



Family Timeline

Intro – This activity features questions for group discussion with a focus on opening up about childhood and family issues. Questions are arranged in a timeline format starting with birth then continuing chronologically to the present. Because some issues can be sensitive, group members are encouraged to be open and try to share what they can but to also make sure not to share more than they are comfortable with at this time in their recovery. The group activity ends with a discussion on coping in the present and the future, as well as some discussion about involving family members in treatment if possible

Directions – As a group, discuss the following timeline questions about childhood and family, in order. (The age groups listed are just guidelines.) When doing this activity with adolescent groups, do Parts 1, 2 and 3, then switch to the Adolescent Specific questions in Parts 4 and 5

Part 1 – Birth through Early Childhood (Up until about age 6)

- What can you remember about this time period in your life?
- What kinds of thoughts and emotions come to mind about this time period in your life?
- What kinds of things from this time period related to your family, may have impacted who you are today?

Part 2 – Middle Childhood (Approx. age 7-12)

- What kind of kid were you during this time period? (What were some of your likes, dislikes and personality traits?)
- How was the transition to school for you?
- What was family life like during this time period?

Part 3 – Adolescence (Age 12-18)

- What roles did you experiment with in adolescence and where did you eventually find yourself?
- How did you do socially and in school? (For SUD groups, how did substance use play a role?)
- How did your family react to you as an adolescent and how did you react to your family?

Part 4 – Early Adulthood (Approx. age 19 through early/mid 20's)

- What became your areas of focus in early adulthood?
 - For Adolescents – What do you plan on focusing on in early adulthood?
- What was this time period like for you mentally and emotionally? (For SUD groups how was your SUD use patterns and related behaviors?)
 - For Adolescents – How do you feel about the near future period of young adulthood coming up soon in your life?
- As an early adult, how did your relationships with family go (How has family helped and hurt?)
 - For Adolescents – What kind of relationship do you want to have with your family as an adult?



Part 5 – Adulthood to the present

- What are some key factors and events that guided your course of adulthood? (For SUD groups discuss substance use and mental health)
 - For Adolescents - What do you think will be helpful for you in your future journey through adulthood?
- What lessons have you learned about coping and surviving as an adult?
 - For Adolescents - As a grown-up with adult responsibilities, how do you plan to survive and cope?
- As an adult, how have your relationships with family changed, evolved, or improved?
 - For Adolescents – What kind of family (if any) do you plan on having?

Closing Discussion - Considerations for the Present and the Future

- **Is your family involved in your recovery?** (If you are in treatment, are they involved in your treatment?) – Why or why not? What may be holding you back?
- **What would it take for you to increase your family involvement in your recovery?** (If this activity is being done at a treatment center, this could be a good time to discuss what family services your program offers and discuss some of the potential benefits of these family treatment and support services)
- **Looking to the future** – After all that has been discussed today, what are some of the things that you have learned (either good or bad, things to do and things not to do) that you can use to help make your current and future family life successful and happy?

