

Counselor's Guide and Client Worksheets

For use with the video
SHEILA: NOT ALONE

A special addition to the 5-part relapse prevention series,

BEAT THE STREET:
Clean and Sober in the City

REELIZATIONS

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Teaching Points

1. The most important key to recovery is having a support system.
2. In order to have a successful recovery, you have to learn to talk about your feelings.
3. If an addict relapses, he or she hits bottom quicker than ever before. It does get worse.
4. For someone living in a high-risk neighborhood or building, surrounded by drug use, three important tools to cope are prayer, having a specific destination when leaving home, and asking for help when needed.
5. When bad things happen in recovery, just remember that they will pass. And no matter what, you don't have to use in response to them.
6. In order to get better, you have to share the "real you" with people in your support system, telling them the "real deep down, gut level stuff" about how you feel.
7. When someone tempts you with an offer of drugs, the best thing to do is remove yourself from the situation, and go to a 12-step meeting.
8. It's best not to get into a love relationship during early recovery.
9. Sex in recovery requires responsibility.
10. It's important to learn to forgive yourself for things you did in the past. No matter what you did back then, it's what you're doing today that counts.

Discussion Questions

1. **This program opens up with Sheila reflecting on how she felt when she first came into recovery. Did she believe she could do it?**

Answers to bring out in discussion: No. Sheila didn't think recovery was possible for her, because it was something new, and a whole new way of life. Plus, people in recovery were talking about their feelings, and she didn't know how to do that then.

Personalize it to the Group: How do people here feel about their own abilities to recover? Can you imagine it "working" for you? Why or why not?

2. **When Sheila first went into detox, what are some reasons why it didn't work for her and she quickly relapsed?**

Answers to bring out in discussion:

- She only stayed 2 days.
- She thought what counselors said didn't apply to her.
- She thought she had all the answers and could do it on her own.
- She didn't have a support system.
- She went to visit her grandmother in the area where she used to get high, and within 10 minutes was back with old friends.

Personalize it to the Group: Has anyone here been through treatment or detox in the past, and then relapsed? Can you see why you relapsed now?

3. **When Sheila relapsed, did it take the same amount of time as it did before for her to become re-addicted and her life unmanageable?**

Answers to bring out in discussion: No, her life fell apart even quicker than before. Within one-and-a-half months of starting to use again, Sheila's kids were removed, she had no place to live, and she was "doing what she had to do" to get drugs.

Personalize it to the Group: Has anyone here ever found that they became re-addicted and their lives unraveled more quickly when they relapsed than the first time they used?

Learning to take care of money made her feel responsible, and because she pays her bills now, she doesn't have to worry that her phone will get cut off, or that she'll get evicted.

Personalize it to the group: How are *you* at dealing with money? Do you have anything to learn? Do you have anybody who could help you? Why is it important for you?

19. What kinds of problems did Sheila have in school as a child?

Answer to bring out in discussion: She was labeled a "problem child," because she was angry and acting out. She dropped out in 8th grade.

Personalize it to the group: What kinds of experiences have you all had in school? How does that affect the way you feel about learning now?

20. When Sheila first went back to school in recovery, what kinds of feelings did she have about it? How did she cope?

Answer to bring out in discussion: Sheila felt inadequate, couldn't concentrate, and felt everyone was better than her. But she knew that her feelings wouldn't last forever, and if she just kept at it she would feel better. She also told herself that if she doesn't know something, that's the reason why she's in school—to learn it!

Personalize it to the group: Have any of you ever gone back to school in recovery? What kinds of feelings did it bring up for you? How did you cope?

21. How long did it take for Sheila to get her high school diploma in recovery? What does that tell you about her? What other success has she had? What's the key reason she has been able to do all this? What does Sheila consider herself?

Answer to bring out in discussion: It took Sheila eight years part-time to get her high school diploma. The fact that she stuck it out shows how determined she was. She's also gotten a job promotion, got married, bought her own home, and is starting college. Most importantly—and key to her success—Sheila has been clean for eight years. She considers herself a "miracle."

Personalize it to the group: What are *your* long-term goals? Are you willing to stick with it, however long it takes?

Worksheet 1**MY OWN RELAPSE STORY**

Like Sheila, you may have relapsed in the past. Write the story of that relapse below. Put in as many details as you can. What led up to using again? What were you going through at the time? What stress did you have in your life? Did you have much support? Did you go back to the corner, or to old friends? Did someone offer you drugs? **(If you've never relapsed, just imagine a situation that might result in your using again.)**

RELAPSE TRAPS: Now, try to identify the relapse traps that led up to the relapse you wrote about above. For example, were you stressed-out? Were you lacking support? List every relapse trap you can think of that might apply

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Activity 4

DEALING WITH STRESS

Sheila had enormous stress at one point in early recovery:

- She'd just gotten her children back from foster care
- She was pregnant and had no support from the father
- She was building up resentments (anger) that she wasn't talking about
- Her house burned down
- Her water and heat were cut off

Have clients use Worksheet 4 to identify potential areas of stress in their own lives either now or upon release.

After they have completed the Worksheet, invite group sharing about some of the things they wrote. Help group members brainstorm about how various stress factors can be managed or lessened.

Use the relapse tool "identify, avoid or cope" to help clients figure out whether a given stressor, once identified, is something they can avoid. (For example, Sheila might have avoided becoming pregnant in early recovery, if she had planned in advance.) For those things the client cannot avoid (a house burning down, perhaps), help her identify some possible ways to *cope* with that stress.

Some of the coping responses to bring out in group discussion include:

Go to 12-step meetings
 Call someone supportive
 Talk about it
 Cry about it
 Write about it
 Go to church

Listen to soothing music
 Take a walk
 Workout in the gym
 Run
 Meditate
 Sing

After the discussion, ask clients to list some of the coping mechanisms they heard that could work for *them*.