Relationships in Early Recovery

Participant Workbook | Healthy connection and recovery

Relationships can support recovery and can also bring stress. This workbook helps you consider your needs and choices without prescribing whether you should date.

The one-year suggestion

You may hear “Wait a year before dating.” It is a common recovery-community guideline, not a universal clinical requirement. What might it protect? When might it not fit?

My thoughts: _____

_____

Relationships and recovery

How might loneliness, conflict, or substance exposure affect your recovery? You may use a fictional example.

_____

_____

Self-reflection inventory

Mark True, False, or Unsure. There is no score or diagnostic cutoff. You may skip any item.

1. Without realizing it, I focus on others’ needs even at my own expense.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

2. When others offer help, I often decline because attention makes me uneasy.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

3. I take pride in helping and may postpone or deny my own needs.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

4. I feel best about myself when giving advice or handling a crisis.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

5. I sometimes wait for others to care for me in return and feel disappointed.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

6. I sometimes focus so intensely on one person that I struggle to attend to my own needs.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

7. I sometimes worry people value me mainly for what I can do for them.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

8. When I am alone, I often think about other people’s needs rather than my own.

☐ True ☐ False ☐ Unsure

What patterns did you notice?

_____

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Relationship readiness and support plan

Healthy relationship qualities

Consider mutual respect, consent, emotional safety, reciprocity, boundaries, and space for other supports.

Three qualities I value:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My readiness check

How do I respond to rejection or disagreement?

_____

Can I communicate my limits and respect another person's "no"?

_____

How will I maintain recovery supports and routines?

_____

What is my plan if alcohol or drugs are present?

_____

What signs would tell me to slow down or seek help?

_____

Discussion questions

1. How can you tell if a relationship is healthy? What qualities do you look for?

_____

2. How will you know if or when you are ready for a relationship?

_____

3. If you are not currently with a partner but want to date now, why do you want to be in a relationship?

_____

4. If you currently have a partner, do you believe the relationship benefits your recovery? Why or why not?

_____

5. If you think the suggestion to wait a year to date is just dumb, tell us why!

_____

My personal plan

One boundary I can practice:

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_____

A support person or group outside a partner:

_____

A coping strategy for conflict or loneliness:

_____

A sign I need additional support:

_____

Safety note: You do not need to confront someone who threatens, controls, or frightens you. Seek support safely. This is educational, not a diagnosis or individualized treatment plan.

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