

Relationships Strained by Addiction

Map, understand, and begin to repair relational damage

Printable worksheet · 6 parts

Name _____ Date _____

The Recovery Files

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.

Embrace · Empower · Evolve|Progress: 0% · 0 relationships mapped

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

The Recovery Files

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.

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PART 1 OF 6

Overview

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.

Your Mapping Progress 0%

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

Spouses, partners, significant others — past and present. These relationships often bear the deepest...

0 mapped

Family of Origin

Parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles — the family you grew up in. Addiction often damages ...

0 mapped

Children & Parenting

Your children — of any age. This is often the most painful category to explore because children are ...

0 mapped

Friendships

Close friends, longtime companions, and social connections. Addiction often sorts friendships into t...

0 mapped

Professional & Workplace

Bosses, colleagues, employees, mentors, clients, and professional reputation. Addiction can dismantl...

0 mapped

Community & Social

Neighbors, faith communities, social organizations, volunteer networks, and broader social connectio...

0 mapped

Relationship with Self

The most fundamental relationship of all. Addiction shatters self-trust, self-respect, and self-know...

0 mapped

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Deep Dive

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.

Romantic & Intimate Partners

0 relationship(s) mapped

Family of Origin

0 relationship(s) mapped

Children & Parenting

0 relationship(s) mapped

Friendships

0 relationship(s) mapped

Professional & Workplace

0 relationship(s) mapped

Community & Social

0 relationship(s) mapped

Relationship with Self

0 relationship(s) mapped

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Inventory

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

e.g., Sarah (wife), Mom, Jim (former boss)...

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...

Current Status:

damaged

repairing

repaired

lost

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

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Timeline

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.

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Repair & Amends

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?

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

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?

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?

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.

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?

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?

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.

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.

Dear _____, ...

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Patterns

Pattern Recognition & Insights

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

Relationship Damage Heat Map

Early Use Period

Escalation Period

Peak Active Addiction

Consequences & Crisis

Early Recovery

Sustained Recovery

Romantic

Family of Origin

Children

Friendships

Professional

Community

Relationship with Self

Most Affected Relationship Categories

Complete the Timeline Mapping section to see pattern analysis.

damaged

repairing

repaired

lost

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?

Repeating Cycles

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

Sources of Resilience

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

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.

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