



RECOVERY IN FOCUS · GROUP CURRICULUM · FACILITATOR GUIDE

Holidays, Celebrations & "Just One"

Event-based relapse prevention with scripts and exits. Four parts, two group classes.

Topic category (billing anchor)	Relapse Prevention / Trigger Management, with Refusal Skills
Clinical focus	Scheduled high-risk events (holidays, celebrations, grief gatherings, game days) as predictable relapse drivers; event planning and rehearsed refusal as relapse prevention
Evidence base	Relapse Prevention (Marlatt; high-risk situations and coping rehearsal) · CBT · social-skills/refusal training
Format	One participant packet · two group classes of about 2 hours each · Class 1 = Parts 1–2 · Class 2 = Parts 3–4
Group rules	2 to 12 clients, same time · at least 1 active Medi-Cal beneficiary · no minors mixed with adults

This file: facilitator guide class agendas, grief guardrail, rehearsal protocol, FIRP

Companion file: participant packet (print one per member) 4 parts · 10 exercises · 1 vignette · event plan · scripts

FACILITATOR GUIDE

How to run this session

- **TIME IT WELL:** this session earns the most when scheduled a few weeks ahead of a real cluster (November/December, Super Bowl, summer). Members build plans for events that are actually coming.
- **LINK:** calendar matches are the engine: two members with weddings coming, three with the holidays dread. Pair matched members for plan-building.
- **REHEARSE OUT LOUD:** scripts get said around the room until they're boring. Boring is stated as the goal; it reframes awkwardness as progress.
- **LAND IT CLINICALLY:** every segment returns to the mechanism: stacked cues plus permission logic plus the "just one" sale, and the plan as the counter.

Mixed-functioning group adjustments

- Read everything aloud; writing optional; you or a peer can fill plans.
- Lower-functioning rooms can run the whole session on: pick the next event, one person who knows, drink in hand, exit line, debrief call. That's a full plan.

GRIEF AND FAMILY GUARDRAILS

Funerals and first sober holidays carry live grief. Let grief be named, then return to the plan: *"That loss is real, and the day will be heavy. What does heavy need from the plan?"* Don't let the session become grief processing for one member; offer individual follow-up instead. Family estrangement will surface on the holiday material ("I'm not invited anywhere"); treat the empty holiday as its own high-risk event and plan it the same way (the Boredom session's furnishing tools apply; say so). No pressure on any member to attend any event; skipping is honored out loud as a complete plan.

HOOK SOURCE NOTE: holiday/event relapse clustering is a consistent clinical observation and shows in seasonal treatment and crisis-line patterns; present it as "programs see the same calendar every year" rather than a precise statistic. "One isn't a number, it's a door" is rhetoric, not research; let it be rhetoric.

CLASS 1

Parts 1 and 2 (about 2 hours)

Opening (10 min)

Frame: *"Most days you're up against your own triggers. On certain days the whole culture joins the other team. Tonight we plan for those days."* Icebreaker go-around: "What's the next date on your calendar that has history with your using?" Board the dates; you'll reuse them all session.

Part 1: The Days That Stack Against You (40 to 50 min)

Teach (5 min or less): what stacks on event days (cues, emotions including joy, pressure, loneliness, permission logic), and the one favor: these days are on the calendar months ahead.

PLAIN "Which holiday or event was biggest in your using life?"

DEEPER "Have your happiest days been as risky as your worst ones? What do you make of that?"

- **Exercise 1** (yes/no): item 2 (joy as risk) surprises rooms that only guard against pain; linger there.
- **Exercise 2** (the calendar): go around on "the next one coming, with its date." These dates drive Class 2's plans.
- **Exercise 3** (what it loads): volunteers share; sort the loads out loud into cues, feelings, pressure.

Part 2: The "Just One" Voice (45 to 55 min)

Teach (5 min or less): the event vocabulary of the voice; every line sells the first and never mentions the second; one is a door.

- **Exercise 4** (yes/no): item 1 go-around by show of hands; near-universal, and seeing it is the point.
- **Exercise 5** (the voice and the answer): members write both, volunteers read both aloud. The answer written "while it's quiet" is the clinical move; say why: you don't out-argue the voice live, you read the prepared answer.
- **Luis vignette + Exercise 6:** read aloud. The two moves (pre-arranged bartender swap, the ninety-second call) teach that plans are small and specific, not heroic. Question 3 locates each member's toast moment for Class 2.

Close Class 1 with the talk-it-out questions. Assign: find out one logistical fact about your next event (who's going, is there a bar, when does it start). Intelligence-gathering as homework.

CLASS 2**Parts 3 and 4 (about 2 hours)**

Opening (10 min)

Check in on the intelligence homework: what did you learn about your event? Reward specifics.

Part 3: The Event Plan (55 to 65 min)

Teach (5 min or less): the four parts (before, during, exit, after); skipping is a complete plan; the override rule (craving gets loud = leave, no goodbyes); the debrief happens on wins too.

- **Exercise 7** (the plan): the session's centerpiece; members build it for their real date from Class 1. Read plans aloud; challenge vagueness kindly ("whose car, what time, which line?"). Pair calendar-matched members to pressure-test each other's plans.
- **Exercise 8** (the three no's): any "no" is a weak spot; fix live where possible (transportation and the inside-person are usually fixable in the room).

Part 4: Scripts and Exits (45 to 55 min)

Teach (5 min or less): unrehearsed words hide under pressure; short beats explained; nobody owes a medical history at a barbecue; the arm toasts, not the glass.

- **Exercise 9** (pick and rehearse): the rehearsal protocol: offers get made around the room ("want a beer?"), members answer with their line, twice each, until flat. Laughter is fine; flat is the finish line.
- **Exercise 10** (sober traditions): go around; members claiming a role (griller, DJ, driver, photographer) convert events from minefields into jobs. Link members into shared plans (the sober watch party often gets born right here; let it).
- **Skill of the day:** boring on purpose, daily lines in the car. Promise the check-in.

Close with the group questions and the summary read aloud.

FIRP scaffold (one note per member, per class)

Class 1. Focus: member's relapse-prevention objective, plus today's topic: scheduled high-risk events and permission-logic cognitions. **Intervention:** *Educated group on event-based relapse risk, including cue stacking, emotional loading (grief and celebration), social pressure, and permission logic; facilitated identification of each member's upcoming high-risk dates and event-specific risk loads; guided written identification of personal "just one" cognitions and preparation of a counter-response; facilitated vignette analysis of in-event coping; linked members' patterns and processed responses.* **Response:** individualize. **Plan:** gather logistics on the next event; return for Class 2.

Class 2. Focus: same objective, plus today's topic: event planning and refusal-skill rehearsal. **Intervention:** *Reviewed event logistics homework; guided each member through a written four-stage event plan (preparation, in-event supports, predetermined exit, post-event debrief) for a specific upcoming date, with peer pressure-testing; identified and corrected plan gaps in transportation and in-event support; led repeated out-loud rehearsal of refusal, deflection, and exit scripts to fluency; facilitated identification of sober event roles and traditions; assigned daily script rehearsal.* **Response:** individualize, including rehearsal participation and plan completeness. **Plan:** execute the event plan; debrief call scheduled; report back after the event; individual follow-up where grief or estrangement content indicated.

COMPLIANCE NOTES: 2 to 12 clients, same time; at least one active Medi-Cal beneficiary; no one 17 or under mixed with adults (outside a certified school site). Facilitator: licensed/registered clinician or certified/registered AOD counselor, in scope. Participant list each class; one note per member per class with attendance plus that member's specific response, provider-signed, finalized within 3 business days (service day counts as day 0), tied to that member's problem list or objective. Land every segment on the substance-use and relapse link.