



Fostering New Spaces

Overview: What kind of spaces promote recovery? We know that many addicts face the challenge of returning home and back to their communities after achieving sobriety. How can families and communities best support individuals in recovery?

Tags: space, safety, recovery, support, family

Theme: Establishing Place

Time: 60 Minutes

Materials: pens, name tags, participant handouts

Participants: 3-25

Room Configuration: Flexible

Activity

Introduction: Initial Questions (15-20 Minutes)

1. Introduce the participants to the subject of “establishing place”. Ask the audience if they have any initial thoughts, questions, or concerns. Use this as a time to help provide clarity for the audience about the session.
2. Give participants the excerpt to read on their own. Allow 5-10 minutes to read and write down thoughts and ideas.
3. Ask the audience if they have any questions or concerns. Are there any initial thoughts or reactions? If so, provide a brief window for discussion.

Engagement: Exchanging Viewpoints (20 Minutes)

1. Give participants a name tag. Instruct participants to write their names on their tags and wear them, noting that it is OK if they prefer not to share their real name.
2. Ask participants to pair off and introduce themselves to someone else. Then ask pairs to exchange their responses to the following questions or statements. [**Variation:** If the group is not large enough, or if the facilitator prefers, direct these questions to the entire group]
 - a. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “To an older person with an established family, leaving home holds a different kind of terror. But, finding new, clean, and sober friends and family is the only exit that holds the possibility of recovery.”

- b. How does the following statement make you feel? “As long as we keep on releasing addicts from incarceration or treatment back into their previous homes, I see little hope for change.”
 - c. Do you agree or disagree that the opioid crisis is a challenge that cannot be solved by medical treatment alone? Is a combination of medical treatment and support services the ultimate combination?
 - d. Would it make a difference if more affordable and available support and treatment services were present in our communities? Do you agree or disagree?
3. *Omit this section if using the variation described above.* Once participants have been introduced and shared ideas, ask some of the groups to introduce their partner and what their answers were to some of the questions. This process relies on the participant’s ability to summarize the response of their partner. Then, ask the partner (or others in the group) if they agree or disagree with the ideas of this person. Do this for a few rounds until each of the questions have been answered.

Conclusion: Wrap-Up and Next Steps (15 Minutes)

1. Announce that 15-minutes remain for the session.
2. Summarize the main points of the discussion. What were some of the key takeaways? Were there any differences in opinions? Any controversies? Were any major points about establishing place not addressed in the conversation?
3. Wrap up the session by speaking about the manuscript, additional resources, etc. Exchange contact information and continue further conversations if needed.

Reading: Excerpt from “A New Home” by Mary Lynn St. Lawrence

We are facing a public health challenge that can’t be solved by treatment alone. These people, especially the women we work with, just need a community. A young person relies on peers more than family for emotional support, and leaving that group and moving away for recovery is a frightening and sad possibility. To an older person with an established family, leaving home holds a different kind of terror. But, finding new, clean, and sober friends and family is the only exit that holds the possibility of recovery. Imagine spending months in treatment, missing your family, losing your job and then having to enter a new life alone in an empty apartment--with no associates other than those you met in the treatment center. As long as we keep on releasing addicts from incarceration or treatment back into their previous homes, I see little hope for change. New and sustained interpersonal relationships can make a difference.

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