



Trust Building – The Table of Trust

Opening Exercise: SECRETS and TRUST

Directions: Everyone in the group should have something to write with (a pen) and some paper. Also, everyone in this group should be clearly instructed of the following rule about this exercise:

- ***You will not be asked to share any of the secrets you identify during this group exercise. Please keep this in mind. The secrets you list for this exercise are for your eyes only.***

Everyone in the group is going to be asked to think about (but not share) three secrets. This is an exercise about building trust, not sharing secrets. Identify the following three types of secrets and discuss the questions

Level 1 Basic Secret - Think of something in your life or your past that is somewhat uncomfortable or awkward to talk about or it can be something you are just embarrassed (but not humiliated) by. This would be something that you would tend to share with people whom you know and trust – **Write it down**

Discuss:

What are some situations where you are comfortable sharing basic secrets about yourself?

Some people are by nature more trusting and open, and others are more guarded and cautious when it comes to basic secrets. Is it easy or difficult (or somewhere in between) for you to share basic secrets with others?

Level 2 Moderate Secret – Now think of a secret that is more than a little uncomfortable, awkward or embarrassing. Perhaps it is something you feel guilty about, or you are afraid you might have consequences for if the wrong person found out about it. This type of secret you might only be inclined to share with your inner circle of close family members and friends, or with others whom you have built firm trust. – **Write it down**

Discuss:

*Do you have at least one person in your life who knows some of your level 2 moderate secrets?
If so, why are you comfortable sharing these secrets with that person?*

*How do you feel about sharing level 2 secrets in this group as appropriate?
What is needed in this group for people to be able to open up and take risks?*

Level 3 Deep Secret – Now think of a secret that you really do not want others to know. Perhaps you are the only person who knows about this or maybe only the most trusted person in your life. It would require a really high level of trust for you to share this secret – **Write it down if you can. Or if you are unable to, just think about your secret for now**

Discuss:

*Without sharing it, how does it feel when you think of a personal deep secret? (Try to use feeling words)
What is it like to have it written down (Or why were you afraid to write it down?) –*

You can throw your paper away at the end

Why might it be necessary to share some secrets in group therapy when working on substance use and mental health recovery? How can opening up about some secrets be part of the healing process?



The Trust Table

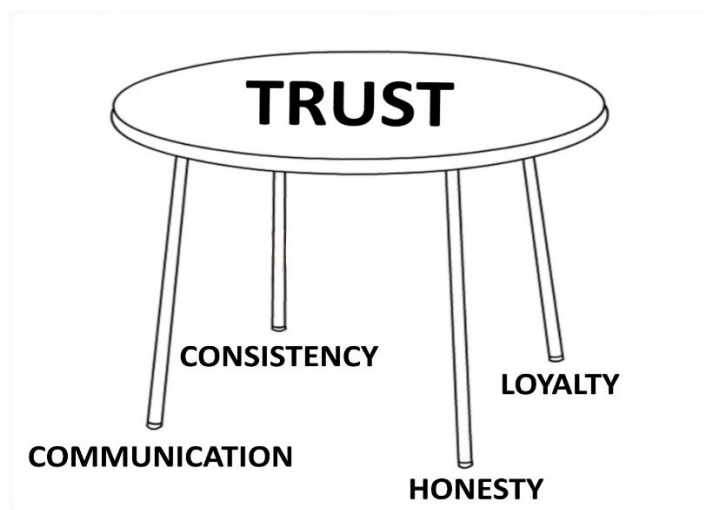
Trust is required to truly open up about who we really are which again can be part of the positive change and healing process. Building trust consists of four main factors working together like legs of a table. The four qualities are:

Honesty – Truthfulness, freedom from deceit or fraud

Loyalty – Faithfulness to commitments, allegiance, devotion

Consistency – Sticking with principles and patterns of behavior and performance

Communication – The open interchange of thoughts, feelings and opinions by speech or writing



Consider how all four qualities are needed to build trust. For example:

It is impossible (and foolish) to trust someone who is **not honest**

If someone is honest, consistent, and a good communicator **but not loyal**, they would still be difficult to trust

If someone was honest, loyal and a good communicator however if you never could depend on them or if they kept treating you differently or if they were in and out of your life unpredictably (**all examples of inconsistency**) then trust would be hard. **Consistency is needed**

Finally, someone may be honest, loyal & consistent, but if they do not **communicate**, we would never know it

How to use the Table of Trust:

If you are trying to build trust in a relationship, discuss these four qualities with your partner and share with one another how you can build on those qualities

If building trust in group therapy discuss how the group can increase consistency, loyalty, honesty and communication

Optional Closing Discussion– Discuss this quote to close out group:

"The man who can keep a secret may be wise,
but he is not half as wise as the man with no secrets to keep." –Edgar Watson Howe