

## ACTIVITY 4: Values Clarification

**Instructions:** When you're clear about your own values, it's easier to make decisions that align with what matters to you.

1. Circle your top 5 values from the list below:

Honesty | Health | Independence | Loyalty | Education | Creativity Family | Fun | Leadership | Security | Spirituality | Achievement Kindness | Popularity | Respect | Adventure | Responsibility | Belonging

2. For each value you circled, describe how giving in to negative peer pressure might conflict with this value:

Value: \_\_\_\_\_ Potential Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_ Value: \_\_\_\_\_  
Potential Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_ Value: \_\_\_\_\_ Potential Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Value: \_\_\_\_\_ Potential Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_ Value: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Potential Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are your personal "non-negotiables"? These are boundaries you won't cross regardless of pressure.

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# ACTIVITY 5: The REAL Response Method

**Instructions:** Practice this method for responding to peer pressure.

**R = Recognize**

Identify that you're feeling pressured and what's making you uncomfortable.

**E = Evaluate**

Consider your options and their consequences.

**A = Assert**

Clearly state your decision.

**L = Leave**

If necessary, exit the situation.

**Practice applying the REAL method to these pressure statements:**

"Come on, just one won't hurt. Don't be such a baby."

- Recognize: \_\_\_\_\_
- Evaluate: \_\_\_\_\_
- Assert: \_\_\_\_\_
- Leave: \_\_\_\_\_

"If you don't do it, I'll tell everyone you're scared."

- Recognize: \_\_\_\_\_
- Evaluate: \_\_\_\_\_
- Assert: \_\_\_\_\_
- Leave: \_\_\_\_\_

"Everyone's doing it. You don't want to be the only one left out, do you?"

- Recognize: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Evaluate: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Assert: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Leave: \_\_\_\_\_
-

## ACTIVITY 6: Refusal Skill Practice

**Instructions:** Having prepared responses makes it easier to resist pressure in the moment. Practice these refusal strategies.

### Direct Refusal:

Clear, firm statements that don't leave room for argument.

- "No, I don't want to."
- "That doesn't work for me."
- "I've made my decision."

Write your own direct refusal phrases:

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### Broken Record:

Repeating your refusal calmly without engaging in debate.

- "I understand, but my answer is still no."
- "Like I said, I'm not interested."
- "I hear you, but I'm not going to do that."

Write your own broken record phrases:

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### Offering Alternatives:

Suggesting something else to do instead.

- "I'd rather go to the movie instead."
- "How about we try this other thing instead?"
- "Let's find something we all want to do."

Write your own alternative suggestions:

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### Using Humor:

Lightening the mood while still refusing.

- "My mom would ground me until I'm 30!"
- "I'm allergic to bad decisions, sorry!"
- "My future self is begging me not to do that."

Write your own humorous refusals:

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### **Blame an External Factor:**

Using rules, parents, or other commitments as your reason.

- "My parents check my location."
- "I have a big test/game tomorrow."
- "I'm already in trouble and can't risk it."

Write your own external factor excuses:

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### **Just Leave:**

Sometimes walking away is the best option.

- "I need to head out now."
- "I just remembered I have to be somewhere."
- "I'm going to catch up with you later."

Write your own exit statements:

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## ACTIVITY 7: Pressure Role-Play Scenarios

**Instructions:** Find a partner (friend, parent, counselor) and practice responding to these pressure scenarios. Switch roles so you can practice both applying pressure and refusing it.

**Scenario 1:** Pressure to cheat on a test or assignment. Pressure statement: "Hey, let me see your answers. It's no big deal, everyone does it."

**Scenario 2:** Pressure to spread rumors or gossip. Pressure statement: "Did you hear what happened with [name]? You have to tell everyone what you know."

**Scenario 3:** Pressure to try vaping/smoking/drinking. Pressure statement: "Just try it once. You'll like it, and it'll help you relax."

**Scenario 4:** Pressure to exclude someone from the group. Pressure statement: "We're all going to ignore [name] today. Don't talk to them or you're not hanging with us."

### Reflection after role-play:

- Which responses felt most comfortable to use?
  - Which were most effective?
  - What was challenging about refusing?
  - What did you learn from being on both sides of the pressure?
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## ACTIVITY 8: Friend Assessment

**Instructions:** Not all friendships are equally supportive. Assess your current friendships to identify which ones might involve unhealthy pressure.

For each statement, mark True (T) or False (F) for each of your close friends:

Friend's name: _____	Friend's name: _____	Friend's name: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Respects when I say "no"	<input type="checkbox"/> Respects when I say "no"	<input type="checkbox"/> Respects when I say "no"
<input type="checkbox"/> Supports my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Supports my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Supports my goals
<input type="checkbox"/> Shares similar values	<input type="checkbox"/> Shares similar values	<input type="checkbox"/> Shares similar values
<input type="checkbox"/> Makes me feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes me feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes me feel good about myself
<input type="checkbox"/> Can have fun without risky behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/> Can have fun without risky behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/> Can have fun without risky behaviors
<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't threaten the friendship	<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't threaten the friendship	<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't threaten the friendship
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourages my best qualities	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourages my best qualities	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourages my best qualities
<input type="checkbox"/> I can be honest with them	<input type="checkbox"/> I can be honest with them	<input type="checkbox"/> I can be honest with them
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts me as I am	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts me as I am	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts me as I am
<input type="checkbox"/> I feel safe around them	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel safe around them	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel safe around them

### Reflection Questions:

1. Do any friendship patterns concern you?
2. Which friendships feel most supportive and pressure-free?
3. Are there any friendships you might need to reevaluate?
4. What qualities do you want to look for in new friends?

## ACTIVITY 9: Building Your Support Network

**Instructions:** Identify people who can support you when you face peer pressure.

**Trusted Adults:** Who are the adults you can turn to when you're feeling pressured or unsure?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

How to reach them:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Supportive Peers:** Which friends are likely to back you up or make similar choices to yours?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

How can you strengthen these supportive friendships?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Code Words/Signals:** Create a code word or text message you can send to a parent or friend when you need help getting out of a situation:

- Code word/text: \_\_\_\_\_
- What it means: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who knows this code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Support Resources:** List other resources available to you (school counselor, hotlines, etc.):

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 10: Pressure Journal & Action Plan

**Instructions:** Keep track of pressure situations and your responses over the next week.

Date	Pressure Situation	How I Responded	How I Felt About My Response	What I'll Try Next Time

### My Personal Pressure Action Plan:

1. The types of pressure I'm most vulnerable to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. My typical warning signs that I'm feeling pressured: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The values I want to remember when making decisions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. My go-to refusal phrases: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. People I can call for support: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Three specific actions I'll take when feeling pressured:

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## Final Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about yourself and how you respond to peer pressure?
2. Which refusal strategies do you think will work best for you?
3. What strengths do you already have that can help you resist negative pressure?
4. What's one situation where you handled pressure well in the past?
5. How might saying "no" to negative pressure actually strengthen your real friendships?
6. What advice would you give to someone younger about handling peer pressure?

### Remember:

- Real friends respect your decisions and boundaries
- You always have the right to say no
- Most people actually respect those who stand up for themselves
- Everyone feels peer pressure—you're not alone
- It's easier to stay true to your values when you decide your limits in advance
- The temporary discomfort of saying no is usually much less than the consequences of doing something you don't want to do

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# What Is Addiction, Really? Understanding the Brain

## The Science Behind Dependence & Recovery

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### **RECOVERY** PART 1: YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

Your brain is the most complex organ in your body. It has different parts that work together, but sometimes they can work against each other too.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: MAPPING THE BRAIN**

Label these key parts of the brain involved in addiction:

**Prefrontal Cortex:** The brain's "thinking center" that helps you make good decisions and understand consequences

**Limbic System:** The brain's "feeling center" that processes emotions and rewards

**Basal Ganglia:** The brain's "habit center" that helps you do things automatically

**Amygdala:** The brain's "alarm system" that responds to stress and danger

**Draw a simple brain outline below and label these four parts:**

[Space for drawing]

**Write one thing each part of your brain helps you do in daily life:**

Prefrontal Cortex:

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Limbic System:

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Basal Ganglia:

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Amygdala:

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## **PART 2: THE REWARD CIRCUIT**

Your brain has a special system called the **reward circuit** that makes you feel good when you do things that help you survive and thrive.

### **ACTIVITY 2: NATURAL REWARDS VS. ARTIFICIAL REWARDS**

**Natural rewards** are things that make you feel good and are good for you, like eating when hungry, spending time with friends, or accomplishing a goal.

**Artificial rewards** can trick your brain's reward system by creating stronger or faster pleasure signals than natural rewards.

**Sort these experiences based on whether they activate your reward circuit in a natural or artificial way:**

- Eating your favorite meal when hungry
- Using alcohol or drugs
- Getting likes on social media
- Completing a difficult project
- Intense video gaming for many hours
- Exercising
- Gambling or betting
- Spending time with close friends
- Shopping compulsively
- Learning a new skill

**Natural Rewards:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Artificial/Potentially Problematic Rewards:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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✂ **PART 3: DOPAMINE AND YOUR BRAIN**

**Dopamine** is a chemical in your brain that plays a big role in how you feel pleasure and motivation.

**ACTIVITY 3: THE DOPAMINE SCALE**

Different activities release different amounts of dopamine. The problem with addictive substances and behaviors is that they can release much more dopamine than natural rewards.

**On the scale below, mark approximately how much dopamine might be released (1 = very little, 10 = extremely high amounts):**

Eating food: \_\_\_\_

Laughing with friends: \_\_\_\_

Winning a game: \_\_\_\_

Completing homework: \_\_\_\_

Using social media: \_\_\_\_

Playing video games: \_\_\_\_

Using nicotine/vaping: \_\_\_\_

Using alcohol: \_\_\_\_

Using stronger drugs: \_\_\_\_

**The Dopamine Problem:** When your brain gets used to high levels of dopamine from artificial rewards, normal activities might not feel as good anymore. This is called **tolerance**.

**What activities in your life might be affected if your brain developed tolerance to high dopamine levels?**

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## **PART 4: THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION**

Addiction isn't just about "bad choices" – it changes how your brain works over time.

### **ACTIVITY 4: UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE**

Number these stages in order to show how addiction develops:

\_\_\_ **Brain Changes:** The brain adapts to the substance or behavior, needing more to feel normal

\_\_\_ **First Use/Experience:** Trying something that produces a pleasurable feeling

\_\_\_ **Tolerance:** Needing more of the substance or behavior to get the same effect

\_\_\_ **Continued Use:** Repeating the behavior to feel good or avoid feeling bad

\_\_\_ **Dependence:** Feeling bad (withdrawal) when not using

\_\_\_ **Compulsion:** Using despite negative consequences, feeling like you can't stop

**Draw a circle and arrange these stages around it to create a visual of the addiction cycle:**

[Space for drawing]

**Where can someone break this cycle? Mark those points with a star.**

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## **PART 5: RISK FACTORS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

Some things can increase or decrease someone's risk for developing addiction.

### **ACTIVITY 5: MY PERSONAL FACTORS**

**Risk factors** make addiction more likely. **Protective factors** help prevent addiction.

Check all that apply to you:

#### **Risk Factors:**

- Family history of addiction
- Starting substance use at an early age
- High stress or trauma
- Mental health challenges
- Peer pressure or friends who use substances
- Easy access to substances
- Difficulty managing emotions
- Impulsive personality
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Protective Factors:**

- Strong family support
- Good coping skills
- Involved in positive activities
- Academic success
- Positive self-esteem
- Knowledge about addiction
- Delayed use of substances
- Strong community connections
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**The protective factors I can strengthen in my life:**



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**PART 6: MYTHS VS. FACTS ABOUT ADDICTION**

There are many misunderstandings about addiction that can make it harder for people to get help.

**ACTIVITY 6: MYTH BUSTERS**

Mark each statement as either a Myth (M) or Fact (F):

\_\_\_ Addiction only happens to people with weak willpower

\_\_\_ Addiction can happen to anyone, though some people have higher risk

\_\_\_ Once someone develops an addiction, their brain is permanently damaged

\_\_\_ The brain can heal from addiction with time and proper support

\_\_\_ Only substances like drugs and alcohol are addictive

\_\_\_ Behaviors like gambling, gaming, and social media can also be addictive

\_\_\_ People with addiction could stop any time if they really wanted to

\_\_\_ Addiction changes brain function, making it very difficult to stop without help

\_\_\_ Addiction is a moral failing or character flaw

\_\_\_ Addiction is a complex brain disorder that requires understanding and treatment

**Why do you think these myths about addiction exist?**

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**How might these myths make it harder for someone to seek help?**

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## **PART 7: WARNING SIGNS**

It's important to recognize early warning signs of potential addiction problems.

### **ACTIVITY 7: RED FLAGS**

Check any warning signs you think are important to watch for:

#### **Behavioral Warning Signs:**

- Spending increasing amounts of time on the substance or activity
- Neglecting responsibilities at school, home, or work
- Giving up activities that used to be important
- Continuing despite negative consequences
- Hiding or being secretive about use
- Failed attempts to cut down or control use
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Physical Warning Signs:**

- Tolerance (needing more for the same effect)
- Withdrawal symptoms when stopping
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Looking tired or unwell
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Emotional Warning Signs:**

- Mood swings
- Irritability when unable to engage in the behavior
- Using to cope with negative emotions
- Feeling guilty or ashamed
- Decreased interest in things once enjoyed
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you noticed these signs in yourself or someone you care about, what would you do?**

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## **PART 8: THE RECOVERING BRAIN**

The amazing thing about your brain is that it can heal and change—this is called **neuroplasticity**.

### **ACTIVITY 8: HEALING PATHWAYS**

Recovery from addiction takes time as the brain heals and builds new pathways. Match the recovery timeline with what might be happening in the brain:

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Brain Recovery</b>
Days to weeks	New nerve connections start forming
1-3 months	Dopamine levels begin to stabilize
3-6 months	Prefrontal cortex function improves
6-12 months	Stress response system begins to normalize
1-2 years	Brain volume may increase in key areas
2+ years	Brain's reward system sensitivity improves

**What activities might help the brain heal faster during recovery?**

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- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

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## **PART 9: HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES**

Developing healthy ways to feel good and manage stress is key to preventing addiction.

### **ACTIVITY 9: MY COPING TOOLKIT**

Check the healthy coping strategies you already use, and circle ones you'd like to try:

#### **Physical:**

- Exercise or sports
- Walking or hiking
- Dancing
- Yoga or stretching
- Deep breathing
- Getting enough sleep
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Mental:**

- Reading
- Learning new skills
- Solving puzzles
- Setting and achieving goals
- Mindfulness or meditation
- Creative thinking
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Emotional:**

- Talking with friends or family
- Journaling
- Art or creative expression
- Listening to music
- Practicing gratitude
- Helping others
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**My top 3 healthy coping strategies I commit to practicing:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2.

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3.

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## **PART 10: REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What was the most surprising thing you learned about addiction and the brain?

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2. How might understanding the brain science of addiction help someone struggling with addiction?

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3. What healthy activities give you a natural sense of reward or pleasure?

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4. How can you support someone who might be dealing with addiction?

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5. What questions do you still have about addiction and the brain?

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## **COMMITMENT CORNER**

**This week, I commit to:**

1. Practicing at least \_\_\_\_ healthy coping strategies from my toolkit
2. Learning more about how to keep my brain healthy
3. Being more understanding of people who struggle with addiction
4. Talking to \_\_\_\_\_ about what I've learned

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **REMEMBER**

- Addiction changes the brain, but the brain can recover with time and support
  - Anyone can develop addiction, but everyone can also heal
  - Understanding the science of addiction helps reduce shame and stigma
  - Healthy coping skills and support systems are key to prevention
  - Recovery is possible, and many people live healthy lives after addiction
  - Knowledge is power when it comes to protecting your brain
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## **RESOURCES**

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, these resources can help:

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline:** 1-800-662-4357 (24/7, free, confidential)
  - **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741
  - **Local Resources:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **School Counselor:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Trusted Adults:** \_\_\_\_\_
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# **WHY PEOPLE RELAPSE—AND WHAT THAT MEANS**

## **Introduction**

Recovery from addiction is rarely a straight path. Relapse—returning to substance use or addictive behaviors after a period of improvement—is a common part of the recovery journey for many people. Understanding relapse can help reduce shame, improve prevention strategies, and provide hope that recovery is still

possible even after setbacks. This worksheet explores the science of relapse, common triggers, warning signs, and strategies for moving forward.

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## ACTIVITY 1: Understanding the Science of Relapse

**Instructions:** Read the following information about how addiction affects the brain and why relapse happens. Check each statement after reading to confirm understanding.

**Brain Changes:** Addiction causes real changes in brain structure and function, particularly in areas controlling judgment, decision-making, learning, memory, and behavior control.

**Neural Pathways:** Repeated substance use creates powerful neural pathways that don't immediately disappear when someone stops using. These pathways can be triggered years later.

**Chronic Disease Model:** Many experts view addiction as a chronic disease similar to diabetes or hypertension, where relapse rates (40-60%) are actually similar to relapse rates for other chronic conditions.

**Learning Process:** Each recovery attempt builds skills and insights that contribute to eventual long-term recovery, even if relapse occurs.

**Trigger Response:** The brain develops automatic responses to certain triggers (people, places, emotions) that can activate cravings without conscious thought.

**Recovery Timeline:** Different substances affect the brain differently, and healing timelines vary. Some neural pathways may take months or years to significantly rewire.

**Vulnerability Windows:** There are periods of heightened vulnerability to relapse, often at 30-90 days, 6 months, and around one year of sobriety.

### Reflection Questions:

1. How does understanding the brain science of addiction change how you view relapse?
  2. What part of this information was new to you or surprised you?
  3. How might viewing addiction as a chronic condition rather than a moral failing change how we respond to relapse?
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## ACTIVITY 2: Common Relapse Triggers

**Instructions:** Review the common triggers below. Check those that you have experienced or believe might affect you or someone you know.

### External Triggers:

- Being around people who still use substances
- Visiting places associated with past substance use
- Seeing drug/alcohol paraphernalia or advertisements
- Attending celebrations or events where substances are present
- Experiencing significant life changes (new job, move, relationship)
- Having easy access to substances
- Financial stress or windfall (having either too little or too much money)
- Anniversary dates (sobriety dates or trauma dates)

### Internal Triggers:

- Experiencing strong negative emotions (anger, fear, sadness, loneliness)
- Feeling positive emotions (wanting to "celebrate" or feeling overconfident)
- Physical discomfort or pain
- Boredom or lack of structure
- Exhaustion or poor self-care

- Believing you can control usage now ("just one won't hurt")
- Romanticizing past use (remembering only the good times)
- Relationship conflicts or sexual urges

**HALT Triggers:**

- Hungry
- Angry
- Lonely
- Tired

**My Personal Top Triggers:** List the 3-5 triggers from above that you believe pose the greatest risk:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection:** For each of your top triggers, what strategies could help manage or avoid this trigger?

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## ACTIVITY 3: The Stages of Relapse

**Instructions:** Relapse is usually a process, not a single event. Understanding the stages can help with early intervention. Read about each stage and answer the reflection questions.

### Stage 1: Emotional Relapse

You're not thinking about using yet, but emotions and behaviors are setting you up for possible relapse:

- Bottling up emotions
- Isolating from support systems
- Poor self-care (sleep, nutrition, exercise)
- Not attending recovery meetings/therapy
- Focusing on others' problems instead of your own

**Warning signs I've noticed in this stage:**

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### Stage 2: Mental Relapse

Your mind begins to struggle between wanting to use and wanting to stay sober:

- Cravings for substances
- Thinking about people/places associated with past use
- Glamorizing past use, minimizing consequences

- Bargaining (planning "controlled" use)
- Looking for opportunities to relapse
- Planning a relapse

**Warning signs I've noticed in this stage:**

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### **Stage 3: Physical Relapse**

The actual return to substance use:

- Using "just once" or a full return to previous patterns
- Often happens when opportunity meets poor coping skills
- May be accompanied by feelings of powerlessness

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. Which stage of relapse do you find most difficult to recognize in yourself or others?

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2. What interventions could be helpful at each stage?

● Emotional Relapse: \_\_\_\_\_

● Mental Relapse: \_\_\_\_\_

● Physical Relapse: \_\_\_\_\_

3. At what point in this process is it easiest to prevent a full relapse?

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## ACTIVITY 4: My Personal Relapse Warning Signs

**Instructions:** Based on past experiences or what you've learned about yourself, identify your personal warning signs that might indicate you're moving toward relapse.

### Thought Patterns:

- "I've got this under control now."
- "I was never that bad compared to others."
- "I could have just one and stop."
- "No one would know if I used just once."
- "Life is boring/too hard without substances."
- "I deserve a break/reward."
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emotional Signs:

- Increased irritability or restlessness
- Unexplained anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Depression or hopelessness
- Complacency or overconfidence
- Apathy toward recovery
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Behavioral Signs:

- Skipping recovery meetings/therapy
- Reconnecting with people from using days
- Being secretive about whereabouts
- Stopping medication
- Isolating from supportive people
- Poor boundaries

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Less attention to personal care
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**My Earliest Warning Signs:** What are the very first signs that might indicate you're heading toward relapse? These early warnings are the best opportunity for intervention.

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**Who Should Know These Signs:** Who are the trusted people who could help identify these warning signs if you don't notice them yourself?

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# ACTIVITY 5: Relapse Prevention Planning

**Instructions:** Create a personalized plan to help prevent relapse or address it quickly if it occurs.

## Daily Practices for Maintaining Recovery:

List 5 daily activities or practices that support your recovery:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Contact List:

List 3-5 people you can call when you're feeling triggered or at risk:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Professional Resources:

List treatment providers, counselors, or hotlines you can contact:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## High-Risk Situations and Coping Strategies:

Potential High-Risk Situation	Warning Signs	Coping Strategies
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**My Reminder Statements:**

Write 3-5 statements you can read when cravings or triggers arise:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**If Relapse Occurs:**

List specific steps to take if relapse happens:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 6: Understanding Abstinence Violation Effect

**Instructions:** The Abstinence Violation Effect (AVE) describes how a single lapse can lead to a full relapse due to negative thoughts and feelings about the initial slip. Understanding this effect can help prevent a momentary lapse from becoming a complete return to addiction.

### Common AVE Thoughts:

Check any thoughts you've experienced or might experience after a lapse:

- "I've ruined everything."
- "All my recovery work was for nothing."
- "I might as well keep using since I've already failed."
- "I'm weak and will never recover."
- "I've let everyone down."
- "This proves I can't do this."
- "I'm a failure."
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Alternative Responses:

For each checked thought above, write a more balanced alternative response:

"I've ruined everything." → \_\_\_\_\_ "All my recovery work was for nothing." → \_\_\_\_\_ "I might as well keep using since I've already failed." → \_\_\_\_\_ Etc.

### Breaking the AVE Cycle:

List 3 actions you could take immediately after a lapse to prevent it from becoming a full relapse:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3.

---

**Reflection:** How might viewing a lapse as a learning experience rather than a failure change the outcome?

---

---

---

## ACTIVITY 7: Learning from Relapse

**Instructions:** If relapse has occurred, it can become a valuable learning opportunity. Answer these questions to help process the experience constructively.

### Understanding the Relapse:

1. What triggers or warning signs preceded the relapse?

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2. What was happening in your life at that time?

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3. What thoughts or beliefs made using seem like a good option?

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4. What coping skills or resources were you not utilizing?

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5. What did the relapse teach you about your recovery needs?

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### Moving Forward:

1. What will you do differently based on what you learned?

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2. What additional support or resources do you need?

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---

3. How has this experience changed your recovery plan?

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4. What positive recovery skills or insights did you gain before the relapse that you can still use?

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---

**Remember:** A relapse doesn't erase the skills, insights, and healing that occurred during your recovery time. All of that learning remains with you and can be built upon.

---

## **ACTIVITY 8: Supporting Someone Through Relapse**

**Instructions:** If you're supporting someone who has relapsed, these guidelines can help you respond effectively. Check each statement after reading.

- Avoid judgment and shame.** Shame doesn't motivate positive change and often leads to continued use.
- Express concern, not anger.** Use "I" statements to express your feelings: "I'm worried about you" rather than "You've disappointed everyone."
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.** Supporting doesn't mean enabling. Be clear about what you can and cannot do to help.
- Encourage professional help.** Recovery often requires professional support, not just willpower or family intervention.
- Be patient with the process.** Recovery is rarely linear, and multiple attempts may be needed.
- Take care of yourself.** Supporting someone through addiction can be draining. Attend to your own wellbeing and consider support groups like Al-Anon.
- Focus on the person, not the addiction.** Remember that addiction doesn't define the whole person.
- Celebrate all progress.** Acknowledge and reinforce positive steps, however small.

#### **Helpful phrases when someone relapses:**

- "I'm here for you. How can I support you right now?"
- "This doesn't erase the progress you've made."
- "What do you think you need right now to get back on track?"
- "I believe you can move forward from this."
- "Would you like help connecting with your counselor/sponsor/support group?"

#### **Unhelpful phrases to avoid:**

- "How could you do this again?"
- "I thought you were stronger than this."
- "You've let everyone down."
- "I guess your recovery wasn't serious."
- "I can't deal with this anymore."

#### **Reflection:**

1. If supporting someone else, what has been most challenging for you?
- 
-

2. What boundaries do you need to establish or maintain?

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3. What support do you need for yourself?

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## **ACTIVITY 9: Finding Meaning in the Recovery Journey**

**Instructions:** Recovery, including relapse experiences, can lead to significant personal growth and meaning. Reflect on the following questions.

1. What have you learned about yourself through the recovery process?

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2. How has your understanding of addiction and recovery evolved?

---

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3. What strengths have you discovered that you didn't know you had?

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4. How might your experiences help others who are struggling?

---

---

5. What values have become more important to you through this journey?

---

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6. How has recovery (even with setbacks) changed your life goals or direction?

---

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7. What are you grateful for in your recovery journey?

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## Final Thoughts and Affirmations

**Instructions:** Circle the statements that resonate with you, or write your own affirmations in the spaces provided.

- Relapse is an event, not a person. It doesn't define who I am.
- Each day in recovery builds skills that remain, even if relapse occurs.
- Recovery isn't about never falling; it's about learning to get back up.
- I can use this experience to strengthen my recovery, not end it.
- Sharing honestly about struggles reduces their power over me.
- My worth isn't measured by perfect sobriety but by my courage to keep trying.
- Today is a new opportunity to choose recovery.
- I am more than my addiction or my relapse.
- Each attempt at recovery teaches me something valuable.
- My path is my own; I don't need to compare it to others.



---

### Resources for Support:

National Helplines:

- SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

#### Online Support Communities:

- Alcoholics Anonymous: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)
  - Narcotics Anonymous: [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)
  - SMART Recovery: [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org)
  - In The Rooms (online meetings): [www.intherooms.com](http://www.intherooms.com)
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## What Recovery Looks Like

### (And It's Not Just Quitting Drugs)

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#### UNDERSTANDING REAL RECOVERY

Recovery is a journey of healing and growth that involves your whole life—not just stopping substance use. Real recovery means building a life where you're healthy, connected, and pursuing what matters to you.

#### Recovery is about:

- Healing your mind, body, and spirit
- Building healthy relationships
- Discovering who you are beyond substances
- Creating a meaningful life you don't want to escape from
- Learning to handle life's challenges in healthy ways

---

## ACTIVITY 1: THE DIMENSIONS OF RECOVERY

Recovery affects every part of your life. Rate where you are now in each area (1=needs lots of work, 5=doing really well):

### PHYSICAL RECOVERY

\_\_\_ Taking care of my body \_\_\_ Getting enough sleep \_\_\_ Eating nutritious foods  
\_\_\_ Physical activity/exercise \_\_\_ Managing health issues

### EMOTIONAL RECOVERY

\_\_\_ Identifying my feelings \_\_\_ Expressing emotions in healthy ways \_\_\_  
Developing coping skills \_\_\_ Building emotional resilience \_\_\_ Managing stress

### SOCIAL RECOVERY

\_\_\_ Setting healthy boundaries \_\_\_ Building supportive relationships \_\_\_  
Repairing damaged relationships \_\_\_ Finding sober/healthy community \_\_\_  
Communication skills

### MENTAL RECOVERY

\_\_\_ Challenging unhealthy thinking patterns \_\_\_ Developing problem-solving  
skills \_\_\_ Learning about myself and recovery \_\_\_ Making thoughtful decisions  
\_\_\_ Being present in the moment

### SPIRITUAL RECOVERY

\_\_\_ Finding purpose and meaning \_\_\_ Connecting with something bigger than  
myself \_\_\_ Practicing gratitude \_\_\_ Developing values to live by \_\_\_ Finding hope  
for the future

**Looking at your ratings, which areas are strengths for you? Which areas need more focus?**

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## ACTIVITY 2: RECOVERY MYTHS VS. REALITY

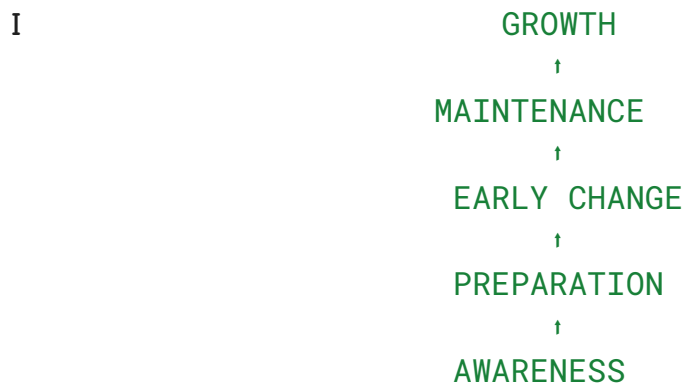
Mark whether each statement is a Myth (M) or Reality (R):

\_\_\_ Recovery means never having fun again \_\_\_ Recovery is a perfect, straight-line process without setbacks \_\_\_ Recovery is only for people with severe addiction problems \_\_\_ Recovery means developing new skills and ways of coping \_\_\_ Once you get sober, all your problems disappear \_\_\_ Recovery often involves learning who you are without substances \_\_\_ Recovery means you can never hang out with your old friends \_\_\_ Recovery is different for each person \_\_\_ Recovery is just about willpower and "just saying no" \_\_\_ Recovery often requires changing environments and habits

---

## THE RECOVERY JOURNEY MAP

Recovery isn't a straight line. It's a journey with ups and downs that typically includes:



**AWARENESS:** Recognizing there's a problem and learning about it

**PREPARATION:** Getting ready for change and building support **EARLY CHANGE:**

Beginning new habits and stopping harmful behaviors **MAINTENANCE:**  
Strengthening recovery and preventing relapse **GROWTH:** Building a fulfilling life  
beyond just "not using"

**Which stage do you think you're in right now? Why?**

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### **ACTIVITY 3: WHAT RECOVERY LOOKS LIKE FOR ME**

Everyone's recovery looks different. What would recovery look like in your life?

#### **Things I want to STOP doing:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Things I want to START doing:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Things I want to CONTINUE doing:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

---

## ACTIVITY 4: RECOVERY SKILLS INVENTORY

Check the recovery skills you already have, and circle the ones you want to develop:

- Identifying triggers
- Managing cravings
- Mindfulness practices
- Stress management
- Healthy communication
- Setting boundaries
- Building support networks
- Conflict resolution
- Emotional regulation
- Relapse prevention planning
- Time management
- Goal setting
- Problem-solving
- Self-care routines
- Asking for help
- Healthy pleasure/fun
- Managing difficult emotions
- Identity exploration

**Pick 3 skills you want to develop. How might you start working on them?**

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## ACTIVITY 5: RECOVERY CAPITAL ASSESSMENT

"Recovery capital" means the resources that support your recovery. The more recovery capital you have, the stronger your recovery can be.

### MY PERSONAL RECOVERY CAPITAL:

- Strengths: \_\_\_\_\_
- Skills: \_\_\_\_\_
- Knowledge: \_\_\_\_\_
- Health: \_\_\_\_\_
- Values: \_\_\_\_\_

### MY RELATIONSHIP RECOVERY CAPITAL:

- Supportive family: \_\_\_\_\_
- Healthy friendships: \_\_\_\_\_
- Recovery community: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mentors/role models: \_\_\_\_\_

### MY COMMUNITY RECOVERY CAPITAL:

- Treatment/support services: \_\_\_\_\_
- Safe housing: \_\_\_\_\_
- Education/work opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_
- Community resources: \_\_\_\_\_

**How could you increase your recovery capital in one area?**

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## ACTIVITY 6: A DAY IN MY RECOVERY

Imagine and describe what a typical day might look like in strong recovery:

**Morning:**

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---

**Afternoon:**

---

---

**Evening:**

---

---

**How is this different from your life before recovery?**

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## **RECOVERY MILESTONES BEYOND SOBRIETY**

Recovery includes many victories beyond just not using substances. Check any you've experienced:

- Sleeping better
- Improved physical health
- More energy
- Clearer thinking
- Better decision-making
- Healthier relationships
- Saving money
- More reliable/responsible
- Greater self-awareness
- New hobbies/interests
- Better emotional control
- Increased self-respect
- More honesty
- Spiritual growth
- Helping others
- Educational progress
- Career development
- Stable housing
- Less legal problems
- More hope for the future

**Which of these would mean the most to you? Are there other milestones not listed that would be important to you?**

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## **ACTIVITY 7: HANDLING RECOVERY CHALLENGES**

Recovery comes with challenges. How might you handle these situations?

**When I experience cravings:**

---

**When I face a triggering situation:**

---

**When I feel like giving up:**

---

**When I experience a setback:**

---

**When old friends pressure me:**

---

**When life feels boring without substances:**

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## **ACTIVITY 8: MY RECOVERY SUPPORT TEAM**

Recovery is not meant to be done alone. Who could be on your support team?

**People I can call when struggling:**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional supports:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Groups/communities:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Crisis resources:**

- National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- Local resource: \_\_\_\_\_

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## RECOVERY IDENTITY VS. USING IDENTITY

USING IDENTITY	RECOVERY IDENTITY
Focused on the next high	Focused on growth and goals
Avoiding feelings	Processing feelings
Isolation	Connection
Secrecy and lies	Honesty and authenticity
Short-term thinking	Future-oriented
Self-centered needs	Balanced relationships
Chaotic lifestyle	Structure and stability
Shame and hiding	Self-acceptance and openness

**What aspects of a recovery identity are you developing?**

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does successful recovery look like to you beyond just not using substances?
  2. What strengths do you already have that will help your recovery?
  3. What's one small step you could take today toward holistic recovery?
  4. How might your life be different in one year if you continue on a recovery path?
  5. What might be the hardest part of recovery for you? How could you prepare for that?
-

## INSPIRATION FROM OTHERS IN RECOVERY

"Recovery didn't make my life perfect. It gave me the clarity to deal with life's challenges without making them worse."

"I thought I was just giving things up, but I ended up gaining so much more—real friends, self-respect, and a future I actually want."

"Recovery isn't about forcing yourself to stop using. It's about building a life where using no longer makes sense."

"The best part of recovery isn't being sober. It's discovering who I really am and what I'm capable of."

Write your own recovery wisdom or motto:

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## MY RECOVERY COMMITMENT

I understand that recovery is a journey that involves my whole life. I commit to:

**Three actions I will take for my holistic recovery this week:**

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---

**I will remember that recovery isn't perfect, and I'll show myself compassion when I face challenges.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## ASPIRE IMPACT NETWORK

*Empowering People. Elevating Business. Creating Impact.*  
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# How Can I Help Someone Who's Struggling With Addiction?

## Understanding, Supporting & Taking Care of Yourself

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### **PART 1: UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION AS A BRAIN CONDITION**

When someone you care about struggles with addiction, it helps to understand what they're experiencing.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: ADDICTION BASICS**

Fill in the blanks with what you know or have learned about addiction:

Addiction is

---

Addiction affects the brain by

---

Some signs of addiction include

---

Recovery from addiction is

---

People with addiction need

---

**Review your answers:** What surprised you about what you wrote? Did you focus more on the person's choices or on addiction as a health condition?

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## **PART 2: WHAT YOU CAN & CAN'T CONTROL**

One of the most important things to understand when helping someone with addiction is the difference between what you can and cannot control.

### **ACTIVITY 2: THE CONTROL CIRCLES**

Draw two circles, one inside the other:

- The inner circle is "Things I CAN Control"
- The outer circle is "Things I CANNOT Control"

Place each of these items in the appropriate circle:

- My own reactions and responses
- Whether they use substances
- How I take care of myself
- Their decision to get help
- Setting my own boundaries
- Their feelings
- How I communicate my concerns
- The consequences of their addiction
- Getting help and support for myself
- Their recovery journey
- Learning about addiction
- Their choices

- How much I care
- Whether they accept help

**What did you notice about this activity?**

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### **PART 3: HOW TO TALK ABOUT ADDICTION**

Talking to someone about their addiction can be difficult, but how you communicate can make a big difference.

#### **ACTIVITY 3: HELPFUL VS. UNHELPFUL COMMUNICATION**

For each statement below, mark whether it's Helpful (H) or Unhelpful (U) when talking to someone with addiction:

- \_\_\_ "You're throwing your life away. Why can't you just stop?"
- \_\_\_ "I've noticed some changes in you lately, and I'm concerned."
- \_\_\_ "If you loved me, you would quit."
- \_\_\_ "I care about you and I'm here to support you when you're ready for help."
- \_\_\_ "You're such a disappointment to everyone."
- \_\_\_ "I know this is really hard. Recovery is possible when you're ready."
- \_\_\_ "I'll always be there to bail you out no matter what you do."
- \_\_\_ "I can't give you money, but I can help you find resources for treatment."
- \_\_\_ "I can see you're in pain, and I'm sorry you're going through this."
- \_\_\_ "Everyone's talking about how messed up you are."

**Now practice writing your own supportive statements:**

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## **PART 4: SUPPORTING RECOVERY VS. ENABLING ADDICTION**

There's a big difference between helping someone recover and accidentally making it easier for them to continue their addiction.

### **ACTIVITY 4: SUPPORT OR ENABLE?**

Mark each action as either Supporting Recovery (S) or Enabling Addiction (E):

- Giving them money whenever they ask
- Listening without judgment when they talk about their struggles
- Making excuses for their behavior to others
- Helping them research treatment options
- Covering up the consequences of their addiction
- Setting clear boundaries about what you will and won't do
- Taking over all their responsibilities
- Offering to go with them to a support group meeting
- Continuing to spend time with them while they're using
- Sharing resources about recovery
- Lying to protect them from consequences
- Taking care of your own wellbeing

**Think about it:** Why might someone enable addiction even when they're trying to help?

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## **PART 5: RECOGNIZING A CRISIS**

Sometimes addiction can lead to dangerous situations where immediate help is needed.

## ACTIVITY 5: CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

Check which signs might indicate someone needs emergency help:

- Passing out or difficulty staying conscious
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Blue lips or fingertips
- Extreme confusion or inability to speak clearly
- Seizures
- Severe vomiting
- Talking about suicide or harming themselves
- Extremely high body temperature with sweating
- Chest pain
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you see these warning signs, what should you do?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Important Phone Numbers:

Emergency: 911

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Local Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Trusted Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 6: SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

When someone you care about has an addiction, setting boundaries is essential for both of you.

### ACTIVITY 6: MY PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Fill in these boundary statements based on what you're comfortable with:

"I care about you, but I will not \_\_\_\_\_"

"I'm here for you, but I need to \_\_\_\_\_"

"I can help by \_\_\_\_\_"

"I cannot help by \_\_\_\_\_"

"If you \_\_\_\_\_, I will need to \_\_\_\_\_"

"I'm willing to \_\_\_\_\_"

"For my own wellbeing, I cannot \_\_\_\_\_"

**Why are boundaries important when helping someone with addiction?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

## **PART 7: TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF**

Supporting someone with addiction can be emotionally draining. Self-care isn't selfish—it's necessary.

### **ACTIVITY 7: MY SELF-CARE PLAN**

Check the self-care activities that might help you when supporting someone with addiction:

#### **Physical Self-Care:**

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating regular, healthy meals
- Physical activity or exercise
- Taking deep breaths when stressed
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Emotional Self-Care:**

- Journaling about your feelings
- Talking to someone you trust
- Crying when you need to
- Setting aside time for activities you enjoy
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Self-Care:**

- Spending time with supportive friends
- Joining a support group for families/friends of people with addiction
- Setting boundaries in relationships
- Asking for help when you need it
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mental Self-Care:**

- Learning about addiction
- Taking breaks from thinking about the situation
- Practicing mindfulness
- Focusing on what you can control
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**My Top 3 Self-Care Commitments:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**8 PART 8: RESOURCES FOR HELP**

You don't have to figure this out alone. There are many resources available for both the person with addiction and those who care about them.

**ACTIVITY 8: BUILDING A RESOURCE LIST**

Research and list resources that could help in your situation:

**For the Person with Addiction:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**For You as a Supporter:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Trusted Adults Who Can Help:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**How to introduce these resources:**

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**PART 9: WORDS MATTER**

The language we use about addiction can either increase stigma or promote healing.

**ACTIVITY 9: CHANGING THE CONVERSATION**

Replace these stigmatizing terms with more supportive, person-first language:

Instead of "addict," say:

---

Instead of "clean" or "dirty," say:

---

Instead of "junkie," say:

---

Instead of "alcoholic," say:

---

Instead of "abuse," say:

---

Instead of "weakness" or "lack of willpower," say:

---

**Why does language matter when talking about addiction?**

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## **PART 10: HOPE AND RECOVERY**

Recovery from addiction is possible, and many people do recover with proper support.

### **ACTIVITY 10: SIGNS OF HOPE**

What are some signs that might indicate someone is moving toward recovery?

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

**How might you celebrate small steps toward recovery?**

---

---

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## **PART 11: REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What is the most important thing you've learned about helping someone with addiction?

---

2. What might be the hardest part of supporting someone with addiction for you personally?

---

3. How can you take care of your own emotional health while supporting someone else?

---

4. What resources or support do you need that you don't currently have?

---

5. What gives you hope when dealing with a difficult situation like addiction?

---

---

## **COMMITMENT CORNER**

### **I commit to:**

1. Learning more about addiction by

---

2. Taking care of myself by

---

3. Communicating more effectively by

---

4. Setting healthy boundaries by

---

5. Getting support for myself by

---

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### **REMEMBER**

- You didn't cause someone else's addiction
  - You can't control or cure their addiction
  - You can care for them and yourself
  - Recovery is possible, but it's their journey
  - You deserve support too
  - Small actions can make a big difference
  - Setting boundaries is an act of love
  - Hope is powerful medicine
- 

### **BONUS ACTIVITY**

Write a letter to yourself expressing compassion for the challenges of supporting someone with addiction. What would you say to a friend in your position? How can you show yourself the same kindness?

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# BREAKING THE CYCLE: I'M NOT JUST MY FAMILY'S STORY

## Youth Empowerment Worksheet

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### UNDERSTANDING FAMILY PATTERNS

Families pass down many things across generations:

- Values and beliefs
- Communication styles
- Ways of handling emotions
- Relationship patterns
- Habits and traditions
- Approaches to problems

Some patterns are positive and strengthen us, while others can limit our growth. Understanding these patterns is the first step to choosing which ones to carry forward and which ones to leave behind.

**Important:** Your family story influences but does not determine your future. You have the power to choose your own path.

---

### ACTIVITY 1: MAPPING MY FAMILY PATTERNS

**Instructions:** Think about patterns you've noticed in your family across generations. Check any that seem familiar:

**COMMUNICATION PATTERNS:**

- Avoiding difficult conversations
- Expressing love through actions rather than words
- Raising voices during disagreements
- Using humor to deflect serious topics
- Not discussing feelings openly
- Frequent criticism or put-downs
- Supportive and encouraging words
- Silent treatment when upset

**RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS:**

- Staying in unhealthy relationships
- Difficulty with trust or closeness
- Strong, supportive family bonds
- Conflicting frequently but making up quickly
- Cutting people off when there's conflict
- Putting others' needs before your own
- Difficulty setting boundaries
- High expectations and pressure to succeed

**COPING PATTERNS:**

- Using substances to handle stress
- Working extremely hard to prove worth
- Turning to faith or spirituality
- Avoiding problems until they become crises
- Using creative outlets for emotions
- Becoming isolated when struggling
- Seeking help and support from others
- Using anger to mask other feelings

**Reflection:** Which patterns have you noticed most strongly in your family?

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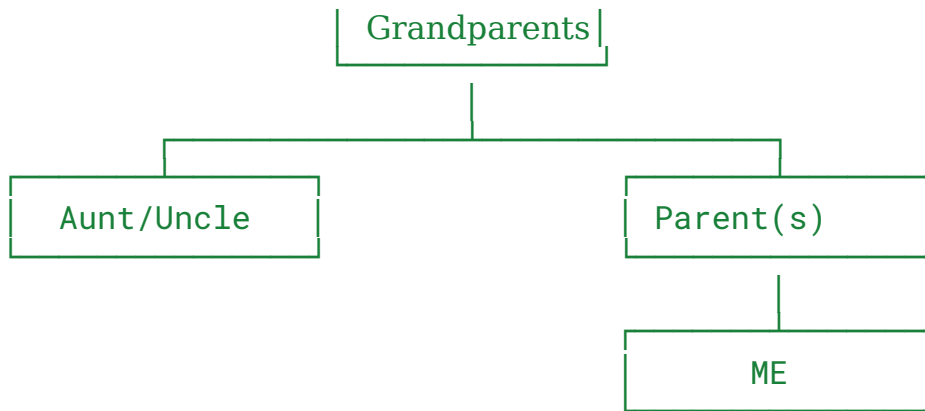
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**ACTIVITY 2: MY FAMILY TREE OF PATTERNS**

**Instructions:** Create a simple family tree, noting key patterns for each person or branch of your family.

I 



For each person or branch, note:

- Strengths they demonstrate
- Challenges they face
- Patterns they seem to repeat

**My observations about patterns across generations:**

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### ACTIVITY 3: IDENTIFYING MY INHERITANCE

**Instructions:** Sort the patterns you've observed into those you want to keep and those you want to change.

**POSITIVE PATTERNS I WANT TO CONTINUE:**

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---
4. 

---

**CHALLENGING PATTERNS I WANT TO CHANGE:**

1. 

---

2.

3.

4.

**Why these patterns matter to me:**

---

---

---

## **ACTIVITY 4: MY PERSONAL STRENGTHS INVENTORY**

**Instructions:** Check the strengths you already have that can help you break unhealthy cycles:

Resilience - bouncing back from difficulties  Self-awareness - understanding my thoughts and feelings  Adaptability - adjusting to new situations  Critical thinking - questioning assumptions  Empathy - understanding others' perspectives  Courage - facing challenges despite fear  Creativity - finding new solutions  Persistence - continuing despite obstacles  Hope - believing in possibilities  Self-regulation - managing emotions  Connection - building supportive relationships  Resourcefulness - finding help when needed

**Additional strengths I have:**

---

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---

## ACTIVITY 5: CYCLE BREAKERS IN MY LIFE

**Instructions:** Think about people you know who have broken unhealthy family cycles. These could be relatives, friends, teachers, or people from books, movies, or history.

### CYCLE BREAKER 1:

Who are they? \_\_\_\_\_ What cycle did they break?  
\_\_\_\_\_ How did they do it? \_\_\_\_\_ What can I learn  
from them? \_\_\_\_\_

### CYCLE BREAKER 2:

Who are they? \_\_\_\_\_ What cycle did they break?  
\_\_\_\_\_ How did they do it? \_\_\_\_\_ What can I learn  
from them? \_\_\_\_\_

**What these examples show me about breaking cycles:**

---

---

---

## ACTIVITY 6: MY VALUES COMPASS

**Instructions:** Your personal values can guide your choices as you create your own path.

1. Circle the 5-7 values that are most important to YOU (not what others expect):

<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Freedom</b>	<b>Creativity</b>
Family	Learning	Courage	Faith
Independence	Compassion	Justice	Loyalty
Respect	Adventure	Security	Peace
Connection	Achievement	Health	Joy
Service	Authenticity	Balance	Forgiveness

2. For each value you circled, write how it might guide you in breaking unhealthy cycles:

Value: \_\_\_\_\_ How it guides me: \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_ How it guides me: \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_ How it guides me: \_\_\_\_\_

(Continue for all values you selected)

---

## ACTIVITY 7: CREATING NEW PATTERNS

**Instructions:** For each challenging pattern you want to change, develop a new, healthier alternative.

### PATTERN 1:

Challenging pattern: \_\_\_\_\_ New pattern I want to create:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Small steps I can take to practice this new pattern:



### PATTERN 2:

Challenging pattern: \_\_\_\_\_ New pattern I want to create:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Small steps I can take to practice this new pattern:





---

**PATTERN 3:**

Challenging pattern: \_\_\_\_\_ New pattern I want to create:

\_\_\_\_\_ Small steps I can take to practice this new pattern:



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**ACTIVITY 8: BUILDING MY SUPPORT NETWORK**

**Instructions:** Breaking cycles is easier with support. Identify people who can help you on this journey.

**PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT MY GROWTH:**



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**COMMUNITIES THAT ENCOURAGE NEW PATTERNS:**



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**RESOURCES I CAN ACCESS:**



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**WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH, I CAN:**



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**ACTIVITY 9: VISUALIZING MY FUTURE STORY**

**Instructions:** Imagine yourself 10 years in the future, having successfully broken the unhealthy cycles you identified. Write or draw what your life looks like.

**IN MY FUTURE:**

- How I handle emotions: \_\_\_\_\_
- How I communicate with others: \_\_\_\_\_
- How I respond to challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

- My relationships look like: \_\_\_\_\_
- My daily habits include: \_\_\_\_\_
- I've overcome: \_\_\_\_\_
- I'm proud that I: \_\_\_\_\_

**What has to happen to make this vision real?**

---

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## **ACTIVITY 10: MY CYCLE-BREAKING PLAN**

**Instructions:** Create a practical plan for breaking unhealthy cycles and building your own story.

**SHORT-TERM STEPS (Next 3 months):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDIUM-TERM GOALS (Next 1-2 years):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**LONG-TERM VISION (5+ years):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES AND HOW I'LL HANDLE THEM:**

Obstacle: \_\_\_\_\_ My strategy: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle: \_\_\_\_\_ My strategy: \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW I'LL CELEBRATE PROGRESS:**

---

---

---

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. What parts of your family story are you grateful for?

---

---

2. What parts are you ready to rewrite?

---

---

3. What new chapters do you want to add to your own story?

---

---

4. How might breaking unhealthy cycles affect future generations?

---

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---

## REMINDERS FOR THE JOURNEY:

- **Breaking cycles takes time.** Be patient with yourself.
  - **Setbacks are normal.** When you slip into old patterns, it's a chance to learn, not a failure.
  - **Small changes matter.** Every new choice creates ripples through generations.
  - **You deserve support.** Seeking help shows strength, not weakness.
  - **Your story is still being written.** Each day is a new page.
  - **You carry your ancestors' strengths** as well as their struggles.
  - **You don't have to be perfect** to make things better.
- 

## MY COMMITMENT TO MY STORY:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognize that while I've been shaped by my family's story, I am the author of my own life. I commit to honoring the positive patterns from my past while bravely creating new, healthier patterns for my future.

One key cycle I'm committed to breaking is: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## REMEMBER:

"Heritage is what we receive. Legacy is what we leave."

**You have the power to transform your family story.**

---

# WHAT DO I REALLY WANT OUT OF LIFE?

## Introduction

One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is "What do I really want out of life?" Surprisingly, many people spend more time planning vacations than planning their life's direction. This worksheet is designed to help you explore your deepest values, priorities, and aspirations. By clarifying what truly matters to you, you can make more intentional choices and design a life that feels meaningful and fulfilling.

---

## ACTIVITY 1: Life Domains Assessment

**Instructions:** Rate your current satisfaction in each life domain from 1-10 (1 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied). Then note how important each area is to you (H = high, M = medium, L = low).

Life Domain	Current Satisfaction (1-10)	Importance (H/M/L)	Brief Notes
Physical Health & Wellbeing			
Mental/Emotional Health			
Family Relationships			
Friendships			
Romantic Relationships			
Career/Work			
Financial Security			
Personal Growth			
Education/Learning			
Spirituality/Faith			
Recreation/Leisure			
Community/Belonging			
Purpose/Meaning			
Living Environment			
Creative Expression			
Independence/Autonomy			

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Which areas have the largest gap between importance and satisfaction?

---

2. Which areas are most satisfying to you currently?

---

3. Are there any surprises in your ratings?

---

4. If you could focus on improving just two domains in the next six months, which would make the biggest difference in your overall life satisfaction?

---

---

## ACTIVITY 2: Core Values Exploration

**Instructions:** From the list below, circle 10 values that resonate most strongly with you. Then narrow to your top 5, and finally rank your top 3.

Achievement Adventure Authenticity Balance Beauty Belonging Challenge  
Comfort Compassion Connection Contribution Courage Creativity Curiosity  
Dependability Dignity Discipline Diversity Education Equality Excellence Faith  
Family Financial Security Freedom Friendship Fun Generosity Growth Happiness

Harmony Health Honesty Honor Humor Independence Innovation Integrity  
Intelligence Justice Kindness Knowledge Leadership Learning Love Loyalty  
Meaning Mindfulness Nature Openness Optimism Order Passion Peace  
Perseverance Play Pleasure Power Prestige Privacy

Purpose Recognition Reliability Respect Responsibility Risk-taking Safety Self-  
control Self-expression Self-respect Service Simplicity Spirituality Stability Status  
Success Sustainability Tradition Tranquility Trust Truth Understanding

Uniqueness Usefulness Variety Wealth Well-being Wisdom Work Ethic Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

**My Top 5 Values:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**For each of your top 3 values, answer: Value 1:**

\_\_\_\_\_ What does this value mean to you personally?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is this value currently expressed in your life?

\_\_\_\_\_

How could you honor this value more fully?

\_\_\_\_\_

Value 2: \_\_\_\_\_ What does this value mean to you personally?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is this value currently expressed in your life?

\_\_\_\_\_

How could you honor this value more fully?

\_\_\_\_\_

Value 3: \_\_\_\_\_ What does this value mean to you personally?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is this value currently expressed in your life?

---

How could you honor this value more fully?

---

---

## **ACTIVITY 3: Life Vision Exploration**

**Instructions:** Take time to imagine different possibilities for your life. Answer these questions thoughtfully to help clarify what you truly want.

### **Achievement & Contribution**

1. What accomplishments would make you feel proud and fulfilled?

---

2. How do you want to contribute to others or make a difference?

---

3. What skills or talents would you like to develop fully?

---

### **Lifestyle & Wellbeing**

4. Describe your ideal daily routine and living environment.

---

5. What activities or practices would support your optimal physical and mental health?

---

6. How much structure vs. freedom do you want in your life?

---

### **Relationships & Community**

7. What qualities do you want in your closest relationships?

---

8. What type of community do you want to be part of?

---

9. How do you want to be remembered by the people in your life?

---

### **Growth & Meaning**

10. What gives your life a sense of meaning or purpose?

---

11. What do you want to learn or understand better?

---

12. How do you want to grow or develop as a person?

---

**Synthesis:** Based on your answers above, write a brief description of what you want your life to look like in 5-10 years.

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## ACTIVITY 4: The Regret Minimization Framework

**Instructions:** This exercise helps clarify what's truly important by considering what you might regret NOT doing in your life.

### Looking Back from Age 80

Imagine yourself at age 80, looking back on your life. Answer these questions from that perspective:

1. What would you regret not having experienced or tried?

---

---

2. What relationships would you regret not having nurtured?

---

---

3. What goals or dreams would you regret having abandoned?

---

---

4. What skills or knowledge would you regret not having developed?

---

---

5. What contributions would you regret not having made?

---

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**Key Insights:** What important themes emerge from this exercise?

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**Immediate Implications:** Based on these potential regrets, what 2-3 changes or decisions feel most urgent now?

---

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## ACTIVITY 5: Personal Mission Statement

**Instructions:** A personal mission statement captures your core purpose and can guide your decisions. Use the prompts below to develop yours.

### Components to Consider:

1. Who do you want to be? (character, qualities, values)

---

2. What do you want to do? (contributions, accomplishments)

---

3. What principles or beliefs will guide you?

---

4. Who or what matters most to you?

---

5. What gifts or strengths do you want to develop and share?

---

**Draft Personal Mission Statement:** (Combine elements from above into 2-3 sentences that capture your core purpose)

---

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## ACTIVITY 6: Barriers & Limiting Beliefs

**Instructions:** Identify internal and external barriers that might prevent you from creating the life you want.

### External Barriers:

What circumstances, resources, or relationships might make it challenging to achieve what you want?

---

---

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For each external barrier, what is one step you could take to address or work around it?

---

---

### Internal Barriers:

What fears, limiting beliefs, or habits might hold you back?

---

---

---

For each internal barrier, how might you challenge or overcome it?

---

---

### "Should" vs. "Want" Analysis:

List things you pursue because you think you "should" (external expectations):

---

---

List things you pursue because you genuinely want to (internal motivation):

---

---

How might you align more of your life with your genuine wants?

---

---

---

## **ACTIVITY 7: Decision-Making Framework**

**Instructions:** Create a personal framework for making important life decisions.

## Values Alignment Check:

When facing a decision, ask:

- Does this option align with my top values of:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Purpose Advancement:

- Does this choice move me toward or away from my mission of:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Regret Minimization:

- Will I regret doing this, or regret NOT doing this?
- Will this matter in 5 years? 10 years?

## Energy Assessment:

- Does this opportunity energize me or drain me?
- Does it involve people who energize or drain me?

## Practice Decision:

Think of a current decision you're facing. Apply the framework above to help clarify your choice.

Decision I'm considering:

\_\_\_\_\_

Analysis using my framework:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 8: Life Buckets Visualization

**Instructions:** This exercise helps you allocate your limited time and energy across different areas of life.

Imagine you have 100 units of time/energy to distribute across your life. How would you ideally allocate them?

Life Bucket	Current %	Ideal %	Gap	Ideas to Shift
-------------	-----------	---------	-----	----------------

Career/Work				
Relationships				
Health/Self-Care				
Learning/Growth				
Recreation/Play				
Spirituality/Inner Life				
Service/Contribution				
Financial Management				
Home/Environment				
Other: _____				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Where are the biggest gaps between your current and ideal allocation?

---

2. What one shift would create the most positive impact in your life?

---

3. What would you need to reduce or eliminate to make room for what matters more?

---



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## **ACTIVITY 9: Life Experiments Design**

**Instructions:** Design small experiments to test different directions or changes that align with what you want in life.

### **Experiment 1:**

One aspect of life I want to explore or change:

---

Small experiment I could try (2-4 weeks):

---

What I hope to learn from this experiment:

---

How I'll measure success:

---

**Experiment 2:**

One aspect of life I want to explore or change:

---

Small experiment I could try (2-4 weeks):

---

What I hope to learn from this experiment:

---

How I'll measure success:

---

**Experiment 3:**

One aspect of life I want to explore or change:

---

Small experiment I could try (2-4 weeks):

---

What I hope to learn from this experiment:

---

How I'll measure success:

---

---

## ACTIVITY 10: Action Plan & Commitment

**Instructions:** Create a concrete plan to begin moving toward what you really want in life.

### Top Life Priorities:

Based on all previous exercises, my top 3-5 priorities are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Short-Term Actions (Next 30 Days):

What specific steps will you take in the next month?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Medium-Term Actions (3-6 Months):**

What will you work toward in the coming months?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Support & Accountability:**

Who can support you in this journey?

---

How will you track your progress?

---

How will you hold yourself accountable?

---

**Renewal Practice:**

How and when will you revisit and refine what you want?

---

**My Commitment:** I commit to taking these steps toward creating a life that reflects what I truly want and value:

---

---

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Final Reflections

**Instructions:** Answer these final questions to integrate your insights.

1. What were the most important insights you gained from these exercises?

---

---

2. What surprised you about what you really want?

---

---

3. What is one small step you can take today to begin moving toward what you want?

---

---

4. How will you remind yourself of what matters most when daily life gets busy?

---

---

5. What quote or personal mantra could help guide you toward your vision?

---

---

### Remember:

- Your definition of a meaningful life is personal and may change over time
- Small, consistent actions aligned with your values create powerful momentum
- Periodic reassessment keeps you on course as you grow and change

- The goal isn't perfection, but increasing alignment between your daily choices and what truly matters to you
- 

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# The Difference Between Motivation and Willpower

## Understanding Your Internal Driving Forces

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### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

**MOTIVATION:** The desire and reasons that drive you to take action

- Based on your "why" - your purpose and values
- Connected to excitement and inspiration
- Comes and goes naturally
- Feels like "I want to do this"

**WILLPOWER:** The mental strength to resist temptations and stick with difficult tasks

- Based on self-discipline and determination
  - Connected to focus and persistence
  - Limited daily supply that can be depleted
  - Feels like "I will do this even though it's hard"
- 

## **ACTIVITY 1: MOTIVATION VS. WILLPOWER SCENARIOS**

For each scenario, mark whether it mainly involves Motivation (M), Willpower (W), or Both (B):

\_\_\_ Studying for a test in your favorite subject \_\_\_ Continuing to practice basketball when you're tired \_\_\_ Saying no to friends who want you to skip school \_\_\_ Working on a project about something you're passionate about \_\_\_ Getting out of bed early when you don't feel like it \_\_\_ Choosing fruit instead of candy when you're hungry \_\_\_ Helping someone because it makes you feel good \_\_\_ Finishing your chores before playing video games \_\_\_ Standing up for someone even when it's scary \_\_\_ Completing homework when you'd rather be on your phone

---

## ACTIVITY 2: MY MOTIVATION SOURCES

Different things motivate different people. Check the sources of motivation that work best for you:

Achieving goals I set for myself  Recognition from others  Learning new things  Making a difference for others  Being part of a team  Competing and improving  Creating something new  Earning rewards  Following my values  Overcoming challenges  Feeling good about myself  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**My top 3 motivation sources:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**For a current goal, how could I increase my motivation using these sources?**

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## ACTIVITY 3: MY WILLPOWER CAPACITY

Willpower is like a muscle that can be strengthened but also gets tired with use. Rate your willpower strength in these areas (1=weak, 5=strong):

\_\_\_ Focusing on tasks when distracted \_\_\_ Controlling emotional reactions \_\_\_  
Resisting peer pressure \_\_\_ Sticking with difficult tasks \_\_\_ Delaying gratification  
\_\_\_ Maintaining healthy habits \_\_\_ Avoiding procrastination \_\_\_ Managing  
technology use \_\_\_ Following through on commitments \_\_\_ Getting started on  
challenging tasks

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

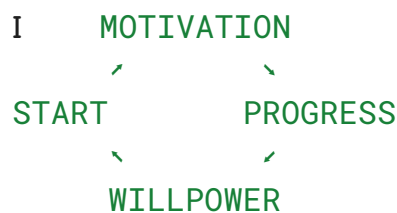
**My strongest willpower area:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My weakest willpower area:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

## THE MOTIVATION-WILLPOWER CYCLE

Motivation and willpower work together in a cycle:



- **START:** Motivation helps you begin
- **PROGRESS:** Willpower helps you continue when motivation fades
- **RENEWED MOTIVATION:** Progress creates new motivation
- **CONTINUED PROGRESS:** Strengthened motivation reduces the need for willpower

**When this cycle breaks down for me, it's usually because:**

---

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## ACTIVITY 4: WHEN MOTIVATION FADES

Everyone experiences times when motivation disappears. What depletes your motivation?

Not seeing progress  Feeling overwhelmed  Losing sight of your "why"  Negative self-talk  Comparing to others  Burnout/exhaustion  Setbacks or failures  Lack of support  Boredom  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**For each factor you checked, write one strategy to address it:**

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## **ACTIVITY 5: WILLPOWER DRAINS AND REFILLS**

Willpower is a limited resource that gets used up during the day.

**Things that drain my willpower:**



**Things that help restore my willpower:**



## ACTIVITY 6: MOTIVATION BOOSTERS

When your motivation is low, try these boosters. Check 5 you want to try:

Break tasks into smaller steps  Connect with your deeper "why"  Create a visual reminder of your goal  Talk to someone who believes in you  Watch/read something inspiring  Remember past successes  Imagine how you'll feel after completing the task  Make the task more enjoyable (music, company, rewards)  Track and celebrate small progress  Change your environment  Take a short break to reset  Focus on the next small step, not the whole journey

**My top 3 motivation boosters to try this week:**

1.

2.

3.

## ACTIVITY 7: WILLPOWER STRATEGIES

Since willpower is limited, successful people use strategies to conserve it. Check the strategies you want to try:

**Environment Design:** Remove temptations from your space  **Implementation Intentions:** Create specific if-then plans ("If X happens, I'll do Y")  **Habit Stacking:** Connect new habits to existing ones  **Decision Reduction:** Make fewer decisions to preserve willpower  **Temptation Bundling:** Pair something challenging with something enjoyable  **Social Accountability:** Tell others about your commitments  **Pre-commitment:** Make decisions in advance when willpower is strong  **Mindfulness:** Notice urges without automatically acting on them  **Self-compassion:** Treat yourself kindly after willpower failures  **Energy Management:** Take care of physical needs (sleep, food, exercise)

**Choose 2 strategies and describe how you'll use them:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

---

## MOTIVATION & WILLPOWER IN ACTION

### CASE STUDY: ALEX'S HOMEWORK CHALLENGE

**SITUATION:** Alex needs to finish a big science project but keeps procrastinating.

**USING JUST MOTIVATION:** Alex thinks about how interesting the topic is and watches videos about it to get excited. This helps for a day, but then motivation fades.

**USING JUST WILLPOWER:** Alex forces himself to work on it even though he doesn't want to. He makes some progress but gets exhausted and eventually gives up.

**USING BOTH EFFECTIVELY:**

1. Alex connects with his motivation (getting a good grade, interest in the subject)
2. He breaks the project into smaller steps (willpower conservation)
3. He removes distractions from his study space (environment design)
4. When motivation fades, he uses willpower to keep going
5. After making progress, he feels motivated again
6. He celebrates small wins to boost motivation further

**What approach do you typically use? How could you balance motivation and willpower better?**

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## ACTIVITY 8: MY MOTIVATION-WILLPOWER PLAN

Choose a current goal or challenge you're working on:

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My "why" (deep motivation for this goal):

---

---

How I'll break this down into smaller steps:



---



---



---

How I'll set up my environment for success:

---

---

What I'll do when motivation is low:

---

---

How I'll conserve and strengthen my willpower:

---

---

How I'll celebrate progress:

---

---

---

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When do you tend to rely more on motivation? When do you rely more on willpower?
  2. How does your motivation change throughout different projects or goals?
  3. What activities or goals feel like they take the most willpower for you?
  4. How might understanding the difference between motivation and willpower help you achieve your goals?
  5. What's one way you could help rebuild motivation when it fades?
- 

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Both motivation and willpower are valuable tools
  - Motivation gets you started; willpower keeps you going
  - Motivation is renewable but inconsistent
  - Willpower is limited but can be strengthened
  - The smartest approach uses both strategically
  - Setting up your environment can reduce the need for willpower
  - Breaking goals into smaller steps helps maintain motivation
  - Progress creates new motivation in a positive cycle
- 

## MY COMMITMENT

This week, I commit to:

**Using these motivation strategies:**



**Using these willpower strategies:**



I'll check my progress on: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **ASPIRE IMPACT NETWORK**

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# What Drives Me? Discovering Internal Motivation

## Finding Your Inner Engine & Sustainable Drive

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### **PART 1: EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL MOTIVATION**

**External motivation** comes from outside yourself—rewards, punishments, or what others think. **Internal motivation** comes from within—your values, interests, and what genuinely matters to you.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: MOTIVATION SORTING**

For each of these motivators, mark whether it's primarily External (E) or Internal (I):

- Getting good grades to earn a reward
- Learning something because you're curious about it
- Helping others because it feels meaningful to you
- Doing something to avoid getting in trouble
- Working toward a goal that you personally care about
- Trying to impress other people
- Feeling a sense of accomplishment when you improve
- Doing something because your friends are doing it
- Working hard because you value doing your best
- Participating to win a prize or recognition

**Think about your own life. List 3 things you do mainly from external motivation:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Now list 3 things you do mainly from internal motivation:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Which list was easier to complete? Why do you think that is?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **▮ PART 2: DISCOVERING YOUR CORE DRIVERS**

We all have different things that naturally energize and motivate us. Understanding your unique drivers can help you tap into deeper motivation.

## ACTIVITY 2: MOTIVATION DETECTIVE

Think about times when you felt highly motivated and energized.  
Answer these questions:

**When do you lose track of time because you're so engaged in what you're doing?**

---

---

**What activities make you feel strong, capable, or "in your element"?**

---

---

**What topics or issues do you find yourself naturally curious about?**

---

---

**What problems or challenges do you enjoy solving?**

---

---

**What kind of difference do you want to make in the world?**

---

---

**Looking at your answers, circle key words or themes that appear multiple times.**

**Based on these patterns, my core internal drivers might be:**

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## **▮** PART 3: THE MOTIVATION EQUATION

Motivation can be understood through a simple equation:

**MOTIVATION = VALUE × EXPECTANCY × SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

### ACTIVITY 3: YOUR MOTIVATION EQUATION

Think about something you want to accomplish but are struggling to stay motivated for.

**My goal:**

---

Rate each component from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high):

**Value: How meaningful is this to me personally? \_\_\_\_**

● Why I rated it this way:

---

● How I could increase the value:

---

**Expectancy: How confident am I that I can succeed? \_\_\_\_**

● Why I rated it this way:

---

● How I could increase my confidence:

---

**Environment: How supportive is my situation for achieving this? \_\_\_\_**

● Why I rated it this way:

---

● How I could improve my environment:

---

**Looking at your lowest score, what specific changes could you make to boost your motivation?**

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---

## **PART 4: MOTIVATION KEYS**

Research shows that three key psychological needs fuel internal motivation when they're met:

- **Autonomy:** Feeling you have choices and control over what you do
- **Competence:** Feeling capable and seeing yourself improve
- **Connection:** Feeling a sense of belonging and that what you do matters to others

### **ACTIVITY 4: MY MOTIVATION KEYS**

Rate how well each need is currently being met in your life from 1-10:

**Autonomy:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Competence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Connection:** \_\_\_\_\_

For your lowest-rated need, brainstorm ways to strengthen it:

My lowest-rated need is:

---

Ways I could strengthen this need:



---



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For your highest-rated need, how could you use this strength to boost your motivation?

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## **PART 5: PURPOSE-POWERED MOTIVATION**

Having a sense of purpose—understanding why what you do matters—is one of the strongest forms of internal motivation.

### **ACTIVITY 5: FINDING YOUR WHY**

Choose an area of your life where you'd like to feel more motivated:

- School
- A particular subject or skill

- Health/fitness
- Relationships
- A hobby or interest
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Area I chose:**

---

Now dig deeper to find your personal purpose by answering these "why" questions:

**Why does this matter to me?**

---

**Why is that important?**

---

**Why would achieving this make a difference in my life or others' lives?**

---

**Why is this connected to what I value?**

---

**My purpose statement for this area:**

---

---

Create a visual reminder of this purpose (draw a symbol, write a phrase, or find an image) that you can look at when your motivation is low.

[Space for drawing/writing]

## **PART 6: OVERCOMING MOTIVATION BLOCKS**

Sometimes our own thoughts and beliefs can block our internal motivation.

### **ACTIVITY 6: BREAKING THROUGH BLOCKS**

Check any thought patterns that sometimes block your motivation:

- "I'm not good enough to succeed at this"
- "This is too hard or overwhelming"
- "I don't see the point of doing this"
- "I'll probably fail anyway"
- "I have to be perfect or it's not worth trying"
- "I don't have what it takes"
- "No one cares if I do this or not"
- "I can't focus or stick with things"
- "Other people are naturally better at this than me"
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose one blocking thought and reframe it into a more motivating thought:

**Blocking thought:**

---

**Reframed thought:**

---

**How would believing this new thought change your motivation?**

---

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## **PART 7: MOTIVATION STYLES**

People are motivated in different ways. Understanding your motivation style can help you set up situations that naturally energize you.

### **ACTIVITY 7: MY MOTIVATION STYLE**

Check the statements that sound most like you:

#### **Achievement-Oriented:**

- I'm energized by accomplishing goals and seeing progress
- I like to challenge myself and beat my personal best
- Crossing things off my to-do list feels satisfying
- I notice when I'm improving at something

#### **Connection-Oriented:**

- I'm motivated when working with others toward a shared goal
- Making a difference for other people energizes me
- I enjoy collaborating and bouncing ideas off others
- I work harder when I feel part of a community or team

**Learning-Oriented:**

- I'm driven by curiosity and figuring things out
- I enjoy becoming knowledgeable about topics that interest me
- Developing new skills and abilities excites me
- I like understanding how and why things work

**Creative-Oriented:**

- I'm motivated by expressing myself and my ideas
- Creating something new or unique energizes me
- I enjoy finding innovative solutions to problems
- I'm driven to make or build things my own way

**Based on my checks, my primary motivation style seems to be:**

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**How could I use this style to boost my motivation in challenging areas?**

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## **PART 8: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE MOTIVATION**

Internal motivation works best when it's supported by good habits and systems.

### **ACTIVITY 8: MY MOTIVATION SYSTEM**

Design a personal system to support your motivation for an important goal:

**My goal:**

---

**Small, specific first step I can take:**

---

**How I'll track my progress:**

---

**How I'll celebrate small wins:**

---

**Potential obstacles and how I'll handle them:**

● Obstacle: \_\_\_\_\_ → Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_

● Obstacle: \_\_\_\_\_ → Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Who can support me and how:**

---

**How I'll remind myself of my purpose:**

---

**My commitment (when, where, how often):**

---

**How I'll restart if I get off track:**

---

---

**PART 9: ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

Motivation requires energy. Understanding what drains and recharges your energy can help you maintain motivation.

**ACTIVITY 9: ENERGY AUDIT**

List activities, people, or situations that:

**Energize me:**

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

**Drain my energy:**

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

**Based on this audit, how could I arrange my day to maximize motivation?**

---

---

**One energy-draining thing I could reduce or eliminate:**

---

**One energizing thing I could add or increase:**

---

---

## **PART 10: REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. When have you felt most internally motivated in your life? What was different about that situation?

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2. What's the difference in how it feels when you do something from internal vs. external motivation?

---

3. How might understanding your internal drivers change how you approach school, hobbies, or other activities?

---

4. What's one area where shifting from external to internal motivation could make a positive difference?

---

5. Who is someone you know who seems to have strong internal motivation? What can you learn from them?

---

---

## **COMMITMENT CORNER**

**This week, I commit to:**

1. Identifying at least \_\_\_\_ activities that naturally energize me
2. Connecting one school or responsibility to my personal values or interests
3. Practicing my motivation reframe when I notice blocking thoughts
4. Creating a visual reminder of my purpose for \_\_\_\_\_
5. Sharing what I've learned about my motivation style with \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **REMEMBER**

- Internal motivation is more powerful and sustainable than external motivation
  - Everyone has natural internal drivers—the key is discovering yours
  - Connecting tasks to your values and purpose boosts motivation
  - Small wins build momentum and confidence
  - Your environment and mindset can either support or block motivation
  - Energy management is as important as time management
  - It's normal for motivation to fluctuate—the key is knowing how to rebuild it
- 

## **BONUS CHALLENGE**

For one week, keep a "Motivation Journal." Each day, record:

1. One thing you did from internal motivation
  2. How it felt compared to externally motivated tasks
  3. What you noticed about your energy and engagement
  4. Any patterns or insights about what truly drives you
- 

*Created by Aspire Impact Network | [www.aspireimpactnetwork.com](http://www.aspireimpactnetwork.com)  
#AspireImpact #EmpowerWithAspire #RecoveryMatters*

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# WHEN I FEEL POWERLESS: WHAT CAN I STILL CONTROL?

## Youth Empowerment Worksheet

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### UNDERSTANDING POWERLESSNESS AND CONTROL

Everyone feels powerless sometimes. This feeling might come when:

- Things happen that you didn't choose
- Others make decisions that affect you
- Life circumstances seem overwhelming
- The future feels uncertain or scary

Even in these situations, you still have power over certain things in your life. Learning to focus on what you CAN control helps you feel stronger and more capable, even during difficult times.

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### ACTIVITY 1: RECOGNIZING POWERLESSNESS

**Instructions:** Think about situations where you've felt powerless. Check any that you've experienced:

- Family changes (moves, divorce, new family members)
- School problems (difficult classes, bullying, transitions)
- Friend/relationship issues (conflicts, rejection, peer pressure)
- Health challenges (illness, injury, mental health struggles)
- Community or world events (pandemic, natural disasters, violence)
- Changes in routines or expectations
- Financial limitations or concerns

Experiencing prejudice or unfair treatment  Having limited choices or options   
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**One specific situation where I've felt powerless recently:**

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**How this situation made me feel:**

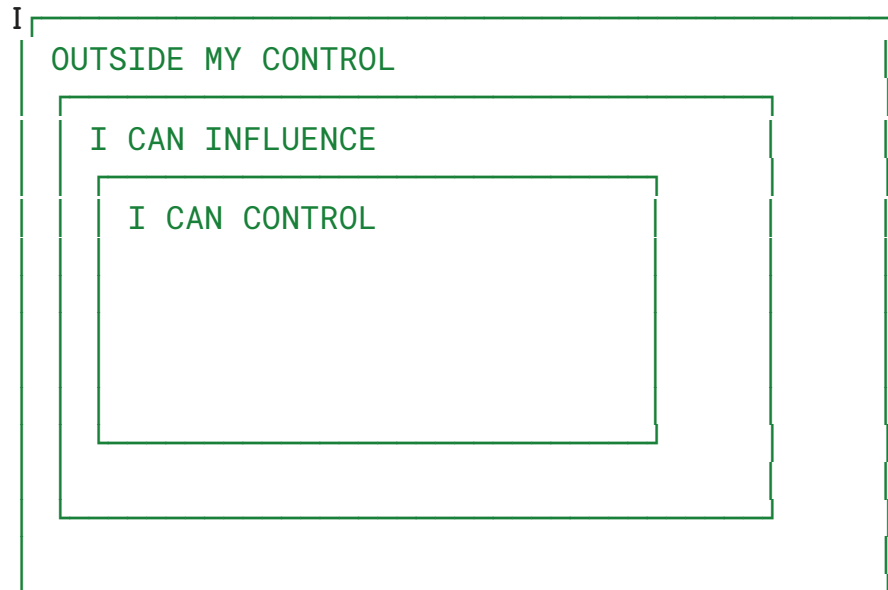
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## ACTIVITY 2: THE CONTROL CIRCLES

**Instructions:** Use these circles to sort aspects of your life into what you can control, what you can influence, and what is outside your control.



**Examples to help you get started:**

### I CAN CONTROL:

- My reactions and responses
- My attitude and mindset
- How I treat others
- My effort and actions
- My self-care choices
- What I focus my attention on

### I CAN INFLUENCE:

- Some aspects of my relationships
- Some outcomes through my effort
- How others understand my needs
- Small changes in my environment
- How I participate in groups

### OUTSIDE MY CONTROL:

- Other people's choices

- Past events
- Natural disasters
- Most large systems
- Physical limitations
- Others' opinions of me

**Add your own examples to each circle based on your life:**

**I CAN CONTROL:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**I CAN INFLUENCE:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTSIDE MY CONTROL:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

5.

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### **ACTIVITY 3: ENERGY AUDIT**

**Instructions:** Where is your energy going? Rate how much energy you spend on things in each circle:

<b>Control Category</b>	<b>Energy Spent (1-10)</b>	<b>Is this helpful?</b>
Things I can control		

Things I can influence

Things outside my control

**If your energy doesn't match what's helpful, what could you adjust?**

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### **ACTIVITY 4: MY CONTROL TOOLKIT**

**Instructions:** Develop strategies for different areas you CAN control, even in difficult situations.

#### **MY THOUGHTS:**

Ways I can choose helpful thoughts:

- ---
- ---
- ---

When negative thoughts come, I can:

- ---
- ---
- ---

#### **MY REACTIONS:**

When I feel strong emotions, I can:

- ---
- ---
- ---

Ways I can pause before reacting:



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**MY BODY:**

Ways I can care for my physical health:



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How I can use movement to feel better:



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**MY ENVIRONMENT:**

Small ways I can improve my surroundings:



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How I can create peaceful spaces:



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**MY CONNECTIONS:**

How I can reach out for support:



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Ways I can be there for others:



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## ACTIVITY 5: THE POWERLESS TO POWERFUL SHIFT

**Instructions:** For each challenging situation, identify what you can't control and what you CAN control.

### SITUATION 1:

What I can't control: \_\_\_\_\_ What I CAN control:  
\_\_\_\_\_ One action I can take:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SITUATION 2:

What I can't control: \_\_\_\_\_ What I CAN control:  
\_\_\_\_\_ One action I can take:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SITUATION 3:

What I can't control: \_\_\_\_\_ What I CAN control:  
\_\_\_\_\_ One action I can take:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 6: CREATING MICRO-CONTROL MOMENTS

**Instructions:** Sometimes when we feel powerless, creating small moments of control can help. Brainstorm tiny actions that give you a sense of control.

### MORNING CONTROL MOMENTS:

Small choices I can make to start my day:



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### SCHOOL/WORK CONTROL MOMENTS:

Small ways I can take charge during my day:



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### EVENING CONTROL MOMENTS:

Small rituals that help me end the day feeling in control:



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### ANYTIME CONTROL RESET:

Quick actions I can take when feeling powerless:



## ACTIVITY 7: MY POWERLESS RESPONSE PLAN

**Instructions:** Create a step-by-step plan for what to do when you feel powerless.

### STEP 1: RECOGNIZE

How I know I'm feeling powerless:

- Physical signs: \_\_\_\_\_
- Thought patterns: \_\_\_\_\_
- Behaviors: \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 2: RESET

How I can calm my nervous system:

- Breathing technique: \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical action: \_\_\_\_\_
- Helpful phrase to repeat: \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3: REFOCUS

Questions I can ask myself:

- What CAN I control right now? \_\_\_\_\_
- What small action would help? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who could support me? \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 4: RESPOND

I commit to:

- One immediate action: \_\_\_\_\_
  - One short-term strategy: \_\_\_\_\_
  - One ongoing practice: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## **ACTIVITY 8: FINDING MY VOICE**

**Instructions:** Even when we can't control a situation, we can often express our thoughts, feelings, and needs. Practice finding your voice:

### **EXPRESSING FEELINGS:**

"I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ happens."

### **SETTING BOUNDARIES:**

"I need \_\_\_\_\_ in this situation."

### **ASKING FOR HELP:**

"Could you help me by \_\_\_\_\_?"

### **STATING PREFERENCES:**

"While I understand \_\_\_\_\_, I would prefer \_\_\_\_\_."

### **OFFERING IDEAS:**

"I was wondering if we could try \_\_\_\_\_."

---

## **ACTIVITY 9: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MEANING**

**Instructions:** Sometimes we can find power by creating meaning in difficult situations.

Ways I can create meaning when facing challenges:

- Learning new skills or knowledge
- Helping others who face similar challenges
- Creating art, music, or writing about my experiences
- Finding purpose in difficult experiences
- Becoming more compassionate through hardship
- Using my story to create positive change
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**For a current challenge, I could create meaning by:**

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## ACTIVITY 10: MY POWER REMINDERS

**Instructions:** Create reminders of your personal power for times when you feel powerless.

### MY POWER PHRASES:

Short statements to remind me of my agency:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### MY POWER MEMORIES:

Times I've overcome challenges before:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### MY POWER PEOPLE:

People who help me feel capable and supported:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What has helped you regain a sense of control during difficult times in the past?

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2. How might focusing on what you can control change how you feel during challenging situations?

---

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3. What new strategies from this worksheet do you think will be most helpful for you?

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4. How could you help someone else who is feeling powerless?

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**MY POWER COMMITMENT:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognize that while I cannot control everything in my life, I always have choices about how I respond. I commit to focusing my energy on what I CAN control, rather than what I cannot.

When I feel powerless, I will remember to: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**REMEMBER:**

"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them." - Maya Angelou

**Your power lies in how you choose to respond.**

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# MAKING A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

## Introduction

A personal mission statement is a powerful tool for clarifying your purpose, values, and direction in life. Unlike organizational mission statements, a personal mission statement is about who you are and how you choose to live—not just what you do. This living document helps guide your decisions, focus your energy, and create a life aligned with what matters most to you. This worksheet will walk you through the process of crafting a meaningful personal mission statement.

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## ACTIVITY 1: Understanding Mission Statements

**Instructions:** Read the following information about personal mission statements. Check each box after reading to confirm understanding.

- Purpose:** A personal mission statement defines your purpose and meaning in life—your "why."
- Benefits:** Creates clarity, guides decisions, increases motivation, and helps you evaluate opportunities.
- Components:** Typically includes your values, strengths, contributions, and aspirations.
- Differences from goals:** Goals are specific achievements with endpoints; a mission is an ongoing direction and purpose.
- Evolution:** A good mission statement will evolve as you grow and gain new insights.

□ **Format:** Can be a single sentence, a paragraph, or even a collection of key principles—no single "right" way.

**Examples of Personal Mission Statements:** (These are samples to inspire your thinking, not templates to copy)

"To use my creativity and communication skills to inspire positive change, while maintaining balance, continuous growth, and meaningful connections with my family and community."

"I live authentically and courageously, using my technical expertise to solve meaningful problems, while nurturing deep relationships and modeling integrity for my children."

"To approach each day with curiosity and compassion, using my analytical abilities to help others achieve financial security, while prioritizing my physical health and spiritual growth."

"I exist to serve by leading, to live by learning, and to give by receiving. I will leave every person and situation better than I found them."

**Reflection Question:** Which example resonates most with you, and why?

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## ACTIVITY 2: Core Values Identification

**Instructions:** Your values are fundamental to your mission. From the list below, circle 10 values that most resonate with you. Then narrow to your top 5, and finally rank your top 3.

Accomplishment Accountability Adventure Authenticity Balance Beauty Belonging  
Collaboration Compassion Connection Contribution Courage Creativity Curiosity  
Determination Diversity Excellence Faith Family Freedom Friendship Fun  
Generosity Growth Happiness Harmony

Health Honesty Humility Independence Innovation Integrity Intelligence Justice  
Kindness Knowledge Leadership Learning Love Loyalty Meaning Nature  
Openness Optimism Order Passion Peace Perseverance Personal Development  
Prosperity Purpose Recognition

Relationships Reliability Resilience Respect Responsibility Security Self-discipline  
Service Simplicity Spirituality Stability Success Sustainability Teamwork Tradition

Transparency Trust Truth Understanding Uniqueness Usefulness Variety  
Wellness Wisdom Work Ethic Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**My Top 5 Values:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**For each of your top 3 values, explain: Value 1:**

\_\_\_\_\_ What this value means to me:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Value 2: \_\_\_\_\_ What this value means to me:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Value 3: \_\_\_\_\_ What this value means to me:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **ACTIVITY 3: Personal Strengths Assessment**

**Instructions:** Identifying your unique strengths helps create a mission statement that leverages your natural abilities.

**Self-Assessment:**

List 5-7 natural strengths, talents, or abilities you possess:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

**External Feedback:**

Ask 2-3 people who know you well what they see as your greatest strengths:  
Person 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Strengths they identified: \_\_\_\_\_ Person 2:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Strengths they identified: \_\_\_\_\_ Person 3:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Strengths they identified: \_\_\_\_\_

**"Flow State" Analysis:**

What activities make you lose track of time because you enjoy them so much?

---

---

What strengths might these activities reveal?

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---

**Synthesis:**

Based on all the above, my most significant strengths appear to be:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How might these strengths contribute to my personal mission?

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## ACTIVITY 4: Contribution & Impact Exploration

**Instructions:** Consider how you want to contribute and what impact you hope to have through your life.

### Areas of Contribution:

Check the contexts where you feel most called to make a difference:  Family  Friends  Community  Workplace  Society  Environment  Faith community  Global issues  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Impact Questions:

1. What problems or needs do you feel drawn to address?

---

---

2. How do you want to help others through your unique abilities?

---

---

3. What contribution would give you the greatest sense of purpose?

---

---

4. What positive change would you like to see as a result of your life?

---

---

5. How would you like to be remembered by the people whose lives you touch?

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**Synthesize your thoughts on contribution and impact:** The essence of how I want to contribute and the impact I want to have is:

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## ACTIVITY 5: Life Roles Examination

**Instructions:** Identify your key life roles and how your mission might express itself in each area.

### My Current Important Roles:

List your significant life roles (e.g., parent, professional, friend, community member, etc.):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

### For each role, answer:

Role 1: \_\_\_\_\_ How I want to show up in this role:

---

---

Role 2: \_\_\_\_\_ How I want to show up in this role:

---

---

Role 3: \_\_\_\_\_ How I want to show up in this role:

---

---

**Reflection:** What common themes do you notice across your different roles?

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How might your mission statement unify these various aspects of your life?

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## **ACTIVITY 6: Aspirational Thinking**

**Instructions:** Connect with your deepest aspirations to inform your mission statement.

### **Visualization:**

Imagine your ideal life 5-10 years from now. You're living according to your values and using your strengths to make meaningful contributions.

1. What are you doing?

---

---

2. How do you feel?

---

---

3. What impact are you having?

---

---

4. What matters most to you?

---

---

### **Inspiration Sources:**

Who inspires you with their sense of purpose or mission? (Choose 2-3 people)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What about their approach to life do you admire?

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### **Legacy Consideration:**

If you could be known for just one thing after you're gone, what would you want it to be?

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## **ACTIVITY 7: Mission Statement First Draft**

**Instructions:** Using insights from previous exercises, draft your personal mission statement. Don't worry about perfection—this is a starting point.

**Step 1: Review your key insights** Values: \_\_\_\_\_

Strengths: \_\_\_\_\_ Contributions:

\_\_\_\_\_ Roles:

\_\_\_\_\_ Aspirations:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2: Look for patterns and themes** What recurring ideas or themes emerged across the exercises?

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**Step 3: Choose a format that feels right to you**  Single sentence  Short paragraph  Set of guiding principles  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4: Write your first draft** My Personal Mission Statement (Draft 1):

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**Step 5: Initial self-assessment** On a scale of 1-10, how well does this draft:

- Reflect your true values? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Include your key strengths? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Express how you want to contribute? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Feel authentic to you? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Inspire you? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## **ACTIVITY 8: Refining Your Mission Statement**

**Instructions:** Use these tools to evaluate and improve your mission statement draft.

### **Clarity Check:**

- Is it clear and understandable?
- Could someone else understand what matters to you from reading it?
- Are there any vague terms that could be more specific?

### **Authenticity Test:**

- Does it sound like you, or like someone else?
- Does it include jargon or buzzwords that don't really reflect who you are?
- Would your close friends recognize you in this statement?

### **Inspiration Measure:**

- Does reading it energize and motivate you?
- Would it inspire you during difficult times?
- Does it connect to what truly matters to you?

### **Balance Assessment:**

- Does it include both being (character/values) and doing (contribution/action)?
- Does it reflect both your current reality and your aspirations?
- Does it address multiple important life domains?

### Revised Draft:

Based on the assessments above, write a refined version of your mission statement:

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### Feedback:

Share your mission statement with 1-2 trusted people who know you well. Ask:

- Does this sound like me?
- What's missing or could be improved?
- Is there anything that doesn't ring true?

Person 1 feedback:

---

---

Person 2 feedback:

---

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---

## ACTIVITY 9: Final Mission Statement & Implementation

**Instructions:** Finalize your mission statement and create a plan to integrate it into your life.

**Final Personal Mission Statement:**

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**Making It Visible:**

How will you keep your mission statement visible in your daily life?  Print and frame it  Set as phone background/lock screen  Create a visual representation or vision board  Use as journal/notebook cover  Set as email signature   
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Decision-Making Application:**

List 3 current decisions or challenges where your mission statement could provide guidance:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

For one of these decisions, how might your mission statement help you choose?

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---

### **Calendar Alignment:**

Review your calendar for the past week:

- Which activities aligned with your mission?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which didn't align? \_\_\_\_\_
- What changes might you make going forward?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Regular Review Plan:**

How often will you review and potentially revise your mission statement?   
Monthly  Quarterly  Semi-annually  Annually  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark your next review date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **ACTIVITY 10: Living Your Mission**

**Instructions:** Create specific strategies to live your mission in everyday life.

### **Daily Mission Practices:**

List 3-5 small daily practices that would help you live your mission:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mission-Aligned Goals:**

Based on your mission statement, what are 2-3 meaningful goals you could pursue in the next year?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Potential Obstacles:**

What might get in the way of living your mission?

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How will you address these obstacles?

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### **Support System:**

Who could support you in living your mission?

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How specifically might they help?

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### **Celebration & Reflection:**

How will you celebrate moments when you're truly living your mission?

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How will you reflect on and learn from times when you struggle to live your mission?

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## **Final Reflections**

**Instructions:** Complete these final reflection questions to close this process.

1. What surprised you most about creating your personal mission statement?

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2. How do you feel now that you have a clearer sense of your mission?

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3. What's one immediate change you might make to better align with your mission?

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---

4. How might having this mission statement impact your life over the next year?

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5. What quote or saying could serve as a shorthand reminder of your mission?

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**Remember:**

- A mission statement is a living document that will evolve as you grow
  - The real value comes not from having a perfect statement, but from the clarity it brings to your daily choices
  - Your mission should inspire and guide you, not restrict or burden you
  - Revisit and refine your mission statement regularly as you gain new insights about yourself and what matters most
- 

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# **Why Change Feels Hard—And Why That's Okay**

## **Understanding and Navigating the Challenge of Change**

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### **WHY CHANGE FEELS DIFFICULT**

Change is naturally challenging for everyone. Our brains are actually wired to resist change because:

- **Our brains love routine and predictability**
- **Familiar patterns feel safe, even if they're not healthy**
- **Change requires extra mental energy**
- **Uncertainty triggers our brain's threat response**

● **New behaviors haven't become automatic yet**

**The good news:** Understanding why change feels hard can make it easier to navigate. Difficulty doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong!

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**ACTIVITY 1: MY EXPERIENCE WITH CHANGE**

Think about a significant change you've experienced or are currently facing:

**The change was/is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How did/does this change make you feel?** Circle all that apply: Anxious • Excited • Overwhelmed • Hopeful • Frustrated Confused • Sad • Relieved • Resistant • Curious • Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What made/makes this change difficult?**

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**What helped/would help make this change easier?**

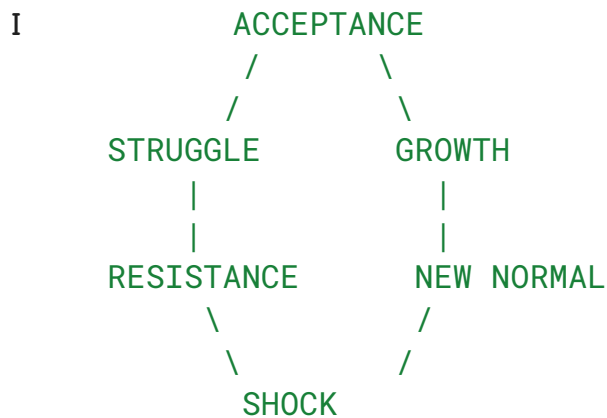
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**THE CHANGE CYCLE**

Most people go through predictable stages when experiencing change:



**SHOCK:** Initial surprise or disruption ("This is happening?") **RESISTANCE:** Pushing back against the change ("I don't want this!") **STRUGGLE:** Difficulty as

you try to adapt ("This is hard!") **ACCEPTANCE:** Beginning to work with the change ("I can do this") **GROWTH:** Learning and developing through the process ("I'm getting better") **NEW NORMAL:** The change becomes your regular way of being ("This is just how things are now")

**Where would you place yourself in this cycle for a current change?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What might help you move forward in the cycle?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **ACTIVITY 2: CHANGE RESISTANCE INVENTORY**

We all resist change in different ways. Check the ways you might resist change:

- Procrastinating or putting it off
- Finding excuses or reasons why it won't work
- Focusing only on the negatives
- Telling yourself you'll fail anyway
- Getting defensive when others mention the change
- Continuing old patterns even when they don't work
- Saying you'll change but not taking action
- Giving up quickly when it gets difficult
- Avoiding situations that require the change
- Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

**For the items you checked, what might be underneath that resistance?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **THE BRAIN SCIENCE OF CHANGE**

Your brain has two important systems involved in change:

### **THE HABIT SYSTEM:**

- Automatic, efficient, and comfortable
- Runs on autopilot without much thought
- Prefers familiar routines and patterns
- Resists disruption to established habits

### **THE EXECUTIVE SYSTEM:**

- Conscious, effortful, and adaptable
- Requires focus and energy
- Plans and implements new behaviors
- Gets tired with too much demand

**During change, these systems often conflict. Your executive system says "Let's change!" while your habit system says "Let's keep things the same!"**

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### **ACTIVITY 3: THE CHANGE EQUATION**

Change happens when:

**DISSATISFACTION + VISION + FIRST STEPS > RESISTANCE**

Complete each part for a change you want to make:

**My dissatisfaction with the current situation:**

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**My vision of how things could be better:**

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**First small steps I could take:**

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**My sources of resistance:**

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**Looking at your answers, is your equation strong enough to overcome resistance? What could you strengthen?**

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### **ACTIVITY 4: MAKING CHANGE EASIER**

Since change is naturally difficult, smart strategies can make it easier. Check the strategies you want to try:

**Start tiny:** Begin with the smallest possible version of the change  **Focus on one change at a time:** Don't overwhelm your brain  **Connect to your "why":**

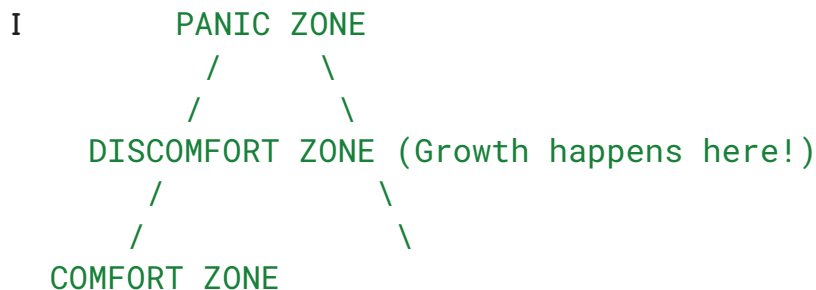
Keep your deeper motivation visible  **Set up your environment:** Make the new behavior easier than the old one  **Get support:** Find people who will encourage your change  **Track progress:** Notice small wins along the way  **Anticipate obstacles:** Plan for challenges in advance  **Practice self-compassion:** Be kind to yourself when you struggle  **Create accountability:** Share your goals with someone who will check in  **Build in rewards:** Celebrate progress in meaningful ways

**Choose 3 strategies and describe specifically how you'll use them:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 5: THE DISCOMFORT ZONE

Growth happens in the "discomfort zone" – not so comfortable that nothing changes, but not so uncomfortable that you shut down.



**Rate your typical response to discomfort (1-10):** 1 = I avoid all discomfort 10 = I can tolerate high discomfort for growth

**My rating:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A recent time I stayed in the discomfort zone and grew:**

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**A time I retreated to my comfort zone and missed growth:**

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**A time I pushed too far into panic and shut down:**

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## **NORMALIZING THE CHANGE PROCESS**

Everyone struggles with change. Here are some normal experiences during change:

- **"Two steps forward, one step back" progress**
- **Emotional ups and downs**
- **Wanting to go back to old ways when stressed**
- **Feeling confused or uncertain**
- **Grieving what you're leaving behind**
- **Feeling both excited and scared**
- **Making mistakes as you learn**
- **Needing more rest during big changes**
- **Questioning if the change is worth it**

**Which of these have you experienced? Any others you'd add?**

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## **ACTIVITY 6: CHANGE RESOURCES INVENTORY**

Everyone has internal and external resources that help with change. Check all that you have:

### **INTERNAL RESOURCES:**

Determination/persistence  Flexibility/adaptability  Problem-solving skills  Patience with yourself  Learning from mistakes  Self-encouragement  Focus on the positive  Ability to ask for help  Managing emotions  Other:

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### **EXTERNAL RESOURCES:**

Supportive friends/family  Role models who've made similar changes  Access to information/learning  Safe space to practice new behaviors

Professional help/guidance  Community/group support  Tools/resources   
Time to focus on the change  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What additional resources might you need for a current change?**

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## **ACTIVITY 7: MY CHANGE SUCCESS STORIES**

You've already successfully navigated changes in your life. Remember these to build confidence.

**A change I successfully made was:**

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**What helped me succeed:**

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**What I learned from that experience:**

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**How I can apply that to current changes:**

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## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do you think our brains are designed to resist change even when it's good for us?
2. What's the difference between change that feels exciting versus change that feels threatening?
3. What specific type of change is most difficult for you personally?

4. How might understanding the normal stages of change help you be more patient with yourself?
  5. What message would you give to someone else who's struggling with a difficult change?
- 

## **KEY REMINDERS FOR CHANGE**

- **Difficulty doesn't mean you're failing – it means you're growing**
  - **Discomfort is a normal and necessary part of change**
  - **Change happens in small steps, not all at once**
  - **Setbacks are normal and don't erase your progress**
  - **Your brain needs time to rewire for new patterns**
  - **Everyone struggles with change – you're not alone**
  - **The most important changes often feel the hardest**
  - **Each successful change builds capacity for future changes**
  - **Self-compassion helps change more than self-criticism**
  - **The struggle is worth it for changes that matter to you**
- 

## **MY CHANGE PLAN**

**A change I'm working on or want to make:**

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**Why this change matters to me:**

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**I'll remember it's normal to feel:**

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**When I struggle, I'll support myself by:**

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**I'll celebrate my progress by:**

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# **What Is Probation—and What Does It Mean for Me?**

## **Understanding Your Requirements & Building Success**

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### **PART 1: PROBATION BASICS**

**Probation** is a court-ordered period of supervision in the community instead of serving time in detention or jail. It's an opportunity to make positive changes while remaining in your community.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: PROBATION FACTS**

Fill in what you know or what you've been told about your probation:

**My probation officer's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Their contact information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How long my probation lasts:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When my probation started:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When my probation is scheduled to end:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How often I need to meet with my PO:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where I meet with my PO:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Three questions I still have about my probation:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Who I can ask to get answers to these questions:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **PART 2: MY PROBATION REQUIREMENTS**

Probation comes with specific requirements that you must follow. These are called "conditions of probation."

### **ACTIVITY 2: MY PROBATION CONDITIONS**

Check all the conditions that apply to your probation and fill in any specific details:

**Regular meetings with probation officer**

● How often: \_\_\_\_\_

● Next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

**School attendance**

- Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_
- How it's verified: \_\_\_\_\_

**Curfew**

- What time: \_\_\_\_\_
- Any exceptions: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community service**

- How many hours: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where: \_\_\_\_\_
- Deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

**Counseling or treatment programs**

- Type of program: \_\_\_\_\_
- Schedule: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

**Drug/alcohol testing**

- How often: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where: \_\_\_\_\_

**Restitution (paying back)**

- Amount: \_\_\_\_\_
- Payment plan: \_\_\_\_\_

**No contact orders**

- Who: \_\_\_\_\_

**Electronic monitoring**

- Type: \_\_\_\_\_
- Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other conditions:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**The three conditions I find most challenging are:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**My plan for meeting these challenging conditions:**

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### **PART 3: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

While on probation, you have both rights and responsibilities.

#### **ACTIVITY 3: KNOWING MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **My Rights on Probation:**

- I have the right to know the conditions of my probation
- I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- I have the right to due process if violations are alleged
- I have the right to ask questions about my probation
- I have the right to receive help meeting my probation requirements
- Other rights:

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##### **My Responsibilities on Probation:**

- I am responsible for knowing and following all probation conditions
- I am responsible for attending all required meetings and appointments
- I am responsible for notifying my PO if I cannot meet a requirement
- I am responsible for being honest with my PO
- I am responsible for making positive changes in my behavior
- Other responsibilities:

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**What's one right that's important for me to remember?**

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**What's one responsibility I need to focus on improving?**

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**PART 4: VIOLATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

Not following the conditions of your probation can result in what's called a "violation."

**ACTIVITY 4: UNDERSTANDING VIOLATIONS**

There are two main types of probation violations:

**Technical Violations:** Breaking a rule of probation (missing appointments, curfew violations, etc.)

**New Offense Violations:** Getting charged with a new crime while on probation

**Potential consequences for violations could include:**

- Warning from your probation officer
- Increased reporting or supervision
- Additional community service hours
- Additional conditions or requirements
- Extended probation period
- House arrest or electronic monitoring
- Detention or incarceration

**If I'm worried I might have violated a condition, I should:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**If I know I can't meet a condition (like an appointment), I should:**

- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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## **PART 5: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

Good communication with your probation officer is essential for successful probation.

### **ACTIVITY 5: COMMUNICATION PLAN**

**Best ways to contact my probation officer:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Information I should always have ready when I contact my PO:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Practice writing a message to your PO for these situations:**

**If you're going to be late to an appointment:**

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**If you need to reschedule an appointment:**

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**If you're having trouble meeting a condition:**

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**If you have good news to share about your progress:**

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**Who else can help me communicate effectively with my PO?**

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## **PART 6: STAYING ORGANIZED**

Keeping track of all your probation requirements takes organization.

### **ACTIVITY 6: MY PROBATION ORGANIZATION SYSTEM**

Check the organization tools that would work best for you:

- Phone calendar with alerts  Wall calendar  Planner or agenda   
To-do lists  Reminder app  Help from parent/guardian  Other:

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**Create a weekly schedule that includes all your probation requirements:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Probation Activities</b>	<b>School/ Work</b>	<b>Other Commitments</b>
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesd ay			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

**What's my plan for keeping track of completed requirements?**

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## **PART 7: SUPPORT SYSTEM**

Having people who support you can make a big difference in successfully completing probation.

### **ACTIVITY 7: BUILDING MY SUPPORT NETWORK**

**People who can help me succeed on probation:**

#### **Family members:**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **School staff:**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Community supports:**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Other positive influences:**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ How they can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How I'll ask for help when I need it:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **PART 8: PROBATION SUCCESS STRATEGIES**

People who successfully complete probation often use similar strategies.

## ACTIVITY 8: MY SUCCESS PLAN

Check the strategies you'll use to succeed on probation:

- Being completely honest with my PO
- Taking responsibility for my actions
- Asking questions when I don't understand something
- Following my schedule and staying organized
- Avoiding people and places that might get me in trouble
- Finding positive activities to fill my time
- Setting goals beyond just completing probation
- Looking for the benefits in required programs
- Focusing on one day at a time
- Remembering that probation is temporary
- Other:

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**The three most important strategies for me are:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**How I'll remind myself of these strategies:**

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## **PART 9: BEYOND PROBATION**

Probation is temporary. It's important to think about your future beyond probation.

### ACTIVITY 9: LOOKING FORWARD

**Three things I want to accomplish while on probation:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**How completing probation successfully will help my future:**

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**My goals for after probation ends:**

**Education goals:**

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**Career/job goals:**

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**Personal goals:**

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**Relationship goals:**

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**Steps I can take now (while on probation) toward these future goals:**

●

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●

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●

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## **PART 10: REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What's one thing about probation that's better than I expected?

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2. What's one thing about probation that's harder than I expected?

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3. What have I learned about myself through this process so far?

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4. How might this experience change how I make decisions in the future?

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5. What strengths do I have that will help me successfully complete probation?

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## **MESSAGE** COMMITMENT CORNER

### **I commit to:**

1. Keeping all my scheduled appointments with my PO and other required meetings
2. Communicating honestly and promptly if I have any problems meeting requirements
3. Using my organization system to stay on track with all conditions
4. Asking for help from my support network when needed
5. Focusing on my future goals beyond probation

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **MESSAGE** REMEMBER

- Probation is an opportunity to make positive changes while staying in your community
  - Being organized and communicating well are key to success
  - Everyone makes mistakes—it's how you respond that matters
  - Your probation officer wants you to succeed
  - This period is temporary—use it to build toward your future
  - Small daily choices add up to big results
  - You are not defined by your past choices—you're defined by who you choose to be now
- 

## **MESSAGE** RESOURCES

### **Local Resources:**

● \_\_\_\_\_

● \_\_\_\_\_

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**Helpful Websites:**



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**Crisis Support:**



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# **GETTING OUT, STAYING OUT: WHAT HELPS PEOPLE AVOID TROUBLE AGAIN**

# Reentry Success Worksheet

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## UNDERSTANDING SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

Research shows that many people who have been in trouble with the law end up in the system again. However, many others successfully rebuild their lives and never return. The difference often comes down to specific factors and strategies that we can learn and apply.

This worksheet will help you:

- Identify common challenges in the reentry process
- Develop practical strategies for avoiding future legal trouble
- Build a personal success plan based on what actually works
- Connect with resources that can support your journey

**Important:** Everyone's path is different, but certain approaches have been proven to help. Success is possible with the right plan and support.

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## ACTIVITY 1: THE REALITY CHECK

**Instructions:** Being honest about challenges is the first step to overcoming them. Check the challenges you think might affect you:

### EXTERNAL CHALLENGES:

Finding stable housing  Getting a job with a record  Reconnecting with family/community  Meeting probation/parole requirements  Accessing healthcare or treatment  Transportation issues  Financial pressures/debt  Limited education or job skills  Negative peer influences  Neighborhood environment

### INTERNAL CHALLENGES:

Dealing with stress without substances  Managing anger or other emotions  Rebuilding trust with others  Feeling labeled or stigmatized  Low confidence or self-esteem  Feeling disconnected from community  Difficulty asking for help  Impulsive decision-making  Negative thinking patterns  Unclear goals or direction

**My top 3 concerns about staying out of trouble:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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## ACTIVITY 2: SUCCESS FACTORS

**Instructions:** Research shows certain factors significantly reduce the chance of getting in trouble again. Rate yourself on each factor (1 = Needs work, 5 = Strong):

Success Factor	Rating (1-5)	My Current Situation	My Next Step
Stable housing			
Employment/income			
Positive relationships			
Education/skills			
Substance-free lifestyle			
Mental health support			
Purpose/meaning			
Problem-solving skills			
Healthy routine			
Community connections			

**Based on this assessment, my top priorities should be:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### ACTIVITY 3: MY REENTRY TIMELINE

**Instructions:** Create a timeline for your reentry process, identifying key actions and milestones.

#### FIRST 24 HOURS:

Critical needs to address immediately:



#### FIRST WEEK:

Priorities to establish basic stability:



#### FIRST MONTH:

Building foundations for longer-term success:



#### FIRST 3 MONTHS:

Developing routines and connections:





**FIRST YEAR:**

Working toward sustainable stability:



**ACTIVITY 4: UNDERSTANDING MY RISK PATTERNS**

**Instructions:** Identifying your personal risk patterns helps you create specific prevention strategies.

**THE PEOPLE FACTOR:**

Who might influence me toward trouble:

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Who will support my positive choices:

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---

**THE PLACE FACTOR:**

Places that might be risky for me:

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Places that feel safe and supportive:

---

---

**THE SITUATION FACTOR:**

Situations that trigger risky behavior:

---

---

Situations that bring out my best:

---

---

**THE FEELING FACTOR:**

Emotions that might lead to poor choices:

---

---

Healthy ways to handle these emotions:

---

---

**THE THINKING FACTOR:**

Thought patterns that justify risky behavior:

---

---

Alternative thoughts that support my goals:

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**ACTIVITY 5: CREATING MY RISK RESPONSE PLAN**

**Instructions:** Develop specific strategies for high-risk situations.

**RISK SITUATION 1:**

Describe the situation: \_\_\_\_\_ Warning signs it's developing: \_\_\_\_\_ My response plan:

- Before: \_\_\_\_\_
- During: \_\_\_\_\_

- After: \_\_\_\_\_ Who can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RISK SITUATION 2:**

Describe the situation: \_\_\_\_\_ Warning signs it's developing: \_\_\_\_\_ My response plan:

- Before: \_\_\_\_\_
- During: \_\_\_\_\_
- After: \_\_\_\_\_ Who can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RISK SITUATION 3:**

Describe the situation: \_\_\_\_\_ Warning signs it's developing: \_\_\_\_\_ My response plan:

- Before: \_\_\_\_\_
  - During: \_\_\_\_\_
  - After: \_\_\_\_\_ Who can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 

**ACTIVITY 6: BUILDING MY SUPPORT NETWORK**

**Instructions:** Success is rarely achieved alone. Identify people and resources who can support different needs.

**PRACTICAL SUPPORT:**

(Housing, employment, transportation, etc.)

- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_
- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:**

(Encouragement, listening, understanding)

- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_
- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOUNTABILITY SUPPORT:**

(Honest feedback, helping you stay on track)

- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_
- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

**MENTORSHIP SUPPORT:**

(Guidance from someone who's been there)

- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY SUPPORT:**

(Who to call in a crisis or high-risk moment)

- Person/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
  - How they can help: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## ACTIVITY 7: LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TRACKER

**Instructions:** Staying out means meeting all legal requirements. Create a system to track your obligations.

### MY SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS:

- Probation meetings (Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_)
  Drug/alcohol testing (Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_)
  Community service (Hours required: \_\_\_\_\_)
  Court appearances (Dates: \_\_\_\_\_)
  Restitution payments (Amount/schedule: \_\_\_\_\_)
  Treatment programs (Type/frequency: \_\_\_\_\_)
  Curfew/electronic monitoring
  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**My tracking system:** How I'll remember appointments:

\_\_\_\_\_

How I'll document completion:

\_\_\_\_\_

Where I'll keep important papers:

\_\_\_\_\_

**My supervision contact:** Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Best way to communicate:

\_\_\_\_\_

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## ACTIVITY 8: IDENTITY SHIFT - WHO AM I BECOMING?

**Instructions:** Successfully staying out often involves developing a new identity beyond your past.

### MY POSITIVE ROLES:

Check roles you want to develop or strengthen:
  Reliable employee/worker
  Supportive family member
  Trusted friend
  Active community member
  Mentor to others
  Student/learner
  Creator/artist
  Volunteer/helper
  Skilled professional
  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR EACH ROLE I CHECKED:

One action I can take to develop this role:



**MY STRENGTHS:**

Skills and positive qualities I already have:



**MY PURPOSE:**

Ways I can contribute positively to others:



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**ACTIVITY 9: DAILY SUCCESS ROUTINES**

**Instructions:** Daily habits and routines provide structure that supports success.

**MORNING ROUTINE:**

Actions that start my day positively:



**DAYTIME PRODUCTIVITY:**

How I'll spend my time constructively:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**EVENING WIND-DOWN:**

Healthy ways to end the day:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**WEEKEND/FREE TIME:**

Positive activities to replace risky behaviors:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 10: HANDLING SETBACKS**

**Instructions:** Everyone faces setbacks. Having a plan for getting back on track is essential.

**WARNING SIGNS I'M STRUGGLING:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**IF I SLIP UP (MINOR SETBACK):**

Steps to get back on track:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

People I'll contact for help:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**IF I HAVE A MAJOR CRISIS:**

Immediate actions to take:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contacts:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT I'LL TELL MYSELF AFTER A SETBACK:**

(Supportive thoughts that keep me moving forward)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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## ACTIVITY 11: CELEBRATING SUCCESS

**Instructions:** Recognizing progress helps maintain motivation and builds identity.

### SMALL WINS I'LL CELEBRATE:



### HOW I'LL CELEBRATE POSITIVELY:

(Healthy rewards that don't create new problems)



### MILESTONES I'M WORKING TOWARD:

1 month goal: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 month goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6 month goal: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 year  
goal: \_\_\_\_\_

### HOW I'LL TRACK MY PROGRESS:



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## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

**Instructions:** Research and list resources available in your community:

### HOUSING RESOURCES:

●

●

**EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES:**

●

●

**SUBSTANCE TREATMENT RESOURCES:**

●

●

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:**

●

●

**EDUCATION/TRAINING RESOURCES:**

●

●

**PEER SUPPORT GROUPS:**

●

●

**CRISIS HOTLINES:**

●

●

---

## MY STAYING OUT COMMITMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit to my successful reentry by:

1. Honestly facing my challenges
2. Building positive relationships and avoiding negative influences
3. Meeting all my legal obligations
4. Developing daily routines that support my goals
5. Asking for help when I need it
6. Learning from setbacks without giving up
7. Taking responsibility for my choices
8. Contributing positively to my community

**The most important thing I can do to stay out is:**

---

**The person I'm becoming is:**

---

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### REMEMBER:

"Your past is not your future unless you choose to live there."

**Change is possible. Many have succeeded, and you can too.**

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# WHY RULES MATTER (EVEN IF I DON'T LIKE THEM)

## Introduction

Rules are everywhere in our lives—at home, school, work, and in society. While they may sometimes feel restrictive or unnecessary, rules serve important purposes in creating structure, safety, and fairness. This worksheet explores why rules exist, how they benefit us, and how to respond constructively to rules we may not like or understand. Understanding the purpose behind rules can help us navigate them more effectively and even participate in changing those that need improvement.

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## ACTIVITY 1: Types of Rules and Their Purposes

**Instructions:** Different types of rules serve different purposes. Review the following categories and examples, then answer the reflection questions.

### Safety Rules

**Purpose:** Protect people from harm **Examples:**

- Traffic laws
- Food safety regulations
- Workplace safety procedures
- Rules about weapons or dangerous items

## **Social Rules**

**Purpose:** Help people interact respectfully and predictably **Examples:**

- Taking turns when speaking
- Respecting personal space
- Dress codes for specific settings
- Greeting customs

## **Fairness Rules**

**Purpose:** Ensure everyone has equal opportunities and treatment **Examples:**

- Sports rules
- Academic integrity policies
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Sharing guidelines

## **Organizational Rules**

**Purpose:** Help groups function efficiently **Examples:**

- Workplace procedures
- Classroom expectations
- Meeting protocols
- Deadlines and schedules

## **Reflection Questions:**

1. Which type of rule do you typically find easiest to follow? Why?

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2. Which type do you find most challenging to accept? Why?

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3. Can you think of a rule that serves multiple purposes? What are they?

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4. Have you ever experienced a situation where the absence of rules created problems?

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## ACTIVITY 2: The Benefits of Rules

**Instructions:** Check the benefits of rules that you've personally experienced or observed.

**Predictability:** Rules create a sense of order and let us know what to expect from others and what others expect from us.

**Safety:** Rules protect us from physical, emotional, and social harm.

**Efficiency:** When everyone follows established procedures, things generally run more smoothly.

**Fairness:** Rules can help ensure everyone has equal opportunities and is treated equitably.

**Trust:** When people follow agreed-upon rules, it builds trust within relationships and communities.

**Skill Development:** Following rules helps develop self-discipline, delayed gratification, and respect for others.

**Conflict Reduction:** Clear rules can prevent disagreements and provide a framework for resolving conflicts.

**Group Identity:** Shared rules help create a sense of belonging and group cohesion.

**Personal Freedom:** Ironically, some rules actually increase freedom by preventing chaos or harm that would restrict freedom more.

**Other benefit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection:** Give a specific example of how rules have benefited you or someone you know:

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## **ACTIVITY 3: Rules Through History**

**Instructions:** Rules and laws have evolved throughout human history. Consider how these historical examples reveal the importance of rules in society.

### **Hammurabi's Code (1754 BCE)**

One of the earliest written legal codes, established clear expectations for behavior and consequences. While harsh by modern standards, it created predictability in social interactions.

### **Magna Carta (1215 CE)**

Limited the power of the king and established that everyone, including rulers, should be subject to the law.

### **U.S. Constitution (1787)**

Created a framework of rules for how government should function, with checks and balances to prevent abuse of power.

### **Geneva Conventions (1949)**

Established international rules for humane treatment during wartime, showing that rules are important even in extreme circumstances.

### **Internet Protocols (1980s-Present)**

Technical rules that allow global computer networks to function, demonstrating how rules enable complex systems to operate.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What do these examples tell us about the human need for rules?

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2. How might society be different without these historical developments in rules and laws?

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3. Can you think of a time when new rules were created to address emerging problems or needs?

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## ACTIVITY 4: Analyzing Rules in Your Life

**Instructions:** Identify three rules you encounter regularly and analyze them using the chart below.

**Rule 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Question	Your Answer
Who created this rule?	
Who does this rule protect or benefit?	
What problem does this rule solve?	
What would happen without this rule?	
Is this rule fair? Why or why not?	
How well is this rule enforced?	
Could this rule be improved? How?	

**Rule 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Question	Your Answer
Who created this rule?	
Who does this rule protect or benefit?	
What problem does this rule	

solve?  
What would happen without this rule?  
Is this rule fair? Why or why not?  
How well is this rule enforced?  
  
Could this rule be improved?  
How?

**Rule 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Question	Your Answer
Who created this rule?	
Who does this rule protect or benefit?	
What problem does this rule solve?	
What would happen without this rule?	
Is this rule fair? Why or why not?	
How well is this rule enforced?	
Could this rule be improved? How?	

**Key Insights:** What did you learn from analyzing these rules?

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## ACTIVITY 5: When Rules Feel Unfair

**Instructions:** Everyone encounters rules that feel unfair, unnecessary, or confusing. Explore constructive responses to these situations.

### Common Reactions to Rules We Don't Like:

Check any reactions you've experienced:  Anger or frustration  Questioning authority  Passive resistance  Active defiance  Seeking loopholes  Feeling personally targeted  Complaining to others  Trying to understand the

reasoning  Working to change the rule  Other:

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### **Case Study:**

Think of a specific rule you found difficult to accept. Describe it briefly:

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How did you respond to this rule?

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What were the consequences of your response?

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What might have been a more constructive response?

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### **Constructive Responses to Difficult Rules:**

Rate how often you use each response (1=never, 5=very often)

\_\_\_ Seek to understand the purpose behind the rule \_\_\_ Ask respectful questions about rules you don't understand \_\_\_ Follow the rule while working to change it through appropriate channels \_\_\_ Propose alternatives that accomplish the same goals \_\_\_ Consider how the rule might benefit others, even if it inconveniences you \_\_\_ Look for the learning opportunity in the situation \_\_\_ Practice patience and self-discipline when rules are frustrating

**Reflection:** Which constructive response would you like to practice more often?

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## **ACTIVITY 6: Rules and Emotional Intelligence**

**Instructions:** Following rules often requires emotional intelligence and self-regulation. Explore the connection between emotions and rule-following.

### **Emotional Triggers:**

What emotions do you typically feel when encountering a rule you don't like?

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What past experiences might influence these emotional reactions?

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### **Emotion Regulation Strategies:**

Check strategies you could use when feeling negative emotions about rules:  Take deep breaths before responding  Use positive self-talk ("I can handle this")  Consider the bigger picture and long-term benefits  Focus on what you can control  Talk to someone you trust about your feelings  Write out your thoughts and feelings  Consider others' perspectives  Take a break if possible before responding  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Practice Scenario:**

Imagine you've been told you need to follow a new procedure at work/school that seems unnecessary and makes your tasks more time-consuming.

How might you feel initially?

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How could you regulate these emotions?

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What questions could you ask to better understand the rule?

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What would a constructive response look like?

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## **ACTIVITY 7: The Process of Rule Creation**

**Instructions:** Understanding how rules are created can help us appreciate them more and participate in improving them. Answer the following questions.

**Rule Creation Process:**

1. How are rules typically created in your:
  - Family: \_\_\_\_\_
  - School/Workplace: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Community: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you ever been involved in creating rules? If so, what was that experience like?

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3. What factors should be considered when creating a good rule?

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**Rule Creation Scenario:**

Imagine you're responsible for creating rules for a shared living space with 5 people.

What problems might need to be addressed through rules?

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List 3-5 rules you would propose:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How would you ensure these rules are fair and respected?

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What process would you establish for changing rules if needed?

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## ACTIVITY 8: Constructively Challenging Rules

**Instructions:** Sometimes rules need to be questioned or changed. Explore how to do this effectively.

### When Rules Should Be Challenged:

Check situations where challenging rules might be appropriate:  When a rule causes harm  When a rule discriminates unfairly  When a rule no longer serves its original purpose  When a rule conflicts with more important values or principles  When a rule was created without adequate input from those affected  When a rule is consistently ineffective at solving the problem it addresses  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Effective vs. Ineffective Approaches:

#### Ineffective Approaches

Breaking the rule without explanation  
Complaining without offering alternatives  
Being confrontational or disrespectful  
Acting alone  
  
Demanding immediate change  
Focusing only on personal impact

#### Effective Approaches

Understanding the rule's purpose first  
Proposing specific improvements  
Being respectful and solution-oriented  
Building support from others  
  
Being patient and persistent  
Considering the impact on everyone

### Constructive Challenge Process:

1. Understand the rule and its purpose
2. Gather information and perspectives
3. Identify specific problems with the current rule
4. Develop a clear alternative that addresses those problems

5. Present your case respectfully to the appropriate authority
6. Be persistent but patient

**Application:** Is there a rule in your life that you believe should be challenged?  
Describe it:

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How could you apply the constructive challenge process to this situation?

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## **ACTIVITY 9: Rules and Personal Responsibility**

**Instructions:** Explore the relationship between rules and personal responsibility through these reflections.

### **Personal Values and Rules:**

List 3-5 of your most important personal values:

1. 

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2. 

---
3. 

---
4. 

---
5. 

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How do these values influence your attitude toward rules?

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### **Beyond the Rules:**

Rules provide minimum standards, but personal responsibility often means going beyond mere compliance.

Give an example of a situation where following the "letter of the law" might not be enough to fulfill the spirit or purpose of a rule:

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Describe a time when you chose to hold yourself to a higher standard than what was required by the rules:

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### **Self-Imposed Rules:**

What are some rules you've created for yourself that help you live according to your values?

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How do these self-imposed rules benefit you and others?

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## **ACTIVITY 10: Finding Balance**

**Instructions:** Rules are important, but so is flexibility. Explore how to find the right balance.

### **The Spectrum of Rule Application:**

Different contexts require different approaches to rules. Place an X on each spectrum to show your view:

**Home/Family:** Highly flexible -----|----- Strictly by the book

**School/Work:** Highly flexible -----|----- Strictly by the book

**Religious/Cultural Practices:** Highly flexible -----|----- Strictly by the book

**Traffic Laws:** Highly flexible -----|----- Strictly by the book

**Social Etiquette:** Highly flexible -----|----- Strictly by the book

**Reflection:** Why do your placements differ across different contexts?

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### Discernment Questions:

When deciding how strictly to follow a rule, consider:

- What's the purpose of this rule?
- Who might be harmed if the rule is bent or broken?
- What values or principles are at stake?
- What are the potential consequences of strict adherence vs. flexibility?
- Am I considering everyone affected, not just myself?

**Application:** Describe a situation that required discernment about rule-following:

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How did you decide what to do?

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What was the outcome?

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### Final Reflection

**Instructions:** Complete these final thoughts about why rules matter.

1. What's the most important insight you've gained about rules from this worksheet?

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2. How might understanding the purpose of rules change your response to them?

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3. What's one way you could contribute to creating or improving rules in a community you belong to?

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4. How can you balance respecting necessary rules while maintaining your personal agency and values?

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### **Key Takeaways:**

- Rules create structure, safety, and fairness that benefit individuals and communities
  - Understanding the purpose behind rules helps us follow them more willingly
  - Emotional intelligence helps us respond constructively to rules we don't like
  - There are effective ways to challenge and change rules that aren't working
  - Personal responsibility often means going beyond minimum compliance with rules
  - Finding the right balance between structure and flexibility is an ongoing process
- 

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# **Redefining Success for Myself**

## **Creating My Own Authentic Vision of Achievement**

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### **WHAT IS SUCCESS, REALLY?**

Success means different things to different people. Society often defines success narrowly as:

- Wealth and material possessions

- Fame or popularity
- High achievements in school or career
- Certain body types or appearances
- Power or status

**But true success is personal and comes from living according to YOUR values and what matters to YOU.**

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### **ACTIVITY 1: COMMON SUCCESS MYTHS**

Rate how much you believe each statement (1=don't believe at all, 5=strongly believe):

\_\_\_ Success means having a lot of money \_\_\_ Success looks the same for everyone \_\_\_ You have to sacrifice happiness to be successful \_\_\_ Success means being better than others \_\_\_ Success is about what others think of you \_\_\_ You're either successful or you're not \_\_\_ Success comes from talent, not effort \_\_\_ Success means never failing \_\_\_ Only certain types of achievements count as success \_\_\_ Once you're successful, you'll always feel fulfilled

**Which of these beliefs might be limiting you?**

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### **ACTIVITY 2: WHAT SUCCESS MEANS TO ME**

**Complete these sentences honestly:**

Success feels like: \_\_\_\_\_

I feel most successful when I: \_\_\_\_\_

I admire people who: \_\_\_\_\_

Five years from now, I'd feel successful if:

---

If no one else's opinion mattered, success would mean:

---

The kind of success that would make me truly happy is:

---

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### ACTIVITY 3: MY SUCCESS VALUES

Values are the principles that guide what's most important to you. Circle 5-7 values that matter most to you personally:

Accomplishment • Adventure • Authenticity • Balance • Belonging Compassion • Contribution • Courage • Creativity • Curiosity Faith • Family • Freedom • Friendship • Fun • Growth • Happiness Health • Honesty • Independence • Justice • Kindness • Knowledge Leadership • Learning • Love • Loyalty • Peace • Perseverance Purpose • Recognition • Respect • Security • Self-expression Service • Spirituality • Stability • Tradition • Wisdom

**Other important values not listed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How might these values shape YOUR definition of success?**

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### DIFFERENT PATHS TO SUCCESS

Success is not one-size-fits-all. There are many equally valuable paths:

#### CONVENTIONAL SUCCESS:

- Academic achievements
- Career advancement
- Financial prosperity
- Recognition/awards

#### RELATIONSHIP SUCCESS:

- Meaningful connections
- Supporting others
- Being a good friend/family member
- Building community

#### PERSONAL GROWTH SUCCESS:

- Learning and developing
- Overcoming challenges
- Self-awareness

- Living authentically

**CONTRIBUTION SUCCESS:**

- Making a difference
- Helping others
- Creating positive change
- Leaving a legacy

**WELLBEING SUCCESS:**

- Balance and health
- Happiness and fulfillment
- Peace of mind
- Enjoying life

**Which path(s) feel most meaningful to you right now?**

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**ACTIVITY 4: SUCCESS ROLE MODELS**

Think about 2-3 people you consider truly successful (they can be people you know personally or public figures):

**Person 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Why I consider them**  
**successful:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Values their success**  
**represents:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Why I consider them**  
**successful:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Values their success**  
**represents:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person 3:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Why I consider them**  
**successful:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Values their success**  
**represents:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What patterns do you notice about who you admire and why?**

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**ACTIVITY 5: MY SUCCESS INVENTORY**

Success includes recognizing what you've already accomplished. List your successes in these areas:

**THINGS I'VE OVERCOME:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**WAYS I'VE GROWN:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**PEOPLE I'VE POSITIVELY IMPACTED:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**SKILLS I'VE DEVELOPED:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**VALUES I'VE LIVED BY:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



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## ACTIVITY 6: MY MULTIPLE SUCCESS AREAS

Success in one area doesn't guarantee success in others. Rate your current satisfaction (1-10) in each area:

\_\_\_ Physical health and wellbeing \_\_\_ Mental and emotional health \_\_\_ Learning and growth \_\_\_ Meaningful relationships \_\_\_ Purpose and contribution \_\_\_ Fun and enjoyment \_\_\_ Financial wellbeing \_\_\_ Authenticity and self-expression \_\_\_ Resilience and coping skills \_\_\_ Balance and boundaries

**Which areas would you most like to develop?**

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**Which areas are you most proud of?**

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## ACTIVITY 7: EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL SUCCESS

Success can be measured in two ways:

**EXTERNAL SUCCESS** (outer achievements):

- What you accomplish
- What you own or earn
- What others can see
- Recognition you receive
- Status or position

**INTERNAL SUCCESS** (inner experience):

- How you feel about yourself
- Living by your values
- Personal growth
- Meaning and fulfillment
- Peace of mind

Which form of success do you focus on more? \_\_\_\_\_

How might you create better balance between them?

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## **ACTIVITY 8: SUCCESS WITHOUT COMPARISON**

Comparison often steals our joy and distorts our view of success.

**When I compare myself to others, I focus on:**

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**How comparison affects how I feel about myself:**

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**What would success look like if I ONLY compared myself to my previous self?**

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## **REWRITING MY SUCCESS STORY**

Complete these alternative success statements:

**Instead of "Success means being the best," success means:**

---

**Instead of "Success means having it all," success means:**

---

**Instead of "Success means never failing," success means:**

---

**Instead of "Success looks the same for everyone," success means:**

---

Instead of "Success is the destination," success means:

---

---

**ACTIVITY 9: MY PERSONAL SUCCESS METRICS**

Create your own meaningful ways to measure success:

**I'll know I'm successful when I feel:**

- ---
- ---
- ---

**I'll know I'm successful when I regularly:**

- ---
- ---
- ---

**I'll know I'm successful by the way I:**

- ---
- ---
- ---

**I'll know I'm successful through my impact on:**

- ---
- ---
- ---

---

## ACTIVITY 10: CREATING MY SUCCESS VISION

Imagine yourself feeling truly successful in the future:

**What are you doing?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who are you with?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you feel?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What are you contributing?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What values are you living?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What aren't you worrying about anymore?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Draw or describe an image that represents this vision of success:**

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How has your definition of success changed over time?
2. Whose definition of success have you been trying to live up to?
3. What parts of the traditional definition of success actually do matter to you?
4. What would you do differently if you fully embraced your personal definition of success?
5. What's one area where you've been successful that you haven't given yourself credit for?

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## SUCCESS WISDOM TO REMEMBER

- **Success is a journey, not a destination**
- **True success feels good on the inside, not just impressive on the outside**

- You can celebrate others' success without comparing yourself to them
  - Success looks different in different seasons of life
  - The most meaningful success comes from living your values
  - Small, consistent progress is success
  - Both achievement AND wellbeing matter for sustainable success
  - Success is personal—only you can define what it means for you
- 

## MY SUCCESS DECLARATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_, define success for myself as:

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I will measure my success by:

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I give myself permission to pursue success in my own authentic way.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ASPIRE IMPACT NETWORK

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# What Does Accountability Really Mean?

## Understanding True Responsibility & Growth

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### **▮ PART 1: DEFINING ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability is often misunderstood. It's not about punishment or blame—it's about taking ownership of your actions and their impact.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: WHAT ACCOUNTABILITY IS AND ISN'T**

Mark each statement as either True (T) or False (F) about what accountability really means:

\_\_\_ Accountability means getting punished when you do something wrong

\_\_\_ Accountability means owning your actions and their effects on others

\_\_\_ Being accountable means never making mistakes

\_\_\_ Accountability includes making things right when possible

\_\_\_ Being accountable means blaming yourself for everything

- \_\_\_ Accountability involves learning and growing from experiences
- \_\_\_ Accountability is something others force on you
- \_\_\_ Accountability is a choice you make
- \_\_\_ Being accountable means making excuses for your behavior
- \_\_\_ Accountability includes acknowledging both your successes and mistakes

**In your own words, what does accountability mean to you?**

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## **PART 2: THE ACCOUNTABILITY CYCLE**

Accountability isn't just a one-time action—it's a process that leads to growth and better relationships.

### **ACTIVITY 2: UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE**

Number these steps in order to show the accountability cycle:

- \_\_\_ Making amends and repairing harm when possible
- \_\_\_ Taking action to change future behavior
- \_\_\_ Acknowledging what happened without excuses
- \_\_\_ Learning from the experience
- \_\_\_ Accepting how your actions affected others
- \_\_\_ Making a commitment to do better

**Draw arrows between these steps to create a visual of the accountability cycle:**

[Space for drawing]

**Think about it:** Why is each step important? What might happen if you skip a step?

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## **PART 3: BARRIERS TO ACCOUNTABILITY**

Sometimes things get in the way of being accountable, even when we want to be.

### **ACTIVITY 3: RECOGNIZING BARRIERS**

Check the barriers to accountability that you sometimes experience:

- Fear of consequences** - Worried about getting in trouble
- Shame** - Feeling like you're a bad person (not just that you made a mistake)
- Pride** - Not wanting to admit you were wrong
- Defensiveness** - Automatically protecting yourself from criticism
- Blame shifting** - Focusing on what others did wrong instead
- Minimizing** - Telling yourself it wasn't a big deal
- All-or-nothing thinking** - Feeling like one mistake makes you a complete failure
- Not seeing impact** - Not understanding how your actions affect others
- Lack of skills** - Not knowing how to take responsibility effectively
- Other:**

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**The barriers that are strongest for me are:**

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**One way I could overcome these barriers:**

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## **PART 4: THE LANGUAGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

The words we use matter. Accountable language sounds different from unaccountable language.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: ACCOUNTABLE VS. UNACCOUNTABLE LANGUAGE**

Rewrite these unaccountable statements to make them accountable:

**"It wasn't my fault because..." →**

---

**"You made me do it when you..." →**

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**"I had to, I didn't have a choice." →**

---

**"It's not a big deal, why are you upset?" →**

---

**"Everyone does it, so..." →**

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**"If you hadn't done that, I wouldn't have..." →**

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**Create your own accountable statements for situations in your life:**

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### **PART 5: ACCOUNTABILITY IN ACTION**

What does accountability look like in real-life situations?

#### **ACTIVITY 5: REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS**

For each scenario, write what accountability would look like:

**Scenario 1:** You borrowed something from a friend and lost it.

---

---

**Scenario 2:** You said something hurtful to someone when you were angry.

---

---

**Scenario 3:** You promised to do something important but forgot to do it.

---

---

**Scenario 4:** You made a mistake that affected your whole team or group.

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**Scenario 5:** You broke a rule or expectation at home or school.

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**Write your own real-life scenario and what accountability would look like:**

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## **PART 6: ACCOUNTABILITY VS. PUNISHMENT**

Many people confuse accountability with punishment, but they're very different.

### **ACTIVITY 6: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE**

Complete this comparison chart:

<b>Punishment</b>	<b>Accountability</b>
Imposed by others	
Focuses on the past	
Often creates resentment	
About paying a price	
Can feel arbitrary	

A personal choice

Focuses on learning and growth  
Builds self-respect

About making things right

Connects to your values

**Which approach leads to more positive change? Why?**

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## **PART 7: ACCOUNTABILITY STRENGTHS**

Being accountable takes courage and other strengths. Recognizing the strengths you already have can help you build accountability.

### **ACTIVITY 7: MY ACCOUNTABILITY STRENGTHS**

Rate yourself on these accountability strengths (1 = need to develop, 5 = strong area for me):

\_\_\_ **Honesty:** Being truthful with yourself and others

\_\_\_ **Courage:** Facing difficult situations even when they're uncomfortable

\_\_\_ **Humility:** Being able to admit mistakes and learn from them

\_\_\_ **Empathy:** Understanding how your actions affect others

\_\_\_ **Responsibility:** Seeing yourself as the author of your choices

\_\_\_ **Perseverance:** Sticking with making things right even when it's hard

\_\_\_ **Self-awareness:** Knowing your patterns and triggers

\_\_\_ **Integrity:** Aligning your actions with your values

**My top accountability strength is:**

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**One accountability strength I want to develop:**

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**How I plan to develop this strength:**

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## **PART 8: ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS**

Sometimes specific tools or strategies can help us practice accountability.

### **ACTIVITY 8: BUILDING MY ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLKIT**

Check the tools you think would be most helpful for you:

- Pause button:** Taking time to think before responding defensively
  - Accountability partner:** Someone who helps hold you to your commitments
  - Reflection routine:** Regular time to think about your actions and their impacts
  - Values reminder:** Keeping your core values visible to guide your choices
  - Impact check:** Asking yourself how your actions might affect others
  - Accountability statements:** Practicing phrases like "I made a mistake" or "How can I make this right?"
  - Progress tracking:** Noting when you successfully practice accountability
  - Amends plan:** A step-by-step approach for making things right
  - Other:**
- 

**My top 3 accountability tools:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2.

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3.

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**How I'll use these tools in my daily life:**

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## **PART 9: BENEFITS OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Being accountable might seem hard in the moment, but it brings many benefits.

### **ACTIVITY 9: THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Draw a ripple diagram with "Accountability" in the center. In each expanding ring, write how being accountable positively affects:

- Your self-image and growth
- Your relationships with family
- Your friendships
- Your school or work life
- Your future opportunities

[Space for drawing]

**The most important benefit of accountability for me personally is:**

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## **PART 10: SUPPORTING OTHERS IN ACCOUNTABILITY**

Just as we need support to be accountable, we can help others on their accountability journey.

### **ACTIVITY 10: BEING AN ACCOUNTABILITY ALLY**

When someone is trying to be accountable, these approaches can help:

**Helpful Responses:**

- Acknowledging their courage in taking responsibility
- Focusing on solving the problem together

- Sharing how their accountability helps rebuild trust
- Giving them space to make amends
- Recognizing growth and change

**Unhelpful Responses:**

- Continuing to punish or shame them after they've taken responsibility
- Bringing up past mistakes unrelated to the current situation
- Making it impossible for them to make things right
- Using their vulnerability against them
- Focusing only on your hurt feelings without moving forward

**Write how you could be an accountability ally for someone in your life:**

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**PART 11: REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. When was a time you practiced accountability? How did it feel during and after?

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2. What's the hardest part of being accountable for you personally?

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3. How might your relationships change if you consistently practiced accountability?

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4. When has someone else's accountability helped heal a situation with you?

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5. How is being accountable connected to your values and who you want to be?

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### **This week, I commit to:**

1. Noticing when I'm using unaccountable language and shifting to accountable language
2. Practicing at least one accountability tool from my toolkit
3. Taking responsibility for one situation where I haven't been fully accountable
4. Supporting someone else in their accountability journey
5. Reflecting on how accountability connects to my personal growth

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **REMEMBER**

- Accountability is a strength, not a weakness
  - Everyone makes mistakes—accountability is how we grow from them
  - Accountability is about the future, not just the past
  - Being accountable builds trust and respect in relationships
  - Small moments of accountability create a pattern of integrity
  - Accountability is a practice that gets easier over time
  - You can be accountable while still being kind to yourself
  - True accountability comes from within, not from outside pressure
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### **BONUS CHALLENGE**

For one week, keep an "Accountability Journal." Each day, record:

1. One situation where you practiced accountability
2. How it felt to take responsibility
3. What you learned from the experience
4. How it affected your relationships

At the end of the week, review your journal and notice any patterns or insights.

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