

10/3/22 Example of handouts from a topic in Creating Change (*What You Want People to Understand*)

Handout 1 - What do you want people to understand about you?

If you have “problem” behaviors, they may be born out of pain, not willful intent. Yet the world may seem unforgiving. Many people don’t understand trauma and addiction.

Explore one or more below. You can keep it private or share it.

What do you want others to understand about....

❖ **How you tried to say “Help!”.** What was your behavior expressing? Hurting yourself physically, starting fights, or doing poorly at school or work are distress signals but may not be seen for what they are. *Were there ways you tried to say “Help!”?*

❖ **What you did to survive.** If you survived a dangerous environment you may have become dangerous. With no help for trauma you may have turned to substances. *Did you do things you didn’t want to do, just to get by?*

❖ **Who you are now versus then.** Maybe you’ve become a better parent, gone back to school, or taken responsibility for your mistakes. The “sober you” may be very different than the “addicted you.” *How have you changed for the better?*

❖ **What you did and didn’t get.** You may have been taken care of physically but not emotionally. You may have had love from one parent, but not another. *Were any of your core needs not met? (e.g., love, safety, education, food, clothing, healthcare).*

❖ **What was good about you.** Did you have a good heart? Did you try to make things better? *What was good about you that others may not have seen?*

❖ **How you tried to repair harm you caused.** You may have lied, neglected others’ needs, been violent. *If you caused harm how did you try to repair it?*

❖ **What you most regret.** Did you do things you’re ashamed of? Did you fail yourself or others? *Are there regrets that weigh on you?*

❖ **Insight you gained.** How have you grown emotionally, intellectually, spiritually? For example, “I learned... to make better choices”, “I learned...that the trauma wasn’t my fault”. *Are there insights you want others to understand?*

❖ **Other:** _____

Handout 2 – An imaginary conversation

Try an *imaginary conversation* with someone, either out loud or silently. What would you say? What would you want the person to say back?

You can focus on a painful aspect of your life or a positive one, such as gratitude and love. You can address addiction, trauma or anything else.

Step #1. See examples below. Then list here, in a short phrase or sentence, an imaginary conversation you'd like to try: _____

Between you and someone in your past

Examples ▪ You tell your deceased father how much you loved him. ▪ You apologize to a person you stole from. ▪ You confront someone who hurt you.

Between you and yourself in the past

Examples ▪ You forgive your 17-year old self for mistakes. ▪ You comfort your nine year old self about the abuse.

Between you and someone in the present

Examples ▪ You reveal your gambling problem to your partner. ▪ You tell your mother how you feel when she criticizes you.. ▪ You tell a friend what you're proud of overcoming.

Between different sides of yourself

Examples ▪ You tell the side of you that feels hopeless why you should keep going. ▪ You kindly welcome all sides of yourself, such as the young side, the angry side, the wise side.

Between you and your higher power

Examples ▪ You express gratitude for recovery. ▪ You ask for guidance on being a better parent.

Step #2. Now try it.

- ✦ Choose a method: in writing, aloud, or just in your mind.
- ✦ Imagine the person sitting across from you, if that helps.
- ✦ Focus on *your* perspective, what *you* want to say.
- ✦ Notice feelings and insights that arise.