Early Sobriety Worksheet

1. Why should I go to meetings? (Put a check mark in a box if it applies to you, and add other examples below to help yourself choose to go to meetings)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I usually feel better after |  | I learn strategies for dealing with stressors and triggers |  | Someone tells my story |
|  | I can bring my friends and family to open meetings to listen and learn |  | I see friends in the program celebrate monthly and yearly successes |  | I can approach someone who needs help and extend my hand |
|  | I relate to the people I meet |  | I can find or have found a sponsor to work with |  | It helps to start or end my day on the “right foot” |
|  | I feel hope that I don’t have to drink today |  | I get a nice cup or tea or coffee |  | It sometimes is the only place I have left to go |
|  | I read or hear literature that makes me want to reflect or re-read later |  | I can take a service position that helps keep the meetings going |  | I want to make sure AA keeps going for the next person who needs it |

More examples:

2. What are some excuses or problems I have run into regarding going to meetings? (Check off any excuses you have used, or think you might use, and add other examples)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Personalities in the rooms make me feel uncomfortable (sometimes) |  | The topics are too vague – I wish they’d talk more about things that matter |  | I still think I can control my drinking |
|  | I have family obligations that conflict with meeting times |  | The coffee is too strong |  | The steps look like an impossible task |
|  | Meetings sometimes make me feel worse |  | The meeting starts at a tough time, and I don’t want to walk in late |  | My friends tell me I’m “fine” now that I’ve attended a few meetings |
|  | I’m scared I’ll run into my sponsor, and I haven’t done the step work I should have |  | I just want to be left alone to listen, but people keep talking to me before/after |  | I think I’m “cured” since I’ve been sober a few days/weeks/months/years |
|  | I don’t have a ride and it’s too cold to get there |  | I’m too young to be an alcoholic |  | The “God” thing is too “cult”-ish for me |

More examples:

3. What are some triggers that cause me to want to drink? (Check the ones that apply, and add any others you can think of in the space below)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Work stress |  | Romantic relationships |  | Boredom |
|  | Success |  | Streets in town: |  | Cravings |
|  | HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) |  | Guilty – recurring memory |  | Guilty – recent mistake |
|  | Feeling down/low self-estreem |  | Being alone (for a weekend, evening) |  | Hear a “drinking song” |
|  | Preparing food (stovetop, BBQ, etc) |  | TV Commercials and shows |  | Sometimes my mind just says “yes, a drink would be perfect now” |

More examples:

4. What are some things I can do to avoid triggers? (Check the ones that apply, and add any others you can think of in the space below)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Take care of my basic needs (eat, meditate, phone a friend, rest) |  | Call a friend, play a game, read a book, pray, meditate |  | Plan ahead each day to see where there might be triggers |
|  | Use the slogans, such as “First Things First” |  | Apologize right away if you hurt someone |  | Feeling down/low self-estreem |
|  | Work the steps |  | Avoid places that make you want to drink |  | Turn the tv off (and grab the big book!) |
|  | Get a list of several phone numbers, and keep calling until you reach someone |  | Wait one year before entering a new romantic relationship |  | Keep a list of slogans in your wallet or purse, and read them if you’re feeling stressed out |
|  | Have small sugar candies around the house to handle cravings |  | Fill up weekends with AA activities if you’re going to be alone |  | Keep a copy of the grapevine to read if needed |

More examples:

5. What are some ways to get started on prayer and meditation? (Check the ones that you have tried or would like to try, and add any others you can think of in the space below)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Start with a simple phrase, such as “Please and thank you” |  | Step 11 Prayer “Make me a channel of your peace” |  | Pray on your knees |
|  | Use the slogans, such as “I can’t, He can, Let Him” |  | Step 3 Prayer “I offer myself to you” |  | Try deep breathing meditation |
|  | Repeat the Serenity Prayer slowly |  | Step 7 Prayer “Take all of me, good and bad” |  | Use a guided meditation disk |

More examples:

6. What are some ways to get involved in service? (Check the ones that you have done or are doing now, and add any others you can think of in the space below)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Get a service sponsor |  | Ask a group member what needs to be done |  | Attend events, such as potlucks, gratitude nights and workshops |
|  | Observe the people who are working and get to know what is done |  | Join a group, and attend every meeting of that group (if possible) |  | Share your story in a general way during meetings |
|  | Volunteer to help set up chairs before the meeting, or be the meeting chairperson |  | Take on a service position, such as group secretary, and find out what you need to do |  | Research how AA groups work using pamphlets and the website |
|  | Attend the District Committee Meeting (usually the last Monday of the month) |  | Always say “yes” when someone asks you to do something involving service for AA |  | Get the key to set up a meeting – knowing you are needed will help motivate you |
|  | Reach out your hand at a meeting and welcome someone |  | Offer to help sweep the floor, clean the cups, or put out the garbage |  | Keep coming back – filling a seat is a simple way to be of service |

More examples:

Here are some additional suggestions from local AA members on how to succeed in early sobriety (please note, these are things that work, but are not “rules”):

* **Using the Big Book**
  + Re-read the big book until you wear it out
  + Join/attend a Big Book or step study group that uses the Big Book
  + The Big Book is the guide to the steps
* **How to look for and choose a sponsor**
  + Ask the person who 12 stepped you to be your sponsor
  + Ask someone who tells your story to be your sponsor
  + Look for someone who shares about working the steps
  + Tell others that you’re looking for a sponsor
  + Don’t wait for the “perfect sponsor”
  + Temporary sponsors can help you get started
  + It’s ok to “fire” a sponsor if the relationship isn’t working for you
  + We can outgrow our sponsor, and then get a new one
* **Challenges to watch out for**
  + Stinking thinking – if you’re thinking a lot about something negative, it’s probably not helping your serenity...
  + Missing meetings because “you don’t feel like it”
  + Drinking-related social functions such as parties – go if you have a reason, and make sure you have a good backup/“escape” plan
  + Find a non-alcoholic substitute such as a favourite pop or fruity drink
  + Major trigger locations such as Gold Range street (Eventually we cease fighting anyone or anything, even alcohol – but in early sobriety, these places can cause us a lot of harm in our spirituality)
  + Any activies that you would normally associate with drinking – BBQing, playoff hockey games, superbowl, vacations – you don’t have to stay away from them, just be prepared
  + Marijuana and other mood altering substances can be easy substitutes for drinking that prevent us from making spiritual progress. Complete abstinence from all substances of this type is recommended.