Individual Therapy Worksheet

Structured reflection for therapy sessions

Printable worksheet · 7 parts

Name _____ Date _____

Individual Therapy in Recovery

A Comprehensive Reading, Self-Assessment & Planning Worksheet for Your Continuing Care

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Worksheet Progress0% Complete

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PART 1 OF 7

Educational Reading

Read through each section at your own pace. Take time to reflect on the embedded questions. Mark sections complete when you've finished.

Welcome: Why This Worksheet Matters

Congratulations on taking this step. Whether you are currently in a treatment program, preparing for discharge, or navigating the early weeks and months of recovery on your own, you are doing something courageous. Recovery is not simply the absence of substance use — it is the daily construction of a life worth living, and individual therapy is one of the most powerful tools available to help you build that life.

This worksheet is designed to help you explore, understand, and plan for individual therapy as a central part of your continuing care. Think of it as a guided conversation with yourself — an opportunity to get honest about what you need, what you're afraid of, what you hope for, and what kind of therapeutic relationship would serve you best.

There are no wrong answers here. Every response you give is valuable information that will help you and your treatment team identify the right therapist, the right approach, and the right goals for this chapter of your recovery. You are not being graded. You are being guided.

A Note on Honesty

The quality of what you get out of this worksheet depends entirely on the honesty you put into it. You have spent enough time wearing masks — in active addiction, in relationships, at work, even in treatment. This is a space where the mask can come off. Nobody is watching. Nobody is scoring you. The only person who benefits from your honesty is you. If a question makes you uncomfortable, that is not a reason to skip it — it is a reason to lean in.

How are you feeling about exploring individual therapy as part of your recovery?

Take a moment to check in with yourself...

Why Individual Therapy in Recovery?

Substance use disorder is a complex condition that affects every dimension of a person's life — physical, emotional, psychological, relational, spiritual, and vocational. While group therapy, peer support, and twelve-step involvement all play important roles in recovery, individual therapy offers something that no other modality can: a private, sustained, deeply personal relationship with a trained professional whose sole focus is your growth, healing, and well-being.

The Unique Power of One-on-One Connection

In group settings, you share the floor. In meetings, you follow a format. In individual therapy, the entire hour belongs to you. There is no need to wait your turn, no concern about taking up too

much space, no pressure to perform or present yourself in a certain way. This is a relationship built entirely around your needs, your history, your pain, and your potential.

Many people in early recovery describe a strange and disorienting experience: they have stopped using substances, but they don't know who they are without them. Drugs and alcohol weren't just substances — they were coping mechanisms, social lubricants, identity markers, emotional regulators, and, in many cases, the primary relationship in a person's life. When that relationship ends, there is a vacuum. Individual therapy helps you fill that vacuum with self-understanding, healthy coping, authentic connection, and purpose.

What the Research Tells Us

Decades of clinical research consistently demonstrate that individuals who engage in ongoing individual therapy following treatment have significantly better outcomes than those who do not. This includes lower rates of relapse, improved mental health functioning, stronger interpersonal relationships, better employment stability, and higher overall quality of life. The therapeutic alliance — the relationship between you and your therapist — is one of the single strongest predictors of positive outcomes across all forms of therapy. In other words, it is not just the technique that heals you; it is the relationship itself.

Individual therapy also provides a safe space to address co-occurring conditions that frequently accompany substance use disorder, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit disorders, bipolar disorder, personality disorders, and grief. Without treatment, these conditions become powerful relapse triggers. With treatment, they become manageable parts of a whole and complex life.

Therapy Is Not a Sign of Weakness

Many people — particularly those in high-performance professions, military backgrounds, or cultures that prize self-reliance — carry a deep, often unspoken belief that seeking therapy is an admission of failure. "I should be able to handle this on my own." "Other people need therapy, not me." "Talking about my feelings isn't going to change anything." These beliefs are understandable, but they are also part of the thinking patterns that sustained active addiction. Recovery requires a fundamental willingness to try new approaches, even — especially — the ones that feel uncomfortable.

The truth is that engaging in therapy is one of the most courageous things a person can do. It requires vulnerability, honesty, patience, and the willingness to sit with discomfort. These are not signs of weakness. They are the hallmarks of strength. The same discipline and determination that you brought to your career, your training, or your daily survival can now be directed toward your healing — but only if you allow yourself to accept support.

Reflection

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What stood out to you most in this section? What, if anything, challenged a belief you've been carrying?

The Ten Core Benefits of Individual Therapy in Recovery

Understanding what individual therapy can offer you is an important step in committing to the process. Below are ten core benefits, each explained in the context of substance use recovery. As you read through them, pay attention to which ones resonate most strongly with where you are right now.

1. Personalized Attention to Your Unique Story

No two people arrive at addiction the same way, and no two people recover the same way. Individual therapy honors the uniqueness of your journey. Your therapist will take the time to understand your specific history — the family dynamics, the trauma, the losses, the pressures, the choices, and the turning points that shaped your relationship with substances. This is not one-size-fits-all. This is tailored care designed around the person you actually are, not the person a textbook says you should be. In group settings, your story is one of many. In individual therapy, your story is the story — and every thread of it matters.

2. A Safe Space to Process Difficult Emotions

In active addiction, substances serve as the primary emotional management system. When you are happy, you use. When you are sad, you use. When you are angry, anxious, bored, lonely, or overwhelmed, you use. Recovery removes that system, and suddenly you are flooded with emotions that you may not have the skills, the experience, or the language to manage. Individual therapy provides a safe, non-judgmental space where you can bring these raw, unfiltered emotions and work through them with a professional who understands both the neuroscience and the lived experience of emotional dysregulation in recovery. You will learn to name what you feel, understand why you feel it, tolerate it without acting on it, and ultimately use it as information rather than a threat.

3. Uncovering and Healing Underlying Trauma

Substance use disorder and trauma are deeply intertwined. Research consistently shows that a significant majority of individuals with substance use disorders have experienced some form of trauma — childhood abuse or neglect, domestic violence, sexual assault, combat exposure, accidents, witnessing violence, or chronic emotional harm. Many people began using substances specifically to numb, escape, or manage the effects of trauma. Without addressing these underlying wounds, the drive to self-medicate remains powerful, and relapse becomes significantly more likely. Individual therapy — particularly trauma-informed approaches — allows you to revisit these experiences in a controlled, safe environment and begin the process of integration and healing.

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4. Developing Healthy Coping Strategies

Recovery is not just about stopping substance use — it is about building a new repertoire of responses to life's inevitable stresses. Individual therapy helps you develop practical, sustainable coping strategies that replace the role substances once played. These may include mindfulness and grounding techniques, cognitive restructuring to challenge distorted thinking, assertive communication skills, stress management protocols, emotional regulation strategies, and relapse prevention planning. The key difference between what you learn in therapy and what you read in a book is practice. Your therapist will help you rehearse these skills in session, troubleshoot barriers to using them in real life, and refine them over time as your needs evolve.

5. Strengthening Self-Awareness and Identity

One of the most profound questions in early recovery is: "Who am I without substances?" For many people, substance use became so central to their identity that they cannot imagine social interactions, creative expression, stress relief, or even daily routines without it. Individual therapy supports the process of identity reconstruction — helping you reconnect with values, interests, strengths, and aspirations that may have been buried under years of active addiction. Your therapist will help you explore questions of purpose, meaning, and self-worth that are essential to building a recovery you actually want to live in, not one you merely endure.

6. Improving Relationships and Communication

Addiction damages relationships. That is not a judgment — it is a reality. Trust has been broken. Boundaries have been violated. Communication has deteriorated into patterns of manipulation, avoidance, conflict, or emotional shutdown. Individual therapy provides a space to examine these relational patterns, understand their origins, grieve what has been lost, and develop new skills for building and maintaining healthy connections. Whether the relationship in question is with a spouse, a parent, a child, a friend, or a colleague, the work you do in therapy will ripple outward into every important connection in your life.

7. Managing Co-Occurring Mental Health Conditions

Substance use disorders rarely exist in isolation. Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, attention deficit disorders, personality disorders, and eating disorders frequently co-occur with addiction. In many cases, these conditions preceded the substance use and contributed to its development. In other cases, chronic substance use altered brain chemistry in ways that created or worsened mental health symptoms. Regardless of the sequence, untreated co-occurring conditions are among the most significant risk factors for relapse. Individual therapy allows for comprehensive assessment and integrated treatment of both the substance use disorder and any co-occurring conditions, ensuring that you are not treating one half of the problem while ignoring the other.

8. Building Accountability Without Shame

Recovery requires accountability, but accountability without compassion becomes punishment — and punishment does not produce lasting change. A skilled therapist creates a space where you can be honest about your struggles, your mistakes, and your setbacks without fear of judgment or rejection. This is not about enabling or excusing harmful behavior. It is about creating a

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relationship where truth-telling is safe, where lapses are learning opportunities, and where growth is measured not by perfection but by progress. For many people in recovery, this is the first relationship in which they have experienced accountability paired with unconditional positive regard — and it can be transformative.

9. Relapse Prevention and Long-Term Planning

Individual therapy is one of the most effective tools for relapse prevention. Your therapist will work with you to identify your specific triggers, warning signs, and high-risk situations, and to develop detailed, personalized plans for managing each of them. This goes far beyond the basics covered in group settings. In individual therapy, you can explore the subtle, often unconscious patterns of thinking and behavior that precede relapse — the gradual drift from recovery routines, the romanticizing of past use, the slow erosion of honesty, the buildup of resentment, the isolation that masquerades as independence. By bringing these patterns into awareness, you gain the power to interrupt them before they escalate.

10. A Consistent, Reliable Relationship

For many people in recovery, the therapeutic relationship is unlike any other relationship they have experienced. It is consistent. It is predictable. It is boundaried. It is honest. Your therapist shows up every week, at the same time, in the same place, with the same commitment to your well-being. In a life that has often been characterized by chaos, unpredictability, broken promises, and unstable connections, this consistency alone can be profoundly healing. The therapeutic relationship becomes a laboratory for learning how to trust, how to be vulnerable, how to tolerate imperfection, and how to maintain connection even when things are difficult.

Reflection

Which two or three benefits resonate most with where you are in your recovery right now? Why?

Common Barriers and How to Move Through Them

Even when people understand the benefits of therapy intellectually, they often encounter internal and external barriers that prevent them from following through. Identifying these barriers honestly is the first step toward overcoming them. Below are some of the most common obstacles people in early recovery face when considering individual therapy, along with strategies for moving through each one.

"I Don't Need Therapy — I Have My Meetings"

Twelve-step meetings and peer support groups are invaluable, but they serve a different function than individual therapy. Meetings provide community, shared experience, spiritual growth, and fellowship. Therapy provides clinical assessment, evidence-based intervention, trauma processing, and individualized treatment planning. These are complementary, not competing. Many people with the strongest, most sustainable recoveries engage in both. Meetings give you a

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fellowship. Therapy gives you a mirror.

"I Can't Afford It"

Financial concerns are real and valid, but they are more often solvable than they initially appear. Many therapists offer sliding scale fees based on income. Insurance plans increasingly cover outpatient mental health and substance use treatment. Community mental health centers provide services regardless of ability to pay. Some therapists offer reduced rates for individuals in early recovery. Your treatment team or case manager can help you navigate these options. The cost of not engaging in therapy — measured in relapse, lost employment, damaged relationships, and diminished quality of life — is almost always far greater than the cost of a weekly session.

"I Don't Have Time"

This is one of the most common barriers, and it deserves honest examination. In most cases, "I don't have time" is actually "I haven't prioritized this yet." You made time for your addiction — hours and days devoted to obtaining, using, hiding, and recovering from substances. You can make time for your healing. Most therapy sessions are 45-60 minutes per week. Many therapists offer early morning, evening, or weekend appointments. Telehealth options eliminate travel time entirely. One hour per week is less than one percent of your waking hours. Your recovery deserves that investment.

"I'm Afraid of What Might Come Up"

This is perhaps the most honest and understandable barrier of all. Therapy asks you to look at things you have spent years avoiding — painful memories, shameful behaviors, unresolved grief, deep fears, broken relationships. The prospect of opening those doors can feel terrifying. Here is what is important to know: a skilled therapist will never push you faster than you are ready to go. Therapy is not an interrogation. It is a collaboration. You control the pace, you set the agenda, and you decide what to share and when. The paradox of avoidance is that the things we refuse to look at control us. The things we bring into the light begin to lose their power.

"I've Tried Therapy Before and It Didn't Work"

This is important information, not a permanent verdict. There are many reasons why a previous therapy experience may not have been helpful: the wrong therapist, the wrong approach, the wrong timing, insufficient session frequency, or the interference of active substance use. A therapy experience during active addiction is fundamentally different from therapy in recovery — your brain chemistry is different, your motivation is different, your capacity for honesty is different, and your relationship with yourself is different. Give therapy another chance with the benefit of recovery as your foundation. You are not the same person you were then.

"I Don't Want to Be Vulnerable"

Vulnerability is the currency of genuine connection and healing. For many people — particularly those who have been hurt, betrayed, or conditioned to be self-reliant — vulnerability feels dangerous. It feels like exposure. It feels like weakness. In reality, vulnerability in the context of a safe therapeutic relationship is an act of extraordinary courage. It is the mechanism through which shame dissolves, authentic connection forms, and real change occurs. You do not have to become vulnerable all at once. You can start small. Share one thing. See how it lands. Build from

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there. Trust is earned, not demanded — and a good therapist understands this.

Reflection

Which barriers, if any, do you currently identify with? What would it take to move through them?

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Benefits Assessment

Benefits Self-Assessment

Rate how strongly you agree with each statement. Be honest — this assessment is for you, and the more accurate it is, the more useful your recommendations will be.

1 = Strongly Disagree3 = Neutral5 = Strongly Agree

1.I believe individual therapy could help me stay sober long-term.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

2.I have emotions I struggle to process without substances.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

3.I have unresolved trauma that contributes to my substance use.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

4.I need help developing healthier coping mechanisms.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

5.I struggle to understand who I am without substances.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

6.My relationships have been damaged by my addiction.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

7.I may have mental health conditions that need professional attention.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

8.I need accountability that goes beyond what group settings provide.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

9.I want help building a detailed relapse prevention plan.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

10.I would benefit from a consistent, reliable relationship with a professional.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

11.There are things I need to talk about that I'm not comfortable sharing in group.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

12.I want to understand the "why" behind my addiction, not just manage the symptoms.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

13.I need help rebuilding trust — with myself and with others.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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14.I experience shame, guilt, or self-hatred that interferes with my recovery.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

15.I want professional guidance as I navigate major life changes in early recovery.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

16.I tend to isolate when things get difficult and need someone who will notice.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

17.I need help managing anger, resentment, or other intense emotions.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

18.I want to develop a stronger sense of purpose and meaning in my life.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

19.I struggle with self-sabotage and patterns of destruction even in recovery.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

20.I believe I deserve professional support for my healing journey.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Looking at your responses above, what themes do you notice? What areas seem most urgent?

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Therapist Preferences

Finding the Right Therapist for You

The therapeutic relationship is the single strongest predictor of positive outcomes. These questions will help you clarify what you're looking for in a therapist so you can find the best fit. Rate how important each factor is to you.

1 = Not Important3 = Moderately Important5 = Essential

1.I would prefer a therapist who has personal experience with recovery.

Background

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

2.It is important to me that my therapist specializes in substance use disorders.

Specialization

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

3.I would feel most comfortable with a therapist of a specific gender.

Demographics

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

4.I want a therapist who incorporates spirituality into treatment.

Approach

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

5.I prefer a therapist who is direct and willing to challenge me.

Style

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

6.I prefer a therapist who is warm, nurturing, and supportive.

Style

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

7.I want a therapist who understands my specific cultural background.

Cultural

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

8.I want a therapist who uses structured, evidence-based techniques.

Approach

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

9.I prefer a therapist who takes a more conversational, exploratory approach.

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Approach

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

10.It is important that my therapist understands the unique pressures of my profession.

Specialization

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

11.I would feel more comfortable with a therapist who is close to my age.

Demographics

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

12.I want a therapist who will assign homework and hold me accountable between sessions.

Style

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

13.I prefer telehealth (video/phone) sessions over in-person.

Logistics

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

14.Scheduling flexibility (evenings/weekends) is very important to me.

Logistics

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

15.I want a therapist who is familiar with twelve-step philosophy.

Approach

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Do you have a preference for your therapist's gender? If so, please share why this matters to you.

Describe your ideal therapist in your own words. What qualities, characteristics, or approaches would make you feel most safe and supported?

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Have you had a previous therapist? If so, what worked well and what didn't?

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Comfort & Needs

Comfort Level & Needs Assessment

Understanding your comfort level with different topics helps your therapist know how to pace treatment and create safety. There is no shame in being uncomfortable — in fact, the areas that feel most uncomfortable are often the ones that hold the most healing potential. Rate your current comfort level with each topic.

1 = Very Uncomfortable3 = Neutral5 = Very Comfortable

1.Discussing my childhood and family of origin

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

2.Talking about traumatic experiences

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

3.Exploring my substance use history in detail

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

4.Discussing my current relationships and conflicts

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

5.Talking about sexual history or concerns

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

6.Discussing financial problems or stress

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

7.Exploring anger and resentment

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

8.Discussing shame, guilt, or self-worth

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

9.Talking about grief and loss

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

10.Discussing my fears about the future

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

11.Exploring my spiritual or existential beliefs

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

12.Discussing physical health concerns related to my use

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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13.Talking about my professional/career situation

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

14.Discussing legal issues

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

15.Exploring patterns of people-pleasing or codependency

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

16.Discussing feelings of loneliness or isolation

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

17.Talking about suicidal thoughts (past or present)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

18.Exploring my identity and sense of self

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Are there any specific topics not listed above that you know you need to address in therapy but feel afraid to?

What would help you feel safe enough to discuss your most uncomfortable topics? What would a therapist need to do or say?

What is the one thing you most need a therapist to understand about you?

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Therapy Modalities

Exploring Therapy Modalities

Not all therapy is the same. Different approaches work better for different people and different issues. Read through each modality below, then rate your level of interest. Your therapist may integrate multiple approaches, and your preferences may evolve — but knowing what resonates now is valuable information.

1 = Not Interested3 = Somewhat Interested5 = Very Interested

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT is one of the most widely researched and effective approaches for substance use disorders. It focuses on the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In recovery, CBT helps you identify the distorted thinking patterns — black-and-white thinking, catastrophizing, minimizing, rationalizing — that drive addictive behavior. You learn to challenge these thoughts, replace them with more accurate and helpful alternatives, and develop concrete behavioral strategies for managing triggers, cravings, and high-risk situations. CBT is structured, skill-based, and typically involves homework between sessions.

Best For

People who are analytical, like structure, want practical tools, and appreciate understanding the logic behind their behaviors.

Key Techniques

Thought records, behavioral experiments, cognitive restructuring, exposure exercises, relapse prevention planning.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Originally developed for borderline personality disorder, DBT has proven highly effective for substance use disorders, particularly for individuals who experience intense emotions, impulsivity, and difficulty with interpersonal relationships. DBT teaches four core skill sets: mindfulness (being present without judgment), distress tolerance (surviving emotional crises without making them worse), emotion regulation (understanding and managing feelings), and interpersonal effectiveness (navigating relationships assertively and respectfully). DBT balances

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acceptance and change — validating where you are while actively working toward where you want to be.

Best For

People who experience emotional intensity, have difficulty tolerating distress, struggle with impulsive behaviors, or have a history of self-harm.

Key Techniques

Mindfulness exercises, distress tolerance skills (TIPP, ACCEPTS), emotion regulation worksheets, interpersonal effectiveness scripts (DEAR MAN).

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is a specialized approach designed to help the brain process and integrate traumatic memories that have become "stuck." During active addiction, trauma memories remain unprocessed because substances prevent the natural healing process. In EMDR, you recall distressing memories while engaging in bilateral stimulation (typically guided eye movements), which helps the brain reprocess these memories so they no longer carry the same emotional charge. EMDR does not require you to describe your trauma in extensive verbal detail, which makes it particularly helpful for people who find traditional talk therapy about trauma too overwhelming.

Best For

People with PTSD, complex trauma, specific traumatic memories tied to substance use, or those who struggle to verbalize traumatic experiences.

Key Techniques

Bilateral stimulation, desensitization, cognitive interweave, resource development and installation.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, person-centered approach that helps you explore and resolve ambivalence about change. Rather than telling you what to do or arguing for change, an MI-trained therapist helps you discover your own reasons for change by drawing out your values, goals, and concerns. MI recognizes that motivation is not something you either have or don't have — it is something that can be cultivated, strengthened, and sustained through the right kind of conversation. MI is particularly helpful in early recovery when motivation may fluctuate and commitment to change may still be developing.

Best For

People who are ambivalent about recovery, resistant to being told what to do, or who respond best to autonomy-supportive approaches.

Key Techniques

Open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, summarizing, developing discrepancy, supporting self-efficacy.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Psychodynamic Therapy

Psychodynamic therapy explores how unconscious patterns, early life experiences, and deep-seated emotional conflicts influence current behavior — including substance use. Rather than focusing primarily on symptom management, psychodynamic therapy seeks to understand the underlying psychological meaning of addiction: What need was the substance meeting? What emotional wound was it covering? What relationship pattern was it replicating? This approach tends to be longer-term and more exploratory, helping you develop deep self-understanding and lasting personality change rather than just behavioral modification.

Best For

People who want deep self-understanding, are interested in exploring childhood patterns, and are willing to invest in longer-term therapeutic work.

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Key Techniques

Free association, exploring transference, dream analysis, examining defense mechanisms, narrative exploration.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

ACT is built on the premise that suffering is a normal part of human experience and that the struggle to avoid or eliminate painful thoughts and feelings often makes things worse. Instead of trying to control or eliminate cravings, difficult emotions, or uncomfortable thoughts, ACT teaches you to accept them as natural experiences, defuse from their power over your behavior, connect with your core values, and commit to action that is aligned with what matters most to you. ACT is particularly powerful in recovery because it shifts the goal from "not using" to "living a values-driven life" — which naturally supports sustained sobriety.

Best For

People who are tired of fighting their own thoughts, want a values-driven approach, or respond well to mindfulness and metaphor.

Key Techniques

Values clarification, cognitive defusion, mindfulness, acceptance exercises, committed action planning.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Trauma-Focused / Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care is not a single technique but a framework that recognizes the pervasive impact of trauma and integrates this understanding into every aspect of treatment. A trauma-informed therapist understands that many behaviors associated with addiction — hypervigilance, avoidance, emotional numbing, difficulty trusting, impulsivity — are actually

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adaptive responses to overwhelming experiences. Within this framework, specific trauma-focused approaches such as Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Seeking Safety, and Somatic Experiencing may be used to directly address traumatic memories and their aftereffects.

Best For

People with histories of abuse, neglect, violence, combat trauma, or any overwhelming experience that continues to affect daily functioning.

Key Techniques

Safety planning, grounding, psychoeducation, gradual trauma processing, somatic awareness, narrative reconstruction.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Family Systems Therapy

Family systems therapy recognizes that addiction does not occur in isolation — it develops within and profoundly affects the entire family system. This approach explores how family dynamics, communication patterns, roles (enabler, scapegoat, hero, lost child), boundaries, and intergenerational patterns contribute to and are affected by substance use. While individual therapy is the focus of this worksheet, family systems work can be integrated into individual sessions by helping you understand your role within your family, identify patterns you want to change, and develop skills for healthier family interactions — even if your family members are not in therapy themselves.

Best For

People whose family dynamics significantly contributed to their addiction, who want to repair family relationships, or who recognize intergenerational patterns of addiction.

Key Techniques

Genograms, boundary work, communication skills, exploring family roles, addressing codependency, differentiation.

How interested are you in this approach?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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What about this approach appeals to you or concerns you?

Modality Reflection

Based on your reading, which one or two modalities feel most aligned with your needs right now?

Are there any modalities you would like to ask your treatment team more about?

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PART 6 OF 7

Goal Setting

Setting Your Therapy Goals

Goals give your therapy direction and purpose. They help you and your therapist stay focused and measure progress. For each category below, rate how important this area is to your recovery, then describe specific goals you would like to work toward.

Sobriety & Relapse Prevention

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Emotional Health & Regulation

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Trauma Processing & Healing

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Relationships & Communication

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Identity & Self-Worth

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Mental Health & Co-Occurring Issues

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Career & Professional Growth

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

Spiritual & Existential Growth

How important is this area to your recovery? (1 = Not important, 5 = Critical priority)

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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What specific goals would you like to work on in this area?

If therapy could change just one thing about your life in the next six months, what would you want that to be?

What does a successful recovery look like to you one year from now? Describe the life you are working toward.

What are you most afraid might happen if you do not engage in individual therapy as part of your continuing care?

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PART 7 OF 7

My Summary

Your Personal Summary & Recommendations

Based on your responses throughout this worksheet, here is a summary of your self-assessment results, key themes, and personalized recommendations to share with your treatment team or use when searching for a therapist.

○ Generate My Personalized Summary