

## Understanding Re-Entry, Transitional Living and Aftercare

### *Re-Entry*

Re-entry is the transitional period when the recovering person leaves a rehabilitation center and re-enters society. It is a difficult time. One must adapt to the stresses and pressures of a “full-blown life” (which feels like ordinary life to others) after having adjusted to less pressure and stresses of life in rehab.

Re-entry planning becomes very important for the long-term success of every recovering person because re-entering society to live a sober life demands difficult change from a population with a *high resistance to change*. We can anticipate particular challenges for each individual. This allows the formulation of a plan that takes into account the amount of time a person might need in order to adjust to the change of a new life. It’s a life without drugs or alcohol. Considering the concept of rate of change is absolutely necessary.

Without such foresight, there is a temptation to rush this adjustment process which will accidentally contribute to failure. In addition, the recovering person is liable to be very impatient and not yet fully aware of the devastating effects of their impatience.

In developing a re-entry plan, here are some of the factors to consider:

- How old is the person?
- How many years have they been practicing their addiction?
- How severe has their life-style been?
- How many times have they been in rehab?
- How many relapses have they had?
- Have they had a period of time where they demonstrated clean and sober, independent, mature and responsible living?

#### *Gem to Share*

*I will always be here for you.  
The ways I help you look different now.  
Prayers. Letters.  
Words of encouragement.  
Sharing a meal together. Listening.  
I love you. I care.*

### *Transitional Living*

One choice for the recovering person who needs to develop more mature coping skills or who has shown an inability to remain clean and sober after previous treatment attempts is some form of *transitional living*. This may be a half-way house, a clean and sober living house, a three-quarter house, etc. This is a good choice because it gives the recovering person more time to adjust to the extra pressures of sober living - the panic of *not using alcohol or drugs to cope!* The choice of transitional living temporarily reduces the increased stresses and pressures of ordinary life a person would have to face if they returned home immediately after treatment.

Transitional living provides a half-step towards the goal of full re-entry. In this environment, a person is expected to obtain low-stress employment and pay rent but not have the pressures of a high-stress job, family, school or trying to please someone.

While living in the half-way house there are a variety of ways to spend “free time”:

- Visiting family members
- Going to meetings
- Seeing a counselor
- Working with a sponsor
- Developing (at least five) sober friendships
- Doing fun recreational activities with sober friends on a weekly basis
- Developing spiritual practices (church, bible study, morning devotions, etc.)
- Getting used to **honesty, accountability, discipline** and **responsible** living

The recommended time for staying in transitional living usually varies from 90 days to a year. It depends on the individual needs of the person.

***Recovery teaches adult coping skills through time and repetition.***

## Aftercare

Aftercare is the program of recovery needed after completing the stay at the rehabilitation center. Aftercare is the most important part of any successful long term recovery. Is the goal short-term recovery or long-term recovery? How many short-term recoveries have they already had? How much time would all of them put together add up to?

Thirty days of rehab might be compared to learning to ride a bicycle. The first written after-care plan could be seen as temporary training wheels helping them learn to pedal, stay balanced and steer on their own in the difficult terrain of the outside world.

## Don't Fail to Plan

Most graduates who fail to stay clean and sober will end up relapsing within the first months after leaving the protective rehab environment. This happens either because they **fail to write** an after-care plan or because they **fail to follow** the plan they have written.

The addict mind should not make decisions during this transitional time. Personalized aftercare alleviates the temptation of taking too much control of life too soon. Each recovering person needs to write a sane and sensible plan to guide them during those first critical 12 months after rehab.

### Mike says .....

*"Aftercare ... exponentially increases the chances of the recovering person's long-term success. It is critical because the recovering person is learning how to live clean and sober while experiencing his or her full freedom."*

*If a recovering person resists having an aftercare program, you need only ask him or her, "Do you want short-term or long-term recovery? Aftercare is an important part of helping people practice new habits that become part of their lives."*

Excerpt from *The Four Seasons of Recovery for Parents of Alcoholics and Addicts*  
Page 146. by Michael Speakman, L.I.S.A.C. Founder of PAL Support Group

Here is a sample of an aftercare agreement your loved one would complete with guidance from rehab personnel prior to leaving for transitional living.

_____ Sign up for I.O.P.....	By when?	_____
_____ Enter a half-way house .....	By when?	_____ For how long? _____
_____ Find a sponsor .....	By when?	_____
_____ End unhealthy friendships.....	By when?	_____
_____ Develop sober friendships.....	By when?	_____
_____ Go to a 12-step meeting (AA, NA, CA)	How many	per week? _____
_____ Do daily prayer or meditation (11th step)		
_____ Do service work at meetings (volunteer clean-up, make coffee, etc.)		
_____ Make face-to-face visits with sponsor.....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Make phone calls to sponsor .....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Attend aftercare group meetings.....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Attend group counseling sessions .....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Go to marriage counseling sessions .....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Go to individual counseling sessions .....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Attend worship services.....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Attend Bible study.....	How many	per week? _____
_____ Recreational activities with sober friends ...	How many	per week? _____

### Lesson Review

Re-entry is difficult for the recovering addicts due to their high r \_\_\_\_\_ to c \_\_\_\_\_ .

Relapse after rehab often occurs because the recovering addict fails to **wr**\_\_ the plan or fail to **f** \_\_\_\_\_ the plan.

Recovery is **HARD** because it requires:

**H** \_\_\_\_\_

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**R** \_\_\_\_\_ living

**D** \_\_\_\_\_