



The Struggle is Real – This activity is focused on identifying and the strategizing ways to overcome the things that are giving you the most trouble in your personal positive change process.

Directions: If you are more advanced in your recovery and you are doing well then for this exercise, look back at some of your past struggles and consider some of them. If you are someone who is still struggling sometimes now, then try to identify a few areas from the list below that are particularly tough for you when it comes to managing substance use disorders

As a group, review and discuss these examples of some typical challenging areas in substance use recovery. When the group is done discussing this list make sure to allow everyone in the group an opportunity to identify and process some of their own ideas about areas of struggle

Do you now or have you in the past ever had a difficult time with any of the following...

- Getting past a certain point without relapsing (If so, when does that usually happen for you?)
- Cravings
- Sleep problems (insomnia/hypersomnia?)
- Mental health
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Mood swings
 - Eating disorder
 - Trauma/PTSD
 - Other mental health issue- Which one?
- Physical Health
 - Coping with physical pain
 - Physical disability
 - Chronic health problem (If so which one?)
- Relationships/Social
 - Difficult finding positive friends and/or staying away from negative ones
 - Poor choices in romantic relationships
- Attitude/Negative Thinking/Difficult Feelings
 - Overconfidence/Cockiness
 - Indifference – (Stop caring and give up- “What’s the point?” or “Who Cares?”)
 - Resentments/Anger leads to relapse
 - Bored with drug free life
 - Loneliness
 - Complacency
 - Maintaining balance/Becoming overwhelmed with responsibilities
 - Return of denial – “I can control it this time” or “Once more won’t hurt”
 - Giving yourself permission – “I deserve a reward”- then use
- Cross Addiction – (For example moving from drugs to alcohol or to gambling or compulsive sex, etc.)
- Other*** – What else that has not been discussed is a struggle for you or was a past struggle for you?



Closing Process Questions:

1. Are you willing to share with the group the next time that you may be struggling? Why or why not?
2. What have people told you to do and what have you tried when it comes to getting through tough times?
3. What do you know for sure helps you?
4. What have you not tried but you think may be helpful with successfully managing areas of struggle?

My Plan to Survive Areas of Struggle: *Review and discuss the following:*

How can this group help me to survive challenges?

What can I start to do now to be prepared for times of struggle?

Specific Struggle Survival Plan: If I am having a hard time, I will... (Be specific and realistic with your plan)

1

2

3

One thing that I am willing to consider trying which I have not tried or resisted in the past is:

I will stay motivated to overcome times of struggle without giving up or giving in by...

The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow.

- Robert Tew