planning

Select 2-3 specific inconsistency patterns to address. For each pattern, complete the following:

Action Plan #1

1. Specific inconsistency pattern:

2. Category and manifestation:

3. Clear, measurable goal:

4. Action steps:

5. Accountability measures:

6. Timeline:

7. Potential challenges:

Action Plan #2

1. Specific inconsistency pattern:

2. Category and manifestation:

3. Clear, measurable goal:

4. Action steps:

5. Accountability measures:

6. Timeline:

7. Potential challenges:

Action Plan #3

1. Specific inconsistency pattern:

2. Category and manifestation:

3. Clear, measurable goal:

4. Action steps:

5. Accountability measures:

6. Timeline:

7. Potential challenges: