



## Chapter 1 - Learn About Dysfunctional Families

**Question: How do we become alcoholics/addicts or codependents?**

### Reading



### Dysfunctional Family Systems

Parents in a dysfunctional family include one alcoholic/addict and one codependent, two alcoholics/addicts, or two codependents. The codependent parents relinquish control to the alcoholic/addict parents, taking on long-suffering roles. Children in dysfunctional families make decisions of how to survive the family abuse since they cannot escape or fight back. They often pattern their lives after the parent-abuser or the parent-victim even when one parent is not present.



### Alcoholics or Addicts

Alcoholics and addicts are people who misuse substances and engage in behavior or adopt beliefs to dull their pain, escape their feelings, or feel alive. Substances include, but are not limited to, alcohol, caffeine, drugs, and tobacco. Behaviors may include excessive use of technology or media, pornography, sexual abuse of self or others, raging, gambling, risky or dangerous activities, and hoarding. Adopted beliefs may be grandiosity, superiority, and having the “right” to control, exploit, and/or manipulate others. They

- Switch between reactive positions:
  - 1) I am the victim; you are my savior; he/she is the perpetrator
  - 2) You are the victim; I am your rescuer (and you will owe me for it); he/she is the perpetrator
  - 3) You are the perpetrator who has betrayed me; I am the victim; I will find another Super-Hero to save me
- Charm codependents with eye contact, listening, touch, intimate social proximity, compliments, gifts, parental nurturing, and protection to manipulate them
- Isolate the codependent from all others
- Intimidate codependents with superior education, intelligence, skills, position, creativity, etc.
- Undermine, ignore, minimize, and shame efforts and accomplishments of codependents and disparage their pride
- Rally codependents to fight causes and quietly enjoy watching the mayhem
- Bait others into arguments and competitions where the addicts have unfair advantage; they must “win” and others must “lose,” be hurt, or humiliated
- Erratically create, define, assert, and enforce their constantly changing family rules
- Dramatize situations to create urgency and allegiance
- Work with ulterior motives to manipulate an outcome to their own benefit using indirect, convoluted, and “quick-fix” solutions
- Are hyper-vigilant and unforgiving when *their* boundaries are violated, using such “violations” to manipulate others
- Manipulate codependents (push and pull) with conditional love, abandonment, and violence



### **Codependents**

- Allow or insist that others use them or their services, time, skills, and creativity
- Believe they deserve to be used and abused; it is their role
- Believe they are too afraid, weak, or stupid to do anything right; they cede control and responsibility
- Are self-effacing and self-destructive to please abusers and/or avoid abuse
- Try to read the minds of their controllers to pre-empt outbursts and avoid violence; believe others also read their minds
- Adopt and champion the opinions, attitudes, behavior, and causes of their controllers (addicts) to gain their approval or avoid abuse of self or others
- Live for hints of compliments and recognition from the controllers
- Keep trying to please their controllers and everyone else because everyone else is more important
- Betray or minimize the value of other codependents
- Suffer in silence, sigh a lot (martyrdom), whine loudly, and try to make others feel guilty



### **When a Family Member Changes Behavior**

When someone stops playing by the dysfunctional family rules, the family dynamic becomes unbalanced and uncomfortable. As a result, the disrupter who is “making waves” and “ruining” the lives of everyone else in that dysfunctional system becomes the person the others try to force back into his/her dysfunctional role by

- Escalating control using guilt, abandonment, whining, crying, undermining, threatening...
- Threatening to disown or exile the disrupter
- Replacing the renegade immediately with a more compliant person to prove how worthless and expendable the disrupter is
- Attacking the renegade physically, his/her reputation, or livelihood



### **Letting Go of Dysfunction - Associate with Functional People**

At the beginning of recovery, it may be easiest to step out of the baiting game by staying away or distancing yourself from all people (relatives, friends, co-workers...) who bring out your dysfunctional behavior. When you have learned what your limits are, how to communicate them, how to assert yourself, and to stand your ground, you will no longer feel threatened or be lured into dysfunctional roles and games. As you progress in recovery you will be more comfortable interacting with dysfunctional people because you will know how to handle them and keep yourself safe.



### **Letting Go of Dysfunction - Refuse to Play**

It is not always possible to avoid family members and others you interact with daily who are dysfunctional. The point of a dysfunctional game is for the one who introduces the game to “win”. The rules of the game ensure that outcome every time. When a “game” is introduced, the sane response to it is to:

1. recognize that your adrenaline has increased because you have been baited

2. see that you are being lured to play the game (understanding that your role in it is to lose)
3. refuse to play

If the game is “Rescue Me”, your response might be “Let me know how you solve that problem.” If the game is “Give Me Your Cherished Thing”, your answer can be “No, I really enjoy it and treasure it myself!” The reply to the game, “Let Me Use All Your Time, Ability, Energy, and Resources”, can be to say “No” or “I’ll have to check my calendar.”



### **Letting Go of Dysfunction - Say No**

If you choose to do things for someone, you need to question your own motives before you commit to any action. If *you* are willing to do it, you ought to be getting something healthy from the transaction. You then need to determine if you have the *extra* time, energy, and ability to do it. Do not commit yourself if you have any doubt. Give yourself permission to say, “No.” You might even use this opportunity to set up a reciprocal trade – “I will do this one thing \_\_\_\_\_ if you do this other thing \_\_\_\_\_ for me first”; *without a commensurate trade no healthy relationship exists.*



### **Letting Go of Dysfunction - Decide On, Communicate, and Enforce Boundaries**

Recovery depends on figuring out who you are, what your likes and dislikes are, and what your limits are. Recognizing the feelings of your Inner Child is the easiest, fastest way to figure out what your limits are. Once you know what they are, then communicating them to others is essential. Communicate them in advance or when your boundaries have been violated. Others cannot read your mind; they will not stop violating your boundaries if you do not tell them to stop. If your boundary is crossed again, you need to immediately enact the consequence you decided on. If the boundary is violated the third time by the same person, you need to end the relationship because that person is consciously abusing you and will continue to do so. You need not tolerate violations of your boundaries.



### **Letting Go of Dysfunction - Respect Yourself**

To become emotionally healthy, you need to make the decision to respect yourself. To do that you focus on yourself instead of others and become rigorously honest in finding out who you are, who you want to be, what you need, and what you want. As your own Loving Parent, you then find healthy ways to supply those needs and wants yourself.



### **Letting Go of Dysfunction - Realize Why You Do What You Do**

Becoming aware of what you do allows you to look at why you do it. You are then able to trace your dysfunctional behavior to old messages (stemming from childhood instances of abuse, neglect, abandonment, loss, and trauma), silence the messages, and resolve the issues. Then you will act more appropriately in daily interactions and respond rather than react to dysfunctional people and life disruptions.



### Exercise 1 – Identify Characteristics of Addicts and Codependents

List 3 – 5 characteristics of an alcoholic/addict and 3 – 5 traits of a codependent. Share your answers with members of your group.

Addicts/Alcoholics	Codependents
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.



### Exercise 2 – Identify the People in Your Life

Below each gingerbread person, write the name of 3-6 people you interact with regularly. Write an A on the chest of the gingerbread person if your person has alcoholic or addiction characteristics. Write a C on the chest of the gingerbread person if your person has codependent traits. Share with members of your group one or more alcoholic/addict or codependent characteristics each person exhibits. If you can identify addict and codependent characteristics in others, you can recognize them in yourself. You can stop your own dysfunctional behavior and protect yourself from others who are dysfunctional.




### Exercise 3 – You Might be an Alcoholic or Addict

Put a checkmark next to all the items that are true for you. Share with members of your group one or more alcoholic or addictive characteristics you see in yourself.

	✓	
1		I misuse substances and engage in behaviors or adopt beliefs to dull my pain, escape my feelings, or feel alive.
2		I misuse substances such as alcohol, drugs, caffeine, or tobacco.
3		I engage in excessive use of adrenaline, technology, media, pornography, sexual abuse of self or others, raging, gambling, risky or dangerous behavior, or hoarding.
4		I am greater than and superior to others.
5		It is my job, my responsibility, to control and use others and make them do what I think they should do.
6		I take on the position of victim, savior, or perpetrator to manipulate others; I assign the roles to others.
7		I charm others to manipulate them using eye contact, listening, touch, social proximity, compliments, gifts, parental nurturing, and/or protection.
8		I like to isolate my codependents from others so that they only listen to me.
9		I deliberately overwhelm codependents with my superior education, intelligence, skills, position, creativity, etc.
10		I undermine, ignore, minimize, and shame the efforts and accomplishments of codependents and disparage their pride to control them.
11.		I get my codependents to fight my causes and quietly enjoy watching the mayhem they create.
12.		I bait others into arguments and competitions where I have the advantage; I must "win" and others must "lose," be hurt, or humiliated.
13.		I erratically create, define, assert, and enforce my constantly changing family rules; it keeps others off balance and unable to identify my shortcomings.
14.		I dramatize situations to create urgency and allegiance to get others to do what I want them to do.
15.		I manipulate outcomes to my own benefit.
16.		I use indirect, convoluted methods to solve my problems; I prefer "quick-fixes."
17.		I am hyper-vigilant and unforgiving when my boundaries are violated. I try to make others feel guilty when they violate my boundaries so they will do what I want them to do.
18.		I manipulate codependents (push and pull) with conditional love, abandonment, and violence.

If you checked many or most of these, you may identify as an alcoholic, addict, or have another addiction.



### Exercise 4 – You Might be a Codependent








Put a checkmark next to all the items that are true for you. Share with members of your group one or more codependent characteristics you see in yourself.

	✓	
1		I allow or insist that others use me or my services, time, skills, creativity, etc.
2		I believe I deserve to be used and abused; it is my role.
3		I believe I am too afraid, weak, and stupid to do anything, so I give up my control and responsibility to others.
4		I become self-effacing and self-destructive to please abusers and/or avoid abuse.
5		I try to read the minds of addicts and alcoholics to pre-empt outbursts and violence from them; I believe others read my mind, too.
6		I adopt and champion the opinions, attitudes, behavior, and causes of my alcoholic/addict to gain his/her approval or avoid abuse for myself and/or others.
7		I live for hints of compliments and recognition from my addict/alcoholic.
8		I keep trying to please my alcoholic/addict and everyone else because everyone is more important than me.
9		I betray or minimize the value of other codependents like me.
10		I suffer in silence, sigh a lot, or whine in the effort to make my alcoholic/addict feel guilty.

If you checked many or most of these items, you may have the characteristics of a codependent.

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

*In this meeting, read through each scenario given. Group members share what each one plans to work on this coming week. At the next meeting, when asked what you did for your Inner Child, share what you actually did during the past week.*

Scenario		In Recovery I Can Do This
You break the family rules and everyone in the family pressures you to act like you always have.	<b>Break the Family Rules</b> 	<i>What can you do to stop being forced back into dysfunctional behavior?</i>
You are around dysfunctional family members, neighbors, co-workers, and acquaintances.	<b>Associate with Functional People</b> 	<i>Who can you associate with who are safe and functional?</i>
You feel hyper-alert due to adrenaline being released into your body because you have been baited to play a dysfunctional game that you will lose.	<b>Refuse to Play</b> 	<i>What can you do instead of playing a dysfunctional game?</i>
Someone tells you how much he/she needs your help, that you are the only one who can help.	<b>Just Say No</b> 	<i>What can you ask yourself before you answer?</i>
A meeting secretary asked you to lead a meeting. You start reading through the meeting format, but the meeting secretary keeps interrupting you. You feel like you have been set up for abuse and betrayed.	<b>Enforce Boundaries</b> 	<i>What can you say respectfully to the meeting secretary to stop the boundary violation?</i>
You help others a lot. You do not stand up for yourself. You allow others to use and abuse you. You do not like yourself or your life.	<b>Respect Yourself</b> 	<i>What can you do to gain self-respect?</i>
You gave your friend the money you saved up for six months to go on vacation because she said she needed it to pay her rent. Instead, she bought new clothes "for job interviews" with that money and slept with the landlord to "pay" the rent.	<b>Realize Why You Do What You Do</b> 	<i>How do you feel?</i> <i>What can you say or do to resolve the problem with your friend?</i>



## Chapter 2 - Build a Solid Emotional Foundation

**Question: How do I build a strong emotional foundation for my Inner Child?**

### Reading

With a strong, solid emotional foundation, our Inner Children can grow up emotionally. Without it, we keep building our lives on shifting sands and wondering why we fail. To build a solid emotional foundation, Loving Parents ensure that their Inner Children get all their physiological, safety and security, loving and belonging, esteem, and actualization needs met.








### Exercise – How I Provide my Inner Child with a Solid Emotional Foundation

*In column 1, circle all items listed that your Inner Child is NOT getting enough of from you. In column 2, write all those items you circled in column 1. In column 3, write down one of those needs you will work on first and what you will do to work on it. Example: You circled “sleep” and “intimacy” in column 1. In column 2, you write “sleep” and “intimacy.” In column 3, you write “Sleep - I will stop drinking coffee after 10 each morning.”*

Inner Child's Needs	Basic Needs My Inner Child Lacks	One Thing I Will Do to Supply It
<b>Physiological</b> Clean Air Food Water Shelter Clothing Sleep Warmth Intimacy		
<b>Emotional Safety &amp; External Security</b> Mind Body Employment Resources to live comfortably Health Worldly Goods and Property		
<b>Love &amp; Belonging</b> Love Friendship Intimacy Family / Program Family Connectedness		
<b>Esteem</b> Respect Self-esteem Social Status / Rank Recognition Strength Freedom		
<b>Freedom to Be &amp; Become</b> Explore Learn Grow Reach potential		

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Do this exercise with the group in the meeting. Put an X on all the statements in the grid that are true for you. Discuss those you did not cross out that you need to work on in recovery. During the next week, work on one of the needs you did not cross out. At the next meeting when you are asked what you have done during the week as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child, share what you did to supply for this need.

	<b>AIR</b> The air I breathe is clean.	<b>FOOD</b> The food I eat is nutritious.	<b>SHELTER</b> I live in a clean, safe, temperature-friendly shelter.	
<b>CLOTHING</b> My clothes are clean, well-fitted, and appropriate for my activities.	<b>SLEEP</b> I get enough, uninterrupted, and restorative sleep.	<b>INTIMACY</b> My intimate relationships are legal, consensual, respectful, reciprocal, and mutually satisfying.	<b>MIND</b> I keep mentally healthy and alert by learning new things; I keep mentally safe by excluding toxic people, places, things, and information from my life.	<b>BODY</b> I eat nutritiously, exercise regularly, see doctors and dentists often, take my prescriptions, keep my home safe and secure, and exclude toxic people, places, and things.
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b> I enjoy a safe, mentally stimulating job that I have the aptitude, education, and skills to do. I take on responsibilities that may lead to a job promotion.	<b>ASSETS</b> I have the savings, income, investments, possessions, and property I need to live comfortably.	 <b>BUILD YOUR EMOTIONAL FOUNDATION</b>	<b>PROPERTY</b> I keep my property and/or investments in order and well-maintained. I insure my property, and I pay my bills on time.	<b>FRIENDS</b> I talk with close friends regularly and work to maintain our friendships.
<b>INTIMACY</b> I have loving, reciprocal, warm, respectful, and intimate relationships with a few special people.	<b>FAMILY</b> I recognize the virtues of my parents and siblings. I work to maintain healthy relationships with the people I recognize as my family today.	<b>BELONGING</b> I am grateful for the people and programs that give me opportunities to volunteer and give service for the things I believe in.	<b>RESPECT</b> I work at being the person whose core values, thoughts, words, and actions match so I can respect myself and be respected.	<b>SELF-ESTEEM</b> I am a wonderful person. As a child of my Higher Power, I was perfect the day I was born. I value and respect who I am.
<b>STATUS</b> I have status in my home, neighborhood, work, program, and community because I have earned respect and trust from others.	<b>RECOGNITION</b> I am recognized for my strengths and contributions in my home, neighborhood, work, program, and community.	<b>STRENGTH</b> I am building a solid emotional foundation.	<b>FREEDOM</b> I say and do what I want to say and do, go where I want to go, and take care of my own needs and wants.	<b>EXPLORATION</b> I am getting to know new people and freely explore new ideas and places.
	<b>LEARNING</b> I am learning how to do new things and doing them.	<b>GROWING UP</b> I am growing up emotionally and taking on my responsibilities as an adult.	<b>REACH POTENTIAL</b> I use my intellect, experience, aptitude, and intuition to realize my potential.	





## Chapter 3 - Realize Your Identity

**Question: Who am I?**

### Reading



#### Swiss Cheese Identity

Children brought up in alcoholic and dysfunctional homes learn from their families who they are, what to believe, what to think, what to say, and how to act. If the family messages are delivered with healthy parenting, the children grow up with healthy identities. If the children are abandoned, neglected, abused, and/or traumatized, they often adopt the thoughts, words, and behaviors of the abuser(s) to survive that environment.

When those children grow up and become self-supporting, they continue the patterns of self-abuse they were taught in their childhood homes. The critical, vicious, and terrifying name-calling and life-threatening experiences endured as defenseless children are seared into the children's memories. The thoughts resurface and replay as the grown children continue believing, thinking, saying, and acting out the self-abuse.

Even though they are adults who have been exposed to new beliefs, ideas, expressions, and behavior that they adopted, they are often in direct conflict with the values, thoughts, words, and actions of their childhood families. Those adults, therefore, struggle with who to be and what to do. They live in constant internal discord and chaos.



#### Putting Humpty Together Again

In ACA recovery, we fill in the holes of the Swiss cheese that is the current state of our identity. Our own Loving Parents guide us through the process of sorting out who we currently are and who we want to become. We challenge the false, negative beliefs ("critical parent tapes" or "stinkin' thinkin'"), grieve our losses, and decide what we really believe. We align our core beliefs with our thoughts, words, and behaviors.



#### Aligning What We Believe with How We Think, Speak, and Act

As our Inner Children begin to trust us, our job as Loving Parents is to guide our Inner Children through a process of discovering who we really are today in the self-discovery inventories in Exercises 1 – 6 that follow.

In Exercise 7, we explore continuums of beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions to see if they are aligned. When they are, we make choices and decisions easily, quickly, and effectively. When

they are not in agreement, we hesitate due to confusion, make no decisions, or make bad choices. In these instances, we appear to be untrustworthy or unreliable to others. Our goal in recovery is to align our core values with what we think, say, and do. To align our beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions, we become aware of the disconnection, challenge the misaligned piece, align it, grieve the roots of the misalignment, and correct ourselves each time when we become aware of the misalignment.



### **Exercise 1 – My World View**

*Break up into pairs or small groups Take one minute to complete the sentences below in writing. Discuss your answers with your partner or group.*

1. The universe began when \_\_\_\_\_
2. My idea of God is \_\_\_\_\_
3. Man's purpose (my purpose) on earth is \_\_\_\_\_
4. I would kill for \_\_\_\_\_
5. I would die for \_\_\_\_\_



### **Exercise 2 – My Heritage**

*Break up into pairs or small groups Take one minute to complete the sentences below in writing. Discuss your answers with your partner or group.*

1. I was born (gender) \_\_\_\_\_ Men are \_\_\_\_\_ Women are \_\_\_\_\_
2. I was born (birthplace) \_\_\_\_\_ which is \_\_\_\_\_
3. My race, ethnicity, and nationality are \_\_\_\_\_ which are \_\_\_\_\_
4. I speak these languages \_\_\_\_\_ that are \_\_\_\_\_
5. Religiously, I was taught to believe \_\_\_\_\_



### **Exercise 3 – My Childhood and Family**

*Break up into pairs or small groups Take one minute to complete the sentences below in writing. Discuss your answers with your partner or group.*

1. What I loved/hated about my father is/was \_\_\_\_\_
2. What I loved/hated about my mother is/was \_\_\_\_\_
3. My brothers and sisters are/were \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. My role in my family was to \_\_\_\_\_
5. My favorite classes in school were \_\_\_\_\_

6. My favorite childhood toys were \_\_\_\_\_
7. My favorite childhood games/sports were \_\_\_\_\_
8. My favorite childhood music, arts, and crafts were \_\_\_\_\_
9. I played it safe when I was a child because I \_\_\_\_\_
10. I did these risky things as a child \_\_\_\_\_
11. After school I used to \_\_\_\_\_
12. The clubs and organizations I belonged to were \_\_\_\_\_



#### **Exercise 4 – My Life Today**

*Break up into pairs or small groups Take 2-5 minutes to complete the sentences below in writing. Discuss your answers with your partner or group.*

1. I like/hate how old I am now because \_\_\_\_\_
2. Three things I do well are \_\_\_\_\_
3. My highest level of education so far is \_\_\_\_\_
4. I like/dislike my job as a \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
5. In terms of my career, I see myself in five years as a \_\_\_\_\_
6. My three greatest achievements are \_\_\_\_\_
7. I spend my spare income today on \_\_\_\_\_
8. I rent/own and reside in a \_\_\_\_\_ that is \_\_\_\_\_
9. The three nicest things I own are \_\_\_\_\_
10. My mode of transportation is \_\_\_\_\_
11. I take care of my health by \_\_\_\_\_
12. My favorite hobbies are \_\_\_\_\_
13. Activities I do in my spare time are \_\_\_\_\_
14. Places I want to travel to are \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
15. My family consists of \_\_\_\_\_
16. My best friends are known for \_\_\_\_\_
17. My favorite pets are/were \_\_\_\_\_
18. My attitude about sex is \_\_\_\_\_
19. My immediate goals are \_\_\_\_\_



### Exercise 5 – My Community Involvement

Break up into pairs or small groups Take one minute to complete the sentences below in writing. Discuss your answers with your partner or group.

1. I give service in my program(s) because I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
3. I socialize with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
4. I am politically active because \_\_\_\_\_



### Exercise 6 – Reflections

Break up into pairs or small groups Take one minute to complete the sentences below in writing. Discuss your answers with your partner or group.

1. The best thing about me is \_\_\_\_\_
2. The best thing I ever did was \_\_\_\_\_
3. The best person in my life is/was \_\_\_\_\_
4. I wish I had more time to \_\_\_\_\_
5. I want \_\_\_\_\_ to know \_\_\_\_\_
6. I did this one thing in the hope it would make the world better \_\_\_\_\_



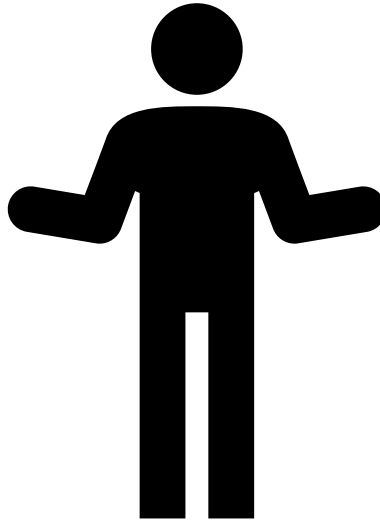
### Exercise 7 – Aligning My Beliefs with what I Think, Say, and Do

In each row below, is an example of the belief/thought/words/behaviors continuum that is a result of being raised in a dysfunctional home. Read across each row. Circle the one part of the continuum in each row that does not make sense with the rest of the continuum in that row. Discuss your answers with your group. Answers are on page 114.

	Belief	Thought	Words	Behavior
1.	I do not deserve to own the home or car I want.	I will never make the money I want to make.	I can have the home, car, and lifestyle I want anytime I want.	Lives in unsafe place Drives unreliable vehicle
2.	Fidelity in marriage is important.	It is wrong to cheat on my spouse.	I love my spouse.	Cheats on spouse
3.	My Higher Power is a vengeful God.	God is a benevolent God.	God will kill me if I make a mistake.	Is a perfectionist in fear of being killed for making a mistake
4.	Everyone lies.	I tell the truth when it serves me.	I always tell the truth; why wouldn't I?	Misstates information, lies, obscures facts, tells half-truths
5.	I am worthless.	I will justify my life by ignoring what I need and want and help others instead.	I am a wonderful person doing God's work humbly.	Helps others; ignores own needs and wants
6.	Spouses have equal roles in families.	I am important because someone pays for my expertise and time.	People who do not earn money for work are worthless.	Tells spouse to stay home to raise the children

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

*Do the exercise below during the meeting. Write your name on the line below. Take 3 minutes to enter your answers into the 6 boxes. Share your answers with your group during the meeting. Select one area below that you will work on during the next week. At the next meeting, when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you worked on.*



I love these 3 people	Three things I enjoy doing
My 3 greatest accomplishments are	I want to be (3 adjectives)
I make the world better by	My hope for the future is



## Chapter 4 - Why We Become Our Own Loving Parents

**Question: Why do we want to be our own Loving Parents for our Inner Children?**

### Reading



#### To Stop Them from Sabotaging Us

If we do not give our Inner Children our attention, they do what real children do when they are ignored. They retaliate and find ways to sabotage us. Examples of sabotage include addictions and compulsions that involve adrenaline, alcohol, dangerous or risky behavior, gambling, food, drugs, sex, tobacco, workaholism, hoarding, etc. Sabotage also includes non-productive or negative behaviors such as:

Abuse of self or others	Inability to trust
Anxiety	Low self-esteem
Attitude that the world owes me	Lying
Avoiding intimacy	Manipulation
Blaming others	Paranoia
Codependence	Passive aggression
Defensiveness	Pretending to work a program of recovery
Demand for immediate attention	Sulking
Drama Queen/King	Procrastination
Embarrassment	Rage
Emotional outbursts	Rescuing and fixing others
Extreme cautiousness	Revenge seeking
Focus on detail, not the worldview	Self-sabotage
Fixation on slights of others	Shame
Habitual coercion of others	Waiting to be rescued



#### To End the Internal Conflict

The fragments of ourselves all have different needs and wants, so we remain in constant internal conflict for as long as the parts of our fractured selves operate in isolation.



#### To Integrate the Fragmented Parts of Ourselves

When we help our Inner Children learn the lessons of life stages they missed, they begin to integrate their needs and wants with those of our Loving Parents. As our needs and wants are integrated, we solidify and unify our personalities. As whole people, we build happy, healthy, and serene lives.



#### To Become Happy, Joyous, and Free

When our integrated Inner Children feel safe, loved, and respected by us, they allow us to be curious, energetic, playful, and trusting of a Higher Power. We become happy, joyous, and free.



### Exercise – My Inner Child

Take 4-5 minutes to answer the questions below. Allocate 5 to 10 minutes in total for the group as a whole to share their answers.

1. How does your Inner Child sabotage you?
2. What is one example from your life of wanting to do different things at the same time? What did you do?
3. Share one thing your Inner Child needs and one thing your Inner Child wants.
4. Share one thing you were intensely curious about, one time you were excited about something, or one time you had a great deal of fun when you were a child.
5. What is one thing you do today that you are intensely curious about, excited about, or is great fun to do?

### Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Do the exercise below during the meeting. Take a minute or two to write down the affirmation given below in your own words. Take five minutes in total for all to read your affirmation aloud. Take five minutes to fill in the blanks next to the outline of the gingerbread Inner Child. Take 5-10 minutes for all to read each completed sentence aloud. Select one area below that you will work on during the next week. At the next meeting, when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you worked on.

1. Write your version of this affirmation on a notecard or poster and read it three times a day for one week:

*As my own Loving Parent  
I will help my Inner Child  
grow up emotionally.*

2. Fill in the blanks next to the outline of your Inner Child below to explain what your life will be like when you are happy, joyous, and free.

Relationship I will be in

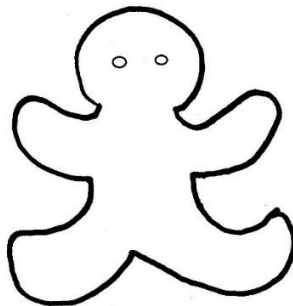
---

Job I will be doing

---

Where I will live

---



One thing I will accomplish

---

One thing I will do for fun

---

People I can trust

---



## Chapter 5 - Overview: What Loving Parents Do; What You Can Do

**Question: What do actual loving parents do for their children?**

### Reading

Loving parents provide their children with solid emotional foundations and nurture healthy identity development. They love, protect, listen to, appropriately touch, and guide their children gently through the life stages of growing up. This chapter is an overview of what you can expect in your recovery.



#### **A. Loving parents provide their children with strong emotional foundations**

In functional homes, parents ensure that their children get their basic needs of air, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep. They provide safety and security. They foster a sense of being loved and belonging in the family, neighborhood, community, and world. They model how to be trustworthy. They have supportive people around them who give them energy. They bolster their children's self-esteem. They support the children's efforts to explore, learn, grow, and reach their potential.

### **Exercise 1 – I Am My Own Loving Parent**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Ensure basic needs are met: air, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep.
2. Provide safety and security.
3. Foster a sense of being loved and belonging in the family, extended family, neighborhood, community, and world.
4. Recognize characteristics of trustworthiness in myself and others.
5. Associate with supportive people who give others around them energy.
6. Bolster the Inner Child's sense of self-esteem.
7. Support the Inner Child's efforts to explore, learn, grow, and reach his/her potential.



#### **B. Loving parents encourage healthy identity development**

Functional parents model how to present themselves in the world for success. They teach their children healthy core beliefs about hope, trust, will, autonomy, purpose, initiative, competence, industry, fidelity, identity, love, intimacy, caring and pride in accomplishment, as well as wisdom and integrity. They keep their promises.

### **Exercise 2 – Encouraging Healthy Identity Development**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as a Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Model how to “Suit up, show up, listen, participate, and let go of the results.”



2. Help your Inner Child discover his/her core beliefs (hope, trust, will, autonomy, purpose, initiative, competence, industry, fidelity, identity, love, intimacy, caring, productivity, wisdom, and integrity).
3. Teach your Inner Child how to set limits and enforce boundaries.
4. Keep your promises.



### **C. Loving parents show their love in how they communicate with their children**

Loving parents speak to their children gently and respectfully. They guide their children through the small, sequential steps of learning new things. They cheer their children on to the next step and applaud their progress. They teach their children to break tasks into smaller increments so the children will succeed, tell the children how much they admire their efforts, and summarize the process the children used to do the task. Praise, not punishment and shame, is used to motivate their children. They address misbehavior by pointing out the behavior their children can change rather than shaming their children. They immediately and gently provide appropriate consequences for misbehavior. They teach their children that through honest self-evaluation, planning, positive action, and follow-through, they can accomplish most things. They teach their children to keep a healthy balance each day between work and play.

### **Exercise 3 – Communicating with Love**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Speak to your Inner Child gently and respectfully.
2. Guide your Inner Child through the small, sequential steps to learn new things.
3. Cheer your Inner Child on to the next step and applaud the progress.
4. Teach your Inner Child to succeed by breaking tasks into smaller increments.
5. Praise the efforts of your Inner Child and restate the process to complete the task.
6. Use praise, not punishment and shame, to encourage your Inner Child.
7. Point out misbehavior your Inner Child can change.
8. Work with your Inner Child to come up with appropriate, immediate consequences for his/her misbehavior (an apology, ways to atone, and changes in behavior).
9. Teach your Inner Child that through honest self-evaluation, planning, positive action, and follow-through, they can usually accomplish most things.
10. Teach your Inner Child to keep a healthy balance each day between work and play.



### **D. Loving parents protect their children**

Loving parents allow their children to freely express themselves and explore, but they are ever vigilant to keep their children healthy, safe, and secure. Loving parents allow their children to make mistakes, fail, and be disappointed at times.

#### **Exercise 4 – Keeping My Inner Child Safe and Secure**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Keep your Inner Child safe and secure as he/she freely expresses him/herself and explores.
2. Allow your Inner Child to make mistakes, fail, and be disappointed.



#### **E. Loving parents respect their children by listening to them**

Loving parents make time each day for their children. They focus on and listen to what their children need and want from them. They hear the words and tone. They read the body language. They ask their children clarifying questions.

#### **Exercise 5 – I Listen Respectfully**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Make time to listen to your Inner Child.
2. Focus on and listen to what your Inner Child needs and wants from you.
3. Hear the words and tone of your Inner Child. Notice the body language of your Inner Child.
4. Ask your Inner Child pertinent questions to clarify your understanding of what he/she said.



#### **F. Loving parents reassure and encourage their children with appropriate touching**

In their mothers' wombs, children experience full-body hugging. Upon birth, children are swaddled and lovingly cradled. Their parents look them directly in the eyes and murmur sweetly to them. As children grow up, appropriate hair tussling, shoulder squeezes, hand holding, back pats, hugs, and respectful massage (head, face, neck, shoulders, back, hands, and feet) are appropriate. Good parents touch their children with love and respect.

#### **Exercise 6 – I Use Respectful Touching to Reassure and Encourage**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Tussle your Inner Child's hair.
2. Squeeze his/her shoulder.
3. Hold his/her hand.
4. Pat your Inner Child on the back.
5. Hug your Inner Child.
6. Occasionally massage your Inner Child (head, face, neck, shoulders, back, hands, and feet).



### **G. Loving parents guide their children through grieving**

When a beloved person or pet dies, someone moves away, or a child's hopes have been dashed, loving parents express their feelings in healthy, safe, acceptable, and productive ways. They show their children their own grief and guide their children through the grieving process.

#### **Exercise 7 – I Model Ways to Grieve**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Practice saying to others how you feel and express those feelings in safe, acceptable, and productive ways.
2. Help your Inner Child work through the process of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance).



### **H. Loving parents raise their children to work through life stages naturally**

Healthy families experience disappointments, setbacks, losses, and woes, and good parents show their children how to feel, share their feelings, and work through the process of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). They teach their children to experience their own feelings and express those feelings in acceptable and productive ways.






#### **Exercise 8 – I Guide my Inner Child Through Life Stages**

*As a volunteer reads the sentences below, circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Allow my Inner Child to feel loss, disappointment, and sadness.
2. Encourage my Inner Child to verbalize his/her feelings or write about them.
3. Offer a sympathetic ear and a hug.
4. Assure my Inner Child that feeling feelings is acceptable and that the feelings eventually pass.
5. Allow my Inner Child to deny loss, get angry about the loss, bargain with God for a specific outcome, be sad and mourn the loss, and finally accept the loss.

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Emotional growth depends on having one's basic needs met (Maslow). Take 5 – 10 minutes to do the exercise below during the meeting. Take another 10 minutes for all to read aloud what they wrote. Select one of these commitments you wrote below to work on during the next week. At the next meeting, when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you worked on.

What Loving Parents Do	What I, as My Own Loving Parent, Will Do for My Inner Child This Week
 <p>Ensure the child's basic needs are met of healthy air, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep so the child has a solid emotional foundation on which to build</p>	<p>Example: Sleep – I will get 8 hours of sleep every night.</p>
 <p>Help child find his/her own identity</p>	<p>Example: Community - After reviewing my answers to the questions In Chapter 3, Exercises 1 – 6, pages 10 – 12 (World View, Heritage, Childhood &amp; Family, Life Today, Community Involvement, and Reflections), I will get involved in my ACA community by doing program service.</p>
 <p>Meet child's needs (love, protection, listening, reassurance, guidance to grow up emotionally)</p>	<p>Example: Protection - I will protect my Inner Child by no longer associating with toxic people, places, and things.</p>
 <p>Model and share own grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)</p>	<p>Example: Depression – I will show my Inner Child how sad I am about my loss by crying and tell him/her my memories when I look at old photos that remind me of happier times.</p>
 <p>Guide the child through the lessons of the life stages (hope, trust, will, autonomy, purpose, initiative, competence, industry, fidelity, identity, love, intimacy, caring, pride, wisdom, and integrity)</p>	<p>Example: Trust – I will assess the trustworthiness of myself and others.</p>



## Chapter 6 - Learn to Be Your Own Loving Parent

**Question: How can we learn what loving parents do for their children?**



### Reading

In ACA meetings people have shared various ways they learned to be good parents to their Inner Children. They saw how their parents behaved and used what was healthy. Sometimes they did the opposite of what their parents did. At times they adopted the behavior of good parents modeled by parents of their friends, parents in movies, and parents on television. When they saw examples of good and bad parenting in public places, they adopted the healthy behaviors. They also read books about healthy parenting and took parenting classes.








### Exercise - What's Your Story?

*Take 5 minutes to write the endings to the sentences below. The group as a whole will take 5 – 10 minutes to read their sentences.*

1. I adopted this behavior from my parents because I thought it was right:
2. I do not behave like my parents in this way because I thought the behavior was wrong:
3. I adopted this good parenting behavior from a movie or television show I saw:
4. This is one good parenting behavior I learned by watching parents of friends and relatives:
5. This is one examples of good parenting I have seen in a public place:
6. One thing I learned by reading a book on good parenting is:
7. One place I can enroll in a class to learn good parenting skills is:

### Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Take 5 – 10 minutes to do the exercise below during the meeting. Take another 5-10 minutes for all to read aloud what they wrote in column 3. Select one of these commitments you wrote below to work on during the next week. At the next meeting, when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you worked on.

	What is one...	Your Responses
	1. Example of good parenting by your mother or father	
	2. Example of bad parenting by your mother or father that you will not use raising your child(ren)	
	3. Example of good parenting you saw on TV or in a movie	
	4. Example of good parenting you saw from someone else's parent	
	5. Example of good parenting you saw in a public place	
	6. Title and author of one parenting book and where you can get it	Title: Author: Location:
	7. Agency, address, and phone number where you can enroll for a class on parenting	Agency: Address: Phone: Date & time of first class:



## Chapter 7 - Learn to Recognize & Communicate with Your Inner Child

**Question: How can I recognize and communicate with my Inner Child?**

### Reading

Our Inner Children emerge when we experience traumas that are too overwhelming for us to emotionally process. We fragment emotionally or compartmentalize parts of our personality. Without parental modeling, instruction, tools, or support to work through the events that we thought would seriously harm us or someone we loved, we become emotionally stunted.

We may have blocked out the traumatic events and forgotten them, but they still are recorded in our unconscious minds. They surface automatically and immediately when similar things happen in our adult lives. Listed in the exercise below are some ways we have contact with our Inner Children.

### Exercise - Ways I Recognize, Communicate With, and Connect with My Inner Child(ren)

*One or two volunteers share on each of the ways below they have connected with their Inner Children.*

1. Play with toys, play games, and engage in activities of children	7. Recognize our own childlike behavior	13. Notice when strong feelings (anger, joy, fear...) arise
2. Write or journal daily	8. Express rage and resort to tantrums	14. Recall memories that bring up strong emotions
3. Draw with crayons or use other art mediums	9. Talk to Inner Child as a Loving Parent	15. Participate in a visualization/guided meditation
4. Write with non-dominant hand	10. Meditate	16. Be aware of own unusual or illogical behavior
5. Look at photos of self as a small child	11. Provide and experience positive sensory stimulants – visual, auditory, taste, smell, touch	17. Notice own wants, urges, and yens
6. Procrastinate, become indecisive, or be unable to act	12. Allow Inner Child to play spontaneously	18. Withdraw, isolate, or feel depressed

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Take 5 – 10 minutes to do the exercise below during the meeting. A volunteer will read across each row as each of you put an X on each box for a way you already connect with your Inner Child. Take another 5-10 minutes for all to read aloud which one of the unmarked boxes you will work on during the week. At the next meeting when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you worked on.

<b>Activities</b> I do children's activities or adult versions of them – parties, play days, sports, gardening, building...	<b>Gut Punch</b> I write down troubling incidents I encounter during the week, my feelings, and how I reacted.	<b>Sensory Auditory</b> I share pleasant things I heard during the week and childhood memories they brought up for me.	<b>Sensory Visual</b> I share pleasant things I see and childhood memories they evoke.	<b>Wants, Yens, &amp; Urges</b> I relate unrelenting desires that arose during the week, what I did about them, and the memories they evoked.
<b>Art</b> I created a piece of art (draw, paint, sculpt, craft...) this past week.	<b>Meditation / Visualization</b> I meditate about or visualize my Loving Parent talking with my Inner Child.	<b>Sensory Smell</b> I share about pleasant aromas or scents I experienced during the week and the childhood memories they evoked.	<b>Talk Each Morning</b> I talk to my Inner Child for ten minutes each morning.	<b>Unusual Behavior</b> I share about any odd or strange behavior I exhibited in the past week and what may have prompted it.
<b>Childhood Photo</b> I talk to my Inner Child when I look at a photo of myself as a small child.	<b>Mired</b> I share about times in the last week I was unable to get anything done or times I put off doing something.		<b>Talk Each Night</b> I talk to my Inner Child for ten minutes each night.	<b>Withdraw or Isolate</b> I share the instances when I withdrew or isolated during the last week.
<b>Dance</b> I move to music.	<b>Reacting</b> I share about a time that I acted out like an angry, hurt, or fearful child this last week and what may have caused me to do that.	<b>Sensory Taste</b> I share about pleasant foods I ate during the week and childhood memories that came up for me.	<b>Talk All Day Long</b> When I suddenly feel angry, afraid, sad, confused, or stunned, I briefly talk with my Inner Child to calm him/her, resume the activity, and discuss it during our evening talk.	<b>Write</b> I write notes to my Inner Child with my dominant hand; my Inner Child answers by writing with the non-dominant hand.
<b>Game</b> I play a child's game or an adult version of one during the week.	<b>Run, Jump, Laugh, Wiggle</b> I share about times in the past week when I was noisy, excited, silly, and carefree.	<b>Sensory Touch</b> I share about pleasant, reassuring, respectful physical contact I received during the week and childhood memories that arose.	<b>Toys</b> I played with a child's toy or an adult version of it this past week.	<b>Write</b> I wrote a poem, story, or song during the last week.





## Chapter 8 - Meet Your Inner Child Visualization

**Question: How can you meet your Inner Child?**

### Reading

Visualization is a helpful tool that gives participants visual images of their Inner Children. Those images allow us to accept the idea of a Loving Parent-Inner Child relationship more easily.

Some of us have found that when we meet our Inner Children, they are wary of us. Once we were adults, we continued to surround ourselves with people who mistreated us as our parents and caretakers had. Worse, we mistreated ourselves. As a result, our Inner Children do not trust us.

Some of our Inner Children do not respond to us but wait to see if the abuse will finally stop. Most guardedly hope we will change. Others release their frustration and pent-up rage, much like a real three-year-old who screams, “I hate you! I want to kill you.” In the end what they *really* want from us is love, protection, true attention, and guidance to grow up emotionally so they can live happy, healthy, functional lives.

### Exercise - Meeting Your Inner Child Through Visualization

*As someone reads the narrative for the visualization, you may choose to participate or not. If at any time you begin to feel uncomfortable, you may stop participating, too. Today, a program person has been designated to talk you through your discomfort if you need support. That person is \_\_\_\_\_. If you continue feeling unsettled after today’s experience, you may want to get professional help from a counselor or therapist.*



## **Visualization**

We are going to do some guided imagery so you can meet your Inner Child today. Seat yourself comfortably. Sit up straight. Relax your arms. Uncross your legs and put your feet flat on the floor. Relax.

Close your eyes now. Inhale slowly and notice how you are breathing. Inhale; exhale slowly. Inhale deeply; exhale slowly. Feel your breathing coming from the bottom of your lungs. Breathe in and breathe out slowly and evenly. Breathe in; breathe out. Breathe in; breathe out.

Today you are going to explore a cavern not far away. It is a beautiful, sunny day with blue skies and white, puffy clouds. It is not too warm, and it is not too cool. A gentle breeze caresses your face. You hear birds chirping. As you walk along the path toward the cavern, you see butterflies flitting near the wildflowers and lush, green grass. You see brown squirrels chasing each other up and down a huge oak tree as you pass.

You walk up and down the gentle slopes of the path. You come to the entrance of a cave. As you walk forward and descend into the cave, the tunnel opens into a subterranean room. Light reflects from an iridescent pool casting beautiful, translucent, dancing silhouettes on the cavern walls.

You make your way to the pool on the cavern floor. As you approach the pool, you see a little child perched on the rim on the other side of it dangling his or her feet into the water. When you stop, you notice what the child looks like, how the child is dressed, how old this child is, and the child's facial expression and body language.

You inadvertently kick a stone with your foot. The little child looks up toward the noise and sees you. The child watches as you approach your side of the pool.

You smile and wave to the child. You say hello and tell the child your name. You wait for the child to respond. You notice how the child reacts to you. You tell this child you are happy to meet him or her. You ask this child how he or she feels about meeting you. You tell the child how happy you are to see him or her. You ask, "Is there anything can I do for you right now?" You wait for an answer, think about it, and respond to the child.

Then you tell the child that you need to leave but promise that you will talk again soon and often. You listen to the child's response, say goodbye, turn, and walk across the cavern floor. Reaching the stairway, you turn back, wave to the child, and climb up the stairs out of the cave. You emerge into the world of dancing butterflies and brown squirrels chasing one another.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Debriefing

*Pair up with a partner. Both partners answer each question before going on to the next question. You have ten minutes to discuss these questions. Take another 5-10 minutes to share your insights with your group.*

1. How do you feel about meeting your Inner Child?
2. Did you see a boy or a girl?
3. How old was the child?
4. What was the child wearing?
5. What else did you notice when you saw your Inner Child?
6. Did your Inner Child tell you his/her name?
7. Did the child seem happy, sad, mad, or frightened to meet you?
8. When you asked the child what you could do for him/her right now, what was the response?
9. How did the child respond when you said you were leaving now but would be back?
10. How do you feel about meeting your Inner Child?
11. What do you want to tell your Inner Child the next time you meet?
12. What is one thing you can do to begin a new relationship with your Inner Child?

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

*Take 5 minutes to do the exercises below during the meeting. A volunteer will read each passage – “Talk Each Morning” and “Talk Each Night.” Fill in your answers to each question. At the next meeting when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share your insights about the discussions your own Loving Parent initiated with your Inner Child.*



### Talk Each Morning

Set up a specific time each morning to meet with your Inner Child. Assure him/her how much you love him/her. Talk about that day's upcoming events, possible challenges, and some ways to handle those challenges if they arise.

What time will you talk? \_\_\_\_\_ For how long? \_\_\_\_\_



### Talk Each Night

Set up a consistent time each evening and talk with your Inner Child about your experiences throughout the day, how your Inner Child felt about them, what your Inner Child is proud of doing in the situations, and what your Inner Child wants to do better if a similar situation arises in the future.

What time will you talk? \_\_\_\_\_ For how long? \_\_\_\_\_



## Chapter 9 - What Does Your Inner Child Want from You?






**Question: How Can You Prove to your Inner Child you will Finally Be a Loving Parent?**

### Reading

If we ask our Inner Children what they want from us, each one will give us some variation of: “Love me, protect me, hear me, hug me, and heal me.”






### Exercise - What Your Inner Child Wants from You

*As a volunteer reads across each row, draw a line through each item in that row of column 2 that your Loving Parent already does for your Inner Child. Then take 1 minute to complete the sentence in column 3 for that row. Take 5-10 minutes for all to share one thing each of you can do in each row to show your unconditional love for your Inner Child.*

My Inner Child Tells Me	How are you showing this to your Inner Child?	What is one thing you will do to be a Loving Parent to your Inner Child?
 Love Me	<b>SHOW YOUR LOVE</b> Schedule time to communicate daily Plan to play and play each day Look into a mirror each day and tell your Inner Child you love him/her unconditionally Praise and reward good behavior Provide something he/she wants	<i>I will show my Inner Child my unconditional love by</i>
 Protect Me	<b>PROTECT YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Remove unsafe people, places, and things Stand up for yourself and your Inner Child Set strong limits and enforce your boundaries	<i>I will protect my Inner Child by</i>
 Hear Me	<b>LISTEN TO YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Communicate every morning and night Ask questions and listen to the answers Note your strong reactions throughout the day Be aware of feeling the effects of adrenaline Notice any emotional numbness Be aware of feeling cold or having chills Notice symptoms of shock you have (pale, cold, clammy skin, shallow, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing, anxiety, rapid or irregular heartbeat, sudden thirst or dry mouth)	<i>I will listen to my Inner Child by</i>
 Hug Me	<b>HUG YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Offer to hug someone each day Accept hugs from safe people Get a healthy massage Hug yourself, pillows, stuffed animals, and pets Pet own pets or animals in petting zoos Give service in programs Volunteer in your community Designate a home meeting and attend it regularly Get a personal support system of 3 to 5 people	<i>I will hug my Inner Child by</i>
 Heal Me	<b>HEAL YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Build a solid emotional foundation Define your identity Grieve your losses Complete unfinished life stages	<i>I will heal my Inner Child by</i>

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

*In column 1, put a checkmark next to the things you already do. Of those items you did not check, write one item from each row in column 3 that you will do this week to meet of your Inner Child's needs. At the next meeting when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share how your Loving Parent meets your Inner Child's basic needs.*

My Inner Child Needs from Me		This Week for my Inner Child I Will
<b>SHOW YOUR LOVE</b> Schedule time to communicate daily Plan to play and play each day Look into a mirror each day and tell your Inner Child you love him/her unconditionally Praise and reward good behavior Provide something he/she wants		
<b>PROTECT YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Remove unsafe people, places, and things Stand up for yourself and your Inner Child Set strong limits and enforce your boundaries		
<b>LISTEN TO YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Communicate every morning and night Ask questions and listen to the answers Note your strong reactions throughout the day and discuss them with your Inner Child Be aware of feeling the effects of adrenaline Notice any emotional numbness Be aware of feeling cold or having chills Notice symptoms of shock (pale, cold, clammy skin, shallow, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing, anxiety, rapid or irregular heartbeat, sudden thirst or dry mouth)		
<b>HUG YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Offer to hug someone each day Accept hugs from safe people Get a healthy massage Hug yourself, pillows, stuffed animals, and pets Pet own pets or animals in petting zoos Give service in programs Volunteer in your community Choose a home meeting and attend it Gather a personal support system of 3 to 5 people		
<b>HEAL YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Build a solid emotional foundation Define your identity Grieve your losses Complete unfinished life stages		



## **Chapter 10 - Building a Relationship with Your Inner Child – Trust**

**Question: How can you build trust with your Inner Child?**

### **Reading**

Our Inner Children, like flesh-and-blood children, assess what we say and do to them and others. They have been quietly watching us for years. They know when we allowed others to abuse them. They know when we have abused them.

We know our Inner Children want to be loved, protected, heard, reassured tangibly of our love, and guided to grow up emotionally into happy and healthy adults. Our job in recovery is to become the loving parents they want who will love, protect, hear, hug, and heal them.

To that end, our first job is to actively, daily, work to become trustworthy. Trust depends on clear communication, reliability, respectfulness, sincerity, honesty, consistency, honoring our commitments, and competency.



### **Communicate Clearly**

One way some of us survived in our dysfunctional homes was to respond to parents and caretakers without saying anything that could get us in trouble. We learned to mumble. We learned to obfuscate. We gave “answers” that did not have any bearing on the questions we were asked, or we changed the subject. We learned not to take a moral position or venture any definitive viewpoint that could be used as evidence against us. In recovery, we learn to clearly say what we mean and mean what we say.



### **Be Reliable**

We could not depend on our parents or caretakers in our childhood homes. In program recovery, we become people who others can depend on. We regularly show up on time, suitably dressed, with the knowledge, experience, and tools to do the tasks we take on or are given. We do those tasks efficiently, effectively, and in a timely manner. We finish what we start.



### **Be Respectful**

Dysfunctional people with deep-rooted, unresolved anger are often disrespectful. This behavior warns others to leave them alone or suffer the consequences. In program recovery, we learn to treat ourselves and others with respect. We trace our anger back to its childhood roots and grieve our losses. We reparent ourselves to make certain that the words we say are kind and from our hearts.



### **Be Honest and Sincere**

As we grew up, we often heard parents and caretakers fibbing, telling half-truths, omitting important information, and outright lying to us, one another, and others. They said one thing but did another. They cheated. They stole. They blamed others for what they did. Some of us adopted those family rules. In recovery, we challenge our sense of superiority as well as our sense of inferiority. We tell the truth. We align what we believe with what we think, say, and do. When we become aware we are being dishonest, we stop, analyze our words or behavior, make amends, and then use new language and behavior that represent what we sincerely believe and think.



### **Be Consistent**

We grew up in homes where adults or caretakers behaved erratically. In recovery, we learn to behave consistently. We make sure our views on people, places, and things remain consistent regardless of circumstances. We solve problems, make decisions, and work towards goals following a logical process each time. In time, our values, thinking, words, and behavior align.



### **Keep Commitments**

We grew up in homes where promises were often broken. In recovery, we ensure that promises we make to our Inner Children and others are kept. Before we make any commitment, we consider if we want to do it and why we want to do it. We decide if we have the time, the energy, enthusiasm, and resources to do it. If we decide to make a commitment, we keep our promise.



### **Be Competent**




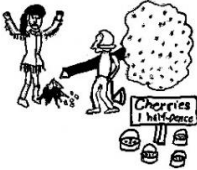



Many of us were told as children to do things we did not know how to do. Parents and/or caretakers did not show us what to do or what steps to take to do the job. In recovery, we become aware of our strengths and limitations. We freely admit what we can and cannot do. We make sure we are qualified to do the things we volunteer to do by, for example, taking classes to learn how to do things, asking others for ideas, or enlisting help from someone having greater knowledge or expertise than we have for the project.

## **When We Become Trustworthy, We Can Trust Ourselves**

As our own Loving Parents, we provide for our Inner Children's needs of love, protection, communication, acceptance, and guidance to help us grow up. We become trustworthy by clearly speaking. We become reliable, respectful, honest, sincere, and consistent. We keep the promises we make. We are competent to do the things we choose to do.

## Exercise – Ways to Show My Inner Child and Others I Can Be Trusted








A volunteer will read the statements in each column in each row. Check the statements in column 2 and 3 that are true for you; then circle one thing you checked in column 2 that you will stop doing. Circle one thing in column 3 you did not check that you will start doing. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss this exercise.

How to Become Trustworthy	I Will NOT	I Will DO This
 <p><b>Communicate Clearly</b></p>	<p>Mumble Babble to avoid confrontation Change the subject Talk about other topics without answering the question Lie about or minimize my needs/wants Agree or keep silent when I disagree Assume others read my mind</p>	<p>Speak clearly, concisely, and on topic Say what I believe Correct erroneous assumptions others have about me Verify what I think someone says</p>
 <p><b>Be Reliable</b></p>	<p>Show up late or not at all Dress inappropriately to do the task Take on a job I do not know how to do Do a job I do not have the experience to do Take on a job I do not have the tools to do Put off doing the job Do part of the job and leave Take the job and do nothing</p>	<p>Show up on time, regularly Dress for the occasion Have or get the knowledge for the task Have or get experience to do the task Have or get the tools to do the task Do the task efficiently and effectively Do the task in a timely manner Get information or help if I need it</p>
 <p><b>Be Respectful</b></p>	<p>Treat others disrespectfully Treat myself disrespectfully Be impolite Mock or demean others</p>	<p>Trace own anger to childhood roots Grieve the losses experienced in childhood Treat myself with respect Treat others with respect</p>
 <p><b>Be Honest and Sincere</b></p>	<p>Fib, lie, or tell half-truths Omit important information Say I will do one thing but do another Cheat on anyone Steal Say or do insincere things Blame others for my actions Convince others to doubt their senses and sanity ("gaslight")</p>	<p>Challenge my sense of superiority Challenge my sense of inferiority Tell the truth; say what I mean Align my thoughts, words, and actions with my beliefs When I am dishonest, I will stop, analyze my behavior, make amends, and change my behavior</p>
 <p><b>Be Consistent</b></p>	<p>Behave erratically</p>	<p>Behave consistently Express my true views Follow a logical process to solve problems, make decisions, and work towards goals Match my thoughts, words, and behavior with my true values</p>
 <p><b>Keep Commitments</b></p>	<p>Break my commitments Break my promises</p>	<p>Keep my promises Before making a commitment, I will:     consider if I want to do it     consider why I want to do it     decide if I have the time, energy, enthusiasm, and resources If I make a commitment, I keep it</p>
 <p><b>Be Competent</b></p>	<p>Volunteer to do things without having skills to do them Do things without knowing how to do them Work on a job without having a plan, skills, or resources</p>	<p>Become aware of my strengths Become aware of my limitations Admit what I can and cannot do Volunteer for things I know how to do Get training or seek help to do things I do not know how to do</p>



## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Refer to the exercise on the previous page as you complete the boxes in each row below. In the second column, list one negative thing you will stop doing this week. In the third column enter one thing you will start doing to earn the trust of your Inner Child. At the next meeting when you are asked what you did during the week to be your own Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you did to earn your Inner Child's trust.

How to Become Trustworthy	I Will NOT	I Will DO This
 <b>Communicate Clearly</b>		
 <b>Be Reliable</b>		
 <b>Be Respectful</b>		
 <b>Be Honest and Sincere</b>		
 <b>Be Consistent</b>		
 <b>Keep Commitments</b>		
 <b>Be Competent</b>		



## **Chapter 11 - Building a Relationship with Your Inner Child – Communication**

**Question: What do you want to say to your Inner Child?**

### **Reading**

#### **Communication Basics**

Inner Children often tell us, “I want ice cream, a new computer, or a Ferrari.” An Inner Child may constantly say, “I want \_\_\_\_\_,” but what that really means is “Pay attention to me!” Inner Children throw tantrums when Loving Parents break promises. This results in the adults procrastinating, taking risks, and destroying relationships (to name a few reactions).

Our relationships with our Inner Children improve as we treat them with more respect. Our Inner Children quickly tell us if we are hurting them in some way. When they do, we, as their Loving Parents, need to stop, make amends, and change our behavior. Our Inner Children also tell us when other people are abusing them so Loving Parents can protect them. Working with our Inner Children will allow us to be more productive, have more fun, and become more serene.

#### **Converse Honestly**

For our Inner Children to trust us again, our Loving Parents initiate honest, one-to-one conversations with our Inner Children. After introductions, we have simple conversations with our Inner Children. The topics vary depending on the ages of the Inner Children who emerge.

#### **Topics of Conversations Introduced by Loving Parents**

1. How lucky I am to meet you
2. How sorry I am for abusing you myself
3. How sorry I am that I allowed others to abuse you after I became an adult
4. Promise to stop any further abuse
5. Make amends to my Inner Child
6. Keep my promises to my Inner Child
7. Promise to deal with difficult situations by talking openly and honestly with my Inner Child (ask gentle questions, listen to answers, accept them, and answer questions)
8. Promise to love, protect, listen to, hug daily, guide safely through grief of the past, and help complete life stages

#### **Considerations in Communicating with Inner Children**

- How to Communicate: gently, clearly, honestly, and openly
- Forms of Communication to Use: verbal, written, artistic forms, physical expression (dance, sports, role play...)
- Communicate Regularly at Set Times: morning and evening
- Communicate Throughout the Day: When strong feelings or problems come up, you withdraw, isolate, or act out, you perceive you have limited time to react or urgency to solve a problem, or you suddenly feel adrenaline surging through your body
- Ways to Talk: out loud, in writing, inside your head, or through movement, body language, facial expression, gesture, or art

### **Topics to Discuss with your Inner Child:**

1. A problem that came up that day and how to solve it
2. Any strong feeling that came up that day, what caused it, and how to resolve it
3. Own acting out or withdrawing from others, what caused it, and how to resolve it
4. Feeling overloaded and unable to deal with a particular problem
5. Noticing that you discounted or abused your Inner Child
6. Awareness that you allowed someone to violate your boundaries
7. Fear that you will fail
8. Fear that you will succeed
9. How to meet the needs and wants of both the Inner Child *and* the Loving Parent
10. Steps to take to make better decisions
11. Steps to take to solve problems
12. How to play daily, what to play, and when to schedule it
13. How to work more effectively and efficiently
14. What to work on in ACA recovery
15. What to focus on first in healing from the effects of the dysfunctional family
16. What to work on first in building a functional life
17. Ways to have fun
18. Keeping promises and commitments





















### **Exercise - Loving Parent Talks with Inner Child**

*One volunteer will play the roles of both the Loving Parent and the Inner Child conversing in each scene below. When all 12 scenes have been completed, the group members share for 5 – 10 minutes to discuss their insights.*

1. Introduce yourself to your Inner Child.
2. Tell your Inner Child how good you feel to finally meet him/her.
3. Apologize for a specific incident of hurting your Inner Child.
4. Tell your Inner Child how you will change your behavior to avoid hurting him/her further.
5. Tell your Inner Child how you will atone for hurting him/her.
6. Apologize for letting others hurt your Inner Child.
7. Explain what you will do to stop others from hurting your Inner Child further.
8. Tell your Inner Child how you will atone for allowing others to hurt him/her.
9. Promise respectful, open, and honest communication from this point forward.
10. Ask your Inner Child what he/she needs and wants.
11. Tell your Inner Child what you need and want from him/her.
12. Promise you will love, protect, listen to, hug, and heal your Inner Child daily.

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

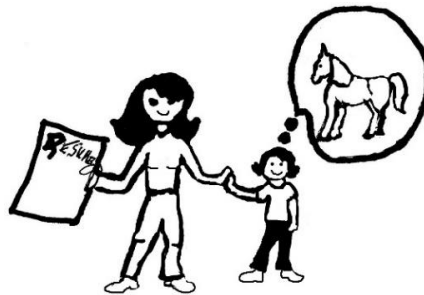
During the meeting, do the exercise below. Circle, check, or write in your answer(s) to the question in each row. Then the group takes 5-10 minutes to discuss their answers. During the ensuing week, practice the commitments you have made here to your Inner Child. At the next meeting, when you are asked what you did for your Inner Child, share how you connected with your Inner Child, when you talked, what you still need to discuss, which ways you liked best, and one example of what you talked about.

<p>In what ways will you connect with your Inner Child?</p>	    <p>Other _____</p>
<p>At what time will you talk to your Inner Child each morning and evening?</p>	   <p>Throughout the Day</p>
<p>What happened recently that you need to talk to your Inner Child about?</p>	      <p>Strong feeling came up    Problem arose    You withdrew    You acted out    You chose a quick fix    You made a bad decision</p>
<p>What are your favorite ways to talk to your Inner Child?</p>	     <p>Other _____</p>
<p>Which of these things will you talk about with your Inner Child this evening?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A problem that came up that day and how to solve it</li> <li>2. Any strong feeling that came up that day, what caused it, and how to resolve it</li> <li>3. Own acting out or withdrawing from others, what caused it, and how to resolve it</li> <li>4. Feeling overloaded and unable to deal with a particular problem</li> <li>5. Noticing that you discounted or abused your Inner Child</li> <li>6. Awareness that you allowed someone to violate your boundaries</li> <li>7. Fear that you will fail</li> <li>8. Fear that you will succeed</li> <li>9. Needs and wants of both the Inner Child and the Loving Parent are met</li> <li>10. Steps to take to make better decisions</li> <li>11. Steps to take to solve problems</li> <li>12. How to play daily, what to play, and when to schedule it</li> <li>13. How to work more effectively and efficiently</li> <li>14. What to work on in ACA recovery</li> <li>15. What to focus on first in healing from the effects of the dysfunctional family</li> <li>16. What to work on first to build a functional life</li> <li>17. Ways to have fun</li> <li>18. Keeping promises and commitment</li> </ol>



## Chapter 12 - Building a Relationship with Your Inner Child – Negotiation

**Question: How do you negotiate with your Inner Child?**



### Reading

Loving Parents and Inner Children have equally important needs and wants. By the time we are adults, we have discounted the needs and wants of our Inner Children for a long time. When we ensure that the needs and wants of the Loving Parents and Inner Children are met, we grow up into integrated, functional people.

Healthy negotiating is a learned skill that we practice in recovery. In ACA recovery, the point of negotiating is not to “win,” but for both parties to get their needs met.

If the adult needs to finish reports for work or get the laundry washed, the Loving Parent initiates a deal with the Inner Child. The Loving Parent tells the Inner Child he/she needs to get the work done. The Inner Child might want to play computer games or go shopping for a new automobile. They negotiate so both get their needs or wants met. The dialogue might go like this:

Loving Parent: I need to finish these reports this morning, Sweetie Pie.

Sweetie Pie: I want to go look at new cars instead.

Loving Parent: If you let me get these reports done, then we can look at new cars after lunch?

Sweetie Pie: Okay, but only if we get to buy one today.

Loving Parent: I cannot afford to buy a new car today, but we can try to find the one we will get when I have the money for the down payment in the bank. You can pick the color of the one we eventually get. All right?

Sweetie Pie: Candy apple red! I want candy apple red!

Loving Parent: If you let me work on these reports now, we will get you that candy apple red automobile.\*

*\*The Loving Parent needs to keep the promises he/she makes to maintain the trust of our Inner Children.*

As our own Loving Parents, we respond to the desires of our Inner Children just as we would if we were dealing with actual children. Generally, our Inner Children just want attention and reassurance. When actual children ask for ponies, parents divert their attention to coloring books of horses or plastic horses. This is true with our Inner Children. The objects are not important; it is our undivided attention that our Inner Children want. In recovery, we give our Inner Children the attention they desire.



### Exercise: Conversation between an Inner Child and a Loving Parent

*For each scenario below, one volunteer plays the role of the Loving Parent negotiating with the Inner Child so the Loving Parent and the Inner Child both get their needs and wants met. When all eight negotiations have been concluded, the group may discuss their insights for 5-10 minutes.*

	INNER CHILD WANTS	LOVING PARENT WANTS
1.	Pizza	Finish writing a resume
2.	Trip to the Super Bowl	Reliable transportation
3.	Expensive sports car	Upscale, low-maintenance home
4.	African lion	A good relationship with a potential mate

	INNER CHILD NEEDS	LOVING PARENT NEEDS
1.	Bath	Clean house
2.	Nutritious meals	Pay bills
3.	Help to learn something new	Get a better job
4.	Practice caring for an animal	Get to work on time

### Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

*A volunteer reads the scenario below aloud. Then another volunteer will read both the Loving Parent and the Inner Child roles. Volunteers from the group will identify the key aspects of that negotiation by answering the questions given. For 5-10 minutes, members of the group may discuss what each did to get their needs met. At the next meeting, group members will be asked to share about one negotiation they had with their Inner Children during the week and if both parties got their needs or wants met.*

#### Scenario

Your boss, Robert, told you to develop a computer program that will allow the corporation to pay contract employees in many nations for their time. This includes making automatic monetary conversions which change constantly, deducting pertinent taxes for the country, and reporting the wages to the governments of each employee.

When the system you created was debuted, the Corporate CEO publicly commended Robert on his great work. Robert thanked the CEO and accepted a promotion and a substantial raise in salary. Robert did not mention your work.

You were furious inside but politely left the celebration. As you exited the room, you kept repeating to yourself inside your head, "I need to keep quiet right now, get away from here, get back home, and sort this out so I can continue working for this corporation; I need to pay the rent." On the way home you decided this was a wonderful ACA opportunity to communicate with your Inner Child!

### ***The Conversation Between the Loving Parent (LP) and the Inner Child (IC)***

LP	Thank you for allowing us to get out of that situation quietly. I know that was hard for you. Tell me now how you are feeling.
IC	I am going to pummel that ratfink so bad his mommy will not recognize him. What a creep! I do all the work, and that son-of-a-pea-picking-poliwog gets the promotion AND the raise. And THEN, and THEN he doesn't even bother to give me an honorable MENTION!!!!????!! Ratfink. I am going to drop some baking soda and vinegar in his next cup of coffee!
LP	I hear how angry you are, Little One. You have every right to be mad. I wonder if there is a way for us to get through this, keep my job, and get you the recognition for your hard work. It will not help either one of us to do anything that will get us fired or arrested. We can use all the energy from your anger to get creative and take care of both our problems, okay?
IC	You can tell Robert you encoded a way to dismantle the whole computer system if he does not announce your contribution and give you a raise!
LP	Blackmail? No. Let us put all that energy into coming up with a POSITIVE solution.
IC	Right now I just want to yell at someone, break something, fight someone.
LP	(yelling angrily) I want to yell! I want to break something! I want to fight someone to the death! I want to yell! I want to break something! I want to fight someone to the death! I want to yell! I want to break something! I want to fight someone to the death!
IC	You get it! That is what I want!
LP	I can see that. After dinner we can go over to the batting cages and hit some balls. Does that sound good?
IC	Pizza for dinner and batting some balls, too? Sounds great to me!
LP	Let us figure this out before dinner, though. You want recognition. Me, I just want to keep doing the job I love doing so we can live as well as we do. How about I schedule a meeting with Robert to RESPECTFULLY explain that I would like him to give me the credit for designing the system that resulted in his promotion and raise. You would have to keep quiet, no matter what he responds. Are you willing to do that?
IC	What if he says, "no?"
LP	Then I will go to Human Resources and tell them how proud I am of the new computer software I designed for which my boss took all the credit, got a promotion, and never recognized me as the genius who created it. We will get your recognition!
IC	Okay. I will keep my lips super-glued together.
LP	Promise? If you do not keep quiet, I am likely to be fired.
IC	I promise! We will keep your job.

### ***Identify Key Aspects of a Successful Negotiation between a Loving Parent and the Inner Child***

Questions	Your Answers
1. Who needs to begin the negotiation?	
2. Who needs to express his anger?	
3. Who needs to acknowledge and guide the healthy expression of anger?	
4. Who needs to figure out a way to release the anger in a positive way when it is still festering?	
5. What does the Loving Parent need?	
6. What does the Inner Child need?	
7. What does the Loving Parent propose?	
8. Why does the Inner Child agree?	
9. Who wins?	

*Answers can be found at the back of the workbook, page 114*



## Chapter 13 - Identify Experiences That Stunted Your Emotional Growth

### Question: What childhood experiences may have stopped you from growing up?

Take about 5 minutes to fill in the chart below for the year you were born next to "birth". In the first column write in the corresponding year for every year up to your age today. In the third column enter up to 5 of your earliest memories of loss, abandonment, neglect, abuse, or trauma on the line next to the corresponding age you were or the year of the event. You may also enter up to 5 joyful milestones, achievements, or successes. Work with your sponsor, program friend, or therapist to grieve each loss or share the excitement. Then we will share what we wrote for 5-10 minutes.

During the week, fill out the entire chart up to the age you are today. This is difficult work. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, intense, overwhelmed, or hyperalert due to this process, stop. Call your sponsor or a mental health professional immediately to get help.


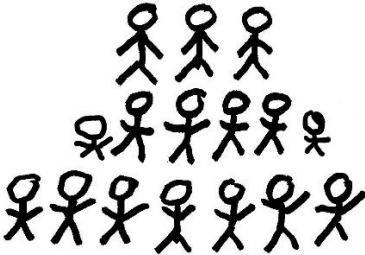


Year	Age	Loss, Abandonment, Neglect, Abuse, Trauma, Joyful Milestones, Achievements, Successes		Year	Age	Loss, Abandonment, Neglect, Abuse, Trauma, Joyful Milestones, Achievements, Successes
	Birth					
	1				21	
	2				22	
	3				23	
	4				24	
	5				25	
	6				26	
	7				27	
	8				28	
	9				29	
	10				30	
	11				31	
	12				32	
	13				33	
	14				34	
	15				35	
	16				36	
	17				37	
	18				38	
	19				39	
	20				40	



Year	Age	Loss, Abandonment, Neglect, Abuse, Trauma, Joyful Milestones, Achievements, Successes		Year	Age	Loss, Abandonment, Neglect, Abuse, Trauma, Joyful Milestones, Achievements, Successes
	41				71	
	42				72	
	43				73	
	44				74	
	45				75	
	46				76	
	47				77	
	48				78	
	49				79	
	50				80	
	51				81	
	52				82	
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	61				91	
	62				92	
	63				93	
	64				94	
	65				95	
	66				96	
	67				97	
	68				98	
	69				99	
	70				100	

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Read through this exercise in the meeting. During the week ahead, cross out the boxes in the second column as you complete them. At the next meeting when you are asked what you have done during the week as your Loving Parent for your Inner Child, share your insights on one of these 4 activities.

	<p>Continue filling out the chart on the previous pages. As you talk to people and review public records, add that information to your chart.</p>
	<p>Talk to people about your childhood who may help you put your childhood experiences into context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents, siblings</li> <li>• Aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents</li> <li>• Neighbors</li> <li>• Family friends</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>
	<p>Research your family tree. Trace the patterns of behavior, addictions, codependency, or other dysfunction through previous generations. Trace strengths and positive behaviors as well.</p>
	<p>Review public records that may pertain to your childhood experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspaper articles about family members</li> <li>• Newspaper announcements – weddings, births, baptisms, divorces, funerals, obituaries</li> <li>• Diaries, scrapbooks, and photo albums</li> <li>• Property records</li> <li>• Court documents</li> <li>• Other sources</li> </ul>



## Chapter 14 - Learning to Grieve

**Question: Why didn't we grieve our losses, abandonment, neglect, abuse, or trauma when they happened?**



### Reading

Five phases of grieving have been defined as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This progression does not necessarily describe every person's grieving process.

In re-parenting we refocus our energy. We use our experience, intelligence, and education to work through unprocessed memories, express our feelings about the memories, and explore the life decisions we made to survive according to that rule.

- We focus on specific memories or our feelings about the life stage issue.
- We express our feelings that we did not express when the abuse or trauma occurred.
- We determine what erroneous, negative life rule we decided upon to survive the event and live our lives.

"Life rule" is another name for "life script." To survive a traumatic event, a child, without parental support or guidance, decides how to protect itself for the rest of its life. A few examples might be:

Men can never be trusted; they cheat.

I take what I want; no one will give me what I want.

A good husband beats his wife regularly.

Grandpa killed Grandma with a butcher knife for talking back to him in the kitchen. If my wife disrespects me, I will do the same to her.

Mommies are unreliable; mommies are women; I am a female; I am unreliable.

- We challenge the rules we imposed on ourselves.
- We reject the old survival rule eliminating the power it has over us.
- We replace the negative admonitions with positive, healthy beliefs.

### Exercise – Grieving

*Select one example of loss, abandonment, neglect, abuse, or trauma from your early childhood that you listed in the chart in Chapter 13. With your sponsor, a program friend, or a therapist, work through the process of grieving to provide closure. An example response follows each question.*

Read through the questions and answers of [Grieving the Past](#) and [Grieving an On-Going Situation](#). These are examples to help you in grieving your own losses.

### Grieving the Past Example

1. Which unresolved experience of loss, abandonment, neglect, abuse, or trauma are you focusing on today?

*My father passed away when I was 12.*

2. Briefly explain what happened to you that left you stunned and/or emotionally stunted.  
*I had no support to deal with the death of my father.*
3. Identify and express the feelings you did not express then about this experience.  
*I did not believe my father died. I felt I had been rejected and abandoned. I thought it was my fault. I was depressed. I did not allow myself to feel anything because it was too painful.*
4. What life rule did you decide on in that moment in the effort to survive?  
*I will live out my Daddy's life for him.*
5. What can you now say to challenge that negative life rule?  
*I am a worthwhile person who deserves to live my own life.*
6. What can you do each time the negative life rule comes up?  
*Inventory my good traits, accomplishments, future aspirations, and friends who love me.*
7. What positive affirmation can you create and repeat to replace the negative rule?  
*As a perfect child of God, I am important, and I will live my own life by my new rules.*

#### Grieving an On-going Situation Example

1. Which unresolved experience of loss, abandonment, neglect, abuse, or trauma are you focusing on today?  
*My mother continues to criticize me unreasonably.*
2. Briefly explain what happened to you that left you stunned and emotionally stunted.  
*As a child, every time my mother criticized me, I was not allowed to challenge her remarks for fear of being hit.*
3. Identify and express the feelings you did not express then about this experience.  
*I feel outraged, fearful, hopeless, helpless, and depressed.*
4. What life rule did you decide on in that moment in the effort to survive?  
*I will survive this abuse today by not responding to the unfair criticism. I will allow my mother to say what she will, and I will try to minimize the effect of her words in my mind.*
5. What can you now say to challenge that negative life rule?  
*Using the "broken record" technique of quietly but pointedly asserting myself, I will respond to criticism from my mother by repeating my feelings and my reality to her.*
6. What can you do each time the negative life rule comes up?  
*Respond quietly by sharing my feelings and my own adult perspective of the reality of the situation.*
7. What positive affirmation can you create and repeat to replace the negative rule (see #4 above)?  
*I am enough just as I am; my mother's criticism is both untrue and unfair.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Take about 5 minutes to complete this exercise in the meeting. On the line below R.I.P. (Rest in Peace), write in the name of a person, place, thing, or event you want to grieve from your chart in Chapter 13. Enter your responses into the 6 sections of the tombstone. Then we will spend 5-10 minutes for volunteers to share their answers to the 6 questions

During the week, use these 6 questions to continue your work through another one of the losses you listed in Chapter 13. That is what you will share about in the next meeting when we ask what you did to reparent your Inner Child during the week. Ultimately grieving our losses is about working through the grieving process which includes denial/disbelief, anger, bargaining with a Higher Power, depression, and acceptance by letting go of the loss and embracing life again.

# R. I. P.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(the person, place, thing, or event I am grieving)

1. What happened that stunted you emotionally?	2. How do you feel about this loss? What is one positive thing you can do to express this feeling?
3. What was the life rule you decided on to survive this?	4. What words can you use to challenge this life rule when it comes up?
5. What can you do each time the negative life rule comes up?	6. Write a positive affirmation you can repeat to replace the negative rule.











## Chapter 15 - Working Through Life Stages We Did Not Complete

**Question: What effect does abandonment, neglect, loss, abuse, and trauma have on emotional growth?**

### Life Stages *(based on Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development)*

#### Reading

	Life Stage	Life Stage Issue	Important People & Events	If Grew up in a Functional Family	If Grew up in a Dysfunctional Family
	Infant 0-18 mo.	Trust vs. Mistrust	<u>Mother</u> Feeding Senses Moving Awareness	Have faith in environment Have faith in future events Have hope and drive	Suspicious Fear future events Have sensory distortion Withdraws Feel unsafe
	Toddler 18 mo. – 3 yrs.	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	<u>Parents</u> Toilet Training	Have self-control Feel adequate Have will power	Feel shame Have self-doubts Is impulsive and compulsive
	Pre-School Child 3 - 6	Initiative vs. Guilt	<u>Family</u> Exploration	Self-starts Initiates Have direction Have purpose	Feel guilty Unable to act independently Is inhibited Afraid to think, speak, and act
	Elementary – School - Aged Child 6-12	Industry vs. Inferiority	<u>Neighbors</u> <u>School</u>	Learn how things work Understand Organize Apply methods Have competence	Feel inferior at understanding and organizing Lack academic skills Frozen or unable to proceed Doubt own capability to achieve success
	Adolescent 12-18	Identity vs. Role Confusion	<u>Peers</u> Relationships Career preparation	See self as unique See self as part of a group Feels a sense of belonging Is loyal Trust oneself	Unsure of who and what he/she is Hold extreme views Disconnected Feel betrayed Does not trust self Unclear of who to be and how to behave
	Young Adult 18- 40	Intimacy vs. Isolation	<u>Lovers.</u> <u>Friends.</u> <u>Co-Workers</u> Relationships	Make commitments Love Affiliate	Unable to form loving relationship Promiscuous or asexual Exclude self (isolates)
	Middle-Aged Adult 40-65	Productivity vs. Stagnation	<u>Children.</u> <u>Community</u> Work Parenthood	Concerned for family and society Productive	Concerned only for own well-being and prosperity Is overly extended Reject others
	Senior 65+	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	<u>Society.</u> <u>Work.</u> <u>Life</u> Reflection on life	Have integrity Feel fulfilled Able to face death Wise Accepting	Dissatisfied with life Despair over own future death Does not appreciate anything Have disdain for others

## Reading

Completing incomplete life stages is one systematic framework to recover from the effects of growing up in alcoholic or dysfunctional homes. In this work the individual in ACA recovery pinpoints the ages he/she was when abused or traumatized and his/her emotional growth stopped. In recovery the Loving Parent guides his/her Inner Child to complete each life stage by:

1. Identifying and grieving the main life stage event(s) that stunted him/her
2. Grieving the issues about the important person(s) of the life stage
3. Providing the Inner Child with what he/she did not get from actual parents/ caretakers
4. Recognizing and rejecting negative beliefs learned in the dysfunctional household and replace them with positive affirmations
5. Providing the Inner Child with experiences to have the fun the Inner Child did not get as a child

## Life Stage Information

The chart on the previous page gives an overview of life stages: the name and approximate age range of the stage, the major life stage issues, important people in the child's life and life stage events, as well as what functional and dysfunctional behavior looks like.

- **Issue** The major life stage issue for an infant (ages birth to 18 months), for example, is trust. If the mother successfully teaches her child to trust, the child is on his/her way to becoming functional. If the child does not learn to trust, he/she starts the lifelong journey of dysfunction.
- **Important Person** Important people in the child's life and the life stage events are also listed. The infant with a functional parent learns to feed, becomes familiar with sensory stimuli, begins to learn how to control his/her body, and becomes aware of the environment. If the parent or caretaker is not nurturing, supportive, or present, the child may develop some serious issues about that individual. Recovery involves grieving the loss of the person as well as the loss of what the child would have learned.
- **In Recovery** A Loving Parent ensures the Inner Child gets all his/her basic needs met. This includes guiding the Inner Child through the events the child might have learned, but did not, in his/her childhood home.
- **A Loving Parent** A Loving Parent also addresses the dysfunctional outcomes of the life stage. If, for example, the Inner Child with trust issues is suspicious, fears future events, has sensory distortions, isolates, and generally feels unsafe, the Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to grieve those issues and systematically learn ways to become trustworthy

(and adopts those behaviors) and recognize trustworthy characteristics in others (and associate with trustworthy people).

- **Functional Behavior** The column, “Functional Behavior” in the chart details the goals of recovery for this life stage.
- **Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, Activities, Mobility, & Sports** In the chart of each life stage are the arts, crafts, music, toys, activities, games, movement, and sports of the life stage. This information is for the Loving Parent to help his/her Inner Child have the fun the child missed. By engaging in children’s activities or the adult versions of those arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities (grabbing objects as an infant might become rock climbing with hand and toe holds as a recovering adult), we are more likely to fully complete the life stage.



### Exercise 1 – Identify and Grieve Events of Incomplete Life Stages

Take 2-3 minutes to fill in the chart below with 1 or 2 of the emotionally stunting events in your life.

Address any of the stunting events of your life. An example is given. 2-3 volunteers share what they wrote.

Your Age	Year	Stunting Event	One Thing I Will Do to Grieve
<i>Example</i> Age 14	2005	Parents divorced	Tell others the negative life rule I used to get through my pain and fear of abandonment



### Exercise 2 – Identify and Grieve Issue with Important Person(s) of Life Stage

Take 2-3 minutes to fill in the chart below with 1 or 2 issues you have with one of the important persons in your life.

Address any of the stunting events of your life. An example is given. 2-3 volunteers share what they wrote.

Your Age	Year	Issue with Important Person of Life Stage	One Thing I Will Do to Grieve
<i>Example</i> Age 4	2009	Family Member – Brother raped me	Admit out loud to my sponsor, trusted program friends, and/or therapist/counselor what happened to me, express my anger and confusion, share my bargaining process with my Higher Power to survive, allow myself to be sad for my Inner Child, accept the incident as a closed chapter of my life, and let go of the issue to my Higher Power





### Exercise 3 – Give Your Inner Child what He/She did not get from Parents

#### / Caretakers

Take 2-3 minutes to fill in the chart below with 1 or 2 issues you have with 1 or 2 examples of the result of family dysfunction and one thing you will do now to help your Inner Child recover. Address any example of what you did not get or learn in your dysfunctional family. An example is given. 2-3 volunteers share what they wrote.

Your Age	Year	One Thing I Did Not Get	One Thing I Will Do
Example Age 8	2005	Organization skills	Hire a professional organizer to show me how to organize my home and office for better functionality



### Exercise 4 – Address the Negative Behaviors of My Dysfunction

Take 2-3 minutes to fill in the chart below with 1 or 2 of the negative behaviors you have of the life stage you select to work on and one thing you will do now to help your Inner Child recover. An example is given. 2-3 volunteers share what they wrote.

Your Age	Year	Life Stage & Negative Aspect of This Life Stage's Dysfunction	One Thing I Will Do
Example Age 30	This year	Young Adult - all my relationships fail	Assess my behavior in my relationships and share my insights with my Sponsor







### Exercise 5 – Experience the Fun your Inner Child Did Not Have





Take 2-3 minutes to fill in the chart below with one toy you did not get that you wanted or one activity you wanted to do but did not get to do as a child. An example is given. 2-3 volunteers share what they wrote.

Your Age	Year	Fun I Did Not Have or Do	One Fun Thing I Will Do
Example Age 2	1985	Pretend to be Super-Hero	Go to Comic-Con dressed as Batman

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

In the meeting, a volunteer reads through each scenario below about adults who experienced such abandonment, neglect, abuse, or trauma at the given life stage that their emotional lives were stunted. In the second to the last column are dysfunctional traits of that interrupted life stage. After reading the scenario in the row, fill the last box with one issue from the fifth column that you might work on to complete the life stage. 2-3 volunteers share what they wrote in the last column. Then go on to the next row until the exercise is finished. Finally, circle the one issue of the life stage you are working on in recovery. All share on the one issue they have selected to work on during the following week. In the next meeting, when you are asked what you did as your Loving Parent for your Inner Child, share what issue you worked on and what you did to recover from that issue.

	Life Stage	Important People & Events	Scenario	Dysfunctional Traits of This Interrupted Life Stage	One Issue to Work on to Complete This Life Stage
	Infant 0-18 mo.  Trust vs. Mistrust	<u>Mother</u>  Feeding Senses Moving Awareness	Jefferson is 42. His girlfriend just broke up with him. She said he constantly accused her of cheating on him, worked on his computer or watched television all the time, refused to do anything new, and misunderstood everything he heard from everyone. Jefferson has no ambition and waits for people to give him things. He forgets to eat and is very thin.	Suspicious Is fearful of what may happen Has sensory distortion Withdraws Feels unsafe	
	Toddler 18 mo. – 3 yrs.  Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	<u>Parents</u>  Toilet Training	Naomi came to ACA because, although she has been in 12-Step programs for 20 years and is clean and sober, she still overspends, gambles, and has sex with anyone who offers her the opportunity. She is proud of her 20-year chip, but she is ashamed of the rest of her behavior. She is not sure the ACA program or anything else can help her, but she is willing to try something new.	Feels shame Doubts oneself Is impulsive and compulsive	
	Pre-School Child 3 – 6  Initiative vs. Guilt	<u>Family</u>  Exploring	Michael always has a girlfriend who tells him what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. When he is not following directions, he daydreams about being a hero to someone. In his real life, he apologizes all the time and is afraid to do anything except what he is told to do. If his sponsor or his girlfriend does not tell him what to do, he watches television or plays video games.	Feels guilty Unable to be on his/her own Is inhibited Afraid to be, think, and act	
	Elementary-School-Aged Child 6-12  Industry vs. Inferiority	<u>Neighbors</u>  School	Barbara did not do well in school. Her home is always a mess. She has trouble at work because she never knows what to do or how to do it. She constantly gets help from her coworkers because they cannot do their jobs unless she does her work. She comes to ACA because she is terrified that her boss is ready to fire her, and she does not know what to do.	Does not understand or organize well Lacks academic skills Frozen or unable to proceed Doubts own future success	

	Life Stage	Important People & Events	Scenario	Dysfunctional Traits of an Interrupted Life Stage	One Issue I Will Work on to Complete This Life Stage
	Adolescent 12-18  Identity vs. Role Confusion	<u>Peers</u>  Relationships Career Preparation	Peter often shares his contempt for the inadequate teachers and professors who gave him mediocre grades when he was in school; he feels they never recognized his genius. He also shares his career goal to be a rodeo clown one week, while at the next meeting he considers selling real estate. After one meeting he talked about moving to India to become a Buddhist lama when his girlfriend broke up with him. He sometimes mentions that he is going to the firing range on the weekend to improve his marksmanship. When others talk to him after the meeting, he becomes belligerent.	Unsure of who and what he/she is or who to be Holds extreme views Disconnects Feels betrayed Does not trust him/herself	
	Young Adult 18-40  Intimacy vs. Isolation	<u>Lovers,</u> <u>Friends,</u> <u>Co-Workers</u>  Relationships	Tara enjoys living alone. She has had many lovers, but she has never found one good enough, smart enough, or wealthy enough for her. She often wonders if she is lovable or can love anyone. She is a librarian at the university. She volunteers at the local animal shelter.	Unable to form loving relationships Promiscuous or asexual Excludes self (isolates)	
	Middle-Aged Adult 40-65  Productivity vs. Stagnation	<u>Children,</u> <u>Community</u>  Work Parenthood	Ben is married to a woman who travels extensively for her job. He has two teenage sons in military schools who come home for holidays. Ben is a high-ranking, law enforcement officer who works twelve to eighteen hours each day, six days a week to pay off his loans and credit cards. He has no friends; he is his job. He is proud of his expensive house, car, and gun collection.	Concerned only for own well-being and prosperity Is overly extended Rejects others	
	Senior 65+  Ego Integrity vs. Despair	<u>Society,</u> <u>Work,</u> <u>Life</u>  Reflection on Life	Christina is about to retire after working for the City for 30 years. She feels life has cheated her. She believes that by this stage of her life she should have had a devoted husband, huge house, and influential friends, but she does not. She hates those people around her who have done well, but assumes they prostituted themselves to get what they have. She wishes her ex-husband would have some catastrophic end. She is afraid of dying, but she cannot wait until her miserable life is over.	Dissatisfied with life Despairs over death Makes presumptions Has disdain for others	










## Chapter 16 - Completing Life Stages - Trust vs. Mistrust (Infants)

**Question: How can we rebuild trust with our Inner Children and others?**

### Life Stage – Infants

Ages 0 – 18 Months

Mother is the Significant Person

Symbol		Recovery
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Trust vs. Mistrust</b>	Identify and grieve the event(s) that led to mistrust Identify and grieve the issues with the mother
	<b>Parent's Job</b> Mother ensures basic needs are met Love the child unconditionally	Supply your Inner Child's basic needs Love your Inner Child unconditionally
	<b>Skills Infants Normally Learn</b> Feeding Sensory perception and sensation Mobility Awareness of environment How to get needs met	Guide your Inner Child to acquire skills he/she did not learn from actual parents or caretakers
	<b>Child Learns in Functional Home</b> Child is loved unconditionally It is all right to express feelings It is acceptable to ask for needs and wants Learn to trust and hope Have self-will and enthusiasm	Teach your inner Child to adopt these beliefs He/she is loved unconditionally I can trust myself I can recognize trustworthy people I can accomplish tasks I can express my excitement I can be determined
	<b>Child Learns in Dysfunctional Home</b> I am not safe I am only what I am given Trust no one; be afraid Do not believe what you see, hear, taste, touch and feel, or smell Isolate to be safe	Grieve false, negative beliefs ("critical parent tapes" or "stinkin' thinkin'") learned in the dysfunctional family, challenge and reject them, grieve their origins, and replace them with positive affirmations that result in positive changes in behavior
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Children Do</b> Arts – finger painting Crafts – clay, play dough, or food sculpting Music – sing or listen to lullabies, move to music Toys – play with crib mobiles, rattles, squeaky toys, rubber ducks, teddy bears, and pull toys Games – Peekaboo	Allow your Inner Child to do arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and life stage activities or adult versions of them
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Bouncers Rockers Walkers	Allow your Inner Child to use mobility or sports equipment or adult versions of them

## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Trust vs. Mistrust**

If we have no memories, but distrust ourselves and/or others, we focus on completing this life stage by rebuilding trust with our Inner Children. We learn the characteristics of trust (clear communication, reliability, respect, honesty, sincerity, consistency, commitment, and competency). We learn to value these traits and adopt them in our behavior. We learn who we can trust by looking for these characteristics in others.

If we have memories of neglect, abandonment, loss, abuse, or trauma from birth to about eighteen months, we work through our grief on those specific events. Our Loving Parents guide us gently through the grief cycle (admit the problem, feel feelings, express feelings, bargain with our Higher Power, become depressed, turn the loss over to our Higher Power, and accept what happened). If we have no memories, we work on adopting the characteristics of trustworthy people.



### **Parent's Job - Recovery to Get What We Never Got**

A mother's job is to ensure the child gets his/her basic needs met (clean air, food, water, shelter, clothing, sleep, and warmth) and to love the child unconditionally. In recovery our Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to learn to supply his/her own basic needs and embraces the Inner Child unconditionally.



### **Recovery to Learn Skills We Did Not Learn as Infants**

In recovery, a Loving Parent teaches the Inner Child about the unlearned skills of the life stage. He/she adapts the childhood experiences he/she did not have to adult versions of those activities to complete the life stage. For example, the infant learns to feed. The Loving Parent assesses what the Inner Child already does and provides the guidance to learn what was never taught. Feeding, in recovery, may include enrolling in nutrition or human physiology classes. The Loving Parent may provide the Inner Child with sensory perception experiences such as buying activity books to find the differences in two similar pictures or figure out what ingredients were used in a dinner entree. The Loving Parent may provide sensory sensations by taking a bubble bath or getting a massage. The Loving Parent may arrange to have instruction in dance, karate, or yoga so the Inner Child learns about body movement. A Loving Parent may take his/her Inner Child to hike in a park, see the wonders in a museum, or ride on a train to experience various environments. The Loving Parent may enroll in a class to learn assertive behavior in the effort to teach his/her Inner Child how to get his/her needs met.



### **Recovery by Teaching Our Inner Children What Functional Children Learn**

Without a loving parent in childhood, the Loving Parent in recovery begins to provide unconditional love to the Inner Child. When the adult defaults to conditional love, the Loving Parent challenges the thought and replaces it with an unconditional love affirmation (e.g., you are

so wonderful, and I love you just as you are). The Loving Parent encourages the Inner Child to express his/her feelings in positive ways. The Loving Parent rewards the Inner Child for asking for what he/she needs and wants by supplying some form of what the Inner Child needs or wants (the Loving Parent, however, may substitute a toy car for a real Lamborghini). Most importantly, the Loving Parent works to become the trustworthy person the Inner Child can count on. When the Inner Child's needs are met, he/she begins to trust, hope, and work toward a better life.



### **Recovery by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”) Learned in Dysfunctional Homes**

The false, negative beliefs (“critical parent tapes” or “stinkin’ thinkin’”) we were taught as infants can be challenged, rejected, and replaced with positive affirmations. The ever-present feeling of being unsafe changes as we surround ourselves with safe people in safe environments and cease to associate with toxic individuals. As we work on self-esteem and assertiveness, we realize we are far more than what we are given. In working on our trust issues, we discover the traits we need to show others so that they can trust us. As we learn what to look for in others to trust them, our fears subside. We ask others about their sensory experiences to validate our own perceptions about what we see, hear, taste, touch and feel, or smell. When we suddenly feel like withdrawing from a situation, we look for what prompted our urgent desire to isolate ourselves. We grieve the original loss as well as the one that caused that emotion.



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Children Do**

An Adult Child in recovery completes the work on this life stage by engaging in fun or creative activities. He/she may explore art through finger-painting, crafts by sculpting with clay, play dough, or food, or music by listening to lullabies or moving to music. He/she may play with toys he/she never had as a child. The Adult Child may watch stars at night in lieu of the childhood mobile. Children's squeaky toys may be pets for adults. An adult version of playing with rubber ducks may be feeding swans or ducks at a pond or lake. Adults may sleep on eiderdown pillows or wear Sherpa-lined fleece flannel shirts in lieu of hugging teddy bears as children. Push toys for children may be carts in grocery stores, wheelbarrow races at picnics, or moving furniture for adults. Towing children or pets in little red wagons or playing tug-of-war at picnics may be the adult versions of childhood pull toys to satisfy the life stage. The childhood game of peekaboo may be pranks on loved ones.











### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

Bouncing for infant may be accomplished as adults by jumping on trampolines. Rocking for infants may be experienced as horseback riding, mechanical bull riding, swinging on park swings, or even rocking in a rocking chair by adults. Using ride-on toys as infants might be experienced as adults by riding bicycles, motorcycles, carousel horses, and Ferris wheels, or driving bumper cars, golf carts, motor vehicles, or race cars.



## Exercise: How Can I Heal?

A volunteer may read across each row. Then the group spends 2-3 minutes discussing ways a Loving Parent can help the Inner Child heal in each situation. Examples (Ex) are given for ways a Loving Parent helps the Inner Child.

		Situation	What can a Loving Parent do to Help His/Her Inner Child Recover or Learn from This?
	1	I was beaten as an infant when I cried.	Ex: Guide the Inner Child through grieving the abuse
	2	My girlfriend says she is being faithful, but I do not believe her.	Ex: Guide the Inner Child to learn characteristics of trustworthiness
	3	We were poor, so we never had heat in the house. I wear jackets today in my house to keep warm.	Ex: Share in meetings about the childhood feelings of living in a cold house
	4	My friends call me an absent-minded professor because I do not pay much attention to what is going on around me.	Ex: Provide daily exercises to focus on details
	5	A co-worker always says nasty things about my work within earshot of our boss; I keep quiet.	Ex: Go to Human Resources department and make a report
	6	I never know what to say or do at a party, so I go home early and watch television or play solitaire.	Ex: Make a list of topics to discuss at parties
	7	Years ago, my uncle promised me I could have any toy in the store, so I asked for the big, white, stuffed cat. He said it was too expensive and did not buy it.	Ex: Buy the Inner Child a big, white, stuffed cat or adopt a real cat
	8	I saw photos of my brother, but not me, as a tiny baby jumping up and down on a bouncer and grinning from ear to ear.	Ex: Jump on a trampoline or in a bounce house

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

During this meeting a volunteer will read across each row. Cross out the boxes in the grid below containing statements that are true for you today. Any boxes that are not crossed out are areas you may work on in recovery. Select one unmarked box to work on for recovery this week. In the next meeting when asked what you did as your Loving Parent to your Inner Child, share what you did during the week.








I communicate clearly	I trust myself	I love my Inner Child unconditionally	I have personal drive and enthusiasm	I enjoy hearing pleasant sounds
I am reliable	Others trust me	I feel and express my feelings	I am safe	I enjoy playing with toys in the water
I am respectful	My mother loved me unconditionally	I ask for what I need and want	I am not afraid	I like to hug soft, stuffed animals
I am honest and sincere	My mother provided all my basic needs: air, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep	 <p>I can recognize trustworthy people</p>	I am so much more than what I am given	I like pulling things and people in wagons
I am consistent	I eat in healthy ways	I have hope that good things will happen and good people will be in my life	I believe what I see, hear, taste, touch and feel, and smell	Bouncing gently up and down is fun
I keep my promises	I am aware of things I see, hear, taste, touch and feel, and smell	I feel and express my feelings	I enjoy being with others	I like to rock in a rocking chair
I am competent at doing many things	I am aware of how I move my body	I enjoy listening to music	I enjoy seeing pretty things that sparkle	I enjoy activities requiring balancing





## Chapter 17 - Completing Life Stages - Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Toddlers)

**Question: How can we become autonomous (self-governing)?**

Life Stage – Toddlers		Ages 18 Months – 3 Years	Parents are the Significant People
			Recovery
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt</b>		Identify the event(s) that led to shame and doubt Grieve the shame and doubt Grieve the issues you have with your parents
	<b>Parent's Job</b> Toilet training Teach the child self-control Encourage positive effort Reward delayed gratification		Learn proper toileting or hygiene Exercise self-control Put forth positive effort Reward delayed gratification Fulfill own needs and wants
	<b>Skills Toddlers Normally Learn</b> To define boundaries and set limits To get needs and wants met To interact with the world by watching, poking, grabbing, pulling To imitate adults and cartoon and movie heroes		Define boundaries and set limits Identify and meet own needs and wants Watch and experiment to learn how to interact appropriately with others Imitate behavior of healthy role models
	<b>Child Learns in Functional Home</b> He/she is loved, lovable, and wonderful Use imagination Break tasks into small steps to increase success He/she deserves encouragement, praise, and rewards for efforts Accomplishments will be valued and shared by parents Exercise free will in a safe environment Have pride in own efforts and accomplishments Initiate activities with others Cooperate, take turns, lead, and follow Understand limits of self-will and impose self-limits Negotiate to get needs and wants met		Convey to Inner Child he is loved, lovable, and wonderful Encourage creativity Guide breaking big tasks into smaller tasks Encourage, praise, and reward Inner Child's efforts Praise and share pride in Inner Child's accomplishments Encourage Inner Child to exercise his/her free will safely Encourage pride in own efforts and accomplishments Guide Inner Child to initiate activities with others Teach to cooperate, take turns, lead, and follow Teach limits of self-will and to impose self-limits Teach to negotiate to get needs and wants met
	<b>Child Learns in Dysfunctional Home</b> To be unsure of him/herself, helpless, and ashamed Become the bully, the follower, or the watcher Feel guilty Be overly responsible or irresponsible Be overly dependent on others to define him/her Be afraid and often paralyzed Never use imagination; never play freely Act impulsively or compulsively		Encourage Inner Child to act on his/her ideas Teach Inner Child how to do things independently Teach Inner Child to see own strengths and accomplishments Guide Inner Child to participate and interact with others in healthy ways Teach Inner Child to take responsibility and make amends when appropriate
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Children Do</b> Arts – finger painting Crafts – create sculptures, stamp designs using ink or paint Music – sing the alphabet and children's songs, dance Toys - building blocks, balls, books, puzzles Games – sorting and memory games, hide and seek Activities – Costume play, connect dots, nursery rhymes		Expose to arts such as fingerpainting Provide materials for sculptures and stamp printing Perform children's songs and dances or adult versions of them Play with blocks, balls, and puzzles or adult versions Play sorting and memory games, hide-and-seek, or adult versions of them Dress up, connect dots, or recite rhymes, or do adult versions
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Practice balance in walking Bounce, catch, and chase balls Run through sprinklers, roll down hills, chase birds Touch, grab, open doors, and open cupboards Pedal a tricycle		Encourage balance activities for children or adults Inspire to play ball games for children or adults Model or participate in water sports, rolling down hills, flying kites, or chasing birds, or catching butterflies Model touching, grabbing, opening objects or adult versions Pedal adult-sized tricycles, pedal cars, or pedal boats

## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt**

The Toddler life stage lasts from 18 months old to three years. Parents are the most important people to toddlers. If we have memories of neglect, abandonment, loss, abuse, or trauma that cause us to feel toxic shame or major doubt, our Loving Parents walk us through the grief cycle (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance).

Children who grow up in dysfunctional homes are often shamed. Such parents subject their children to repeated instances of humiliation. They tell their children they *are* bad rather than their *behavior* is bad. Parents dismiss or belittle their children's efforts, ideas, and achievements. They neglect their children or subject them to physical, emotional, spiritual, or sexual abuse. When children experience a traumatic event, they receive no support from their parents. They are seldom taken to counseling. The children internalize the messages and develop unreasonable expectations for themselves; they become perfectionistic for fear of being shamed.

When we have no specific memories, but always feel ashamed and doubt ourselves, we work with our Inner Children to grieve the toxic shame and debilitating doubt we received from our critical parents or caretakers.



### **To Overcome Toxic Shame**

- We realize that shame was used as a tool to manipulate and control us.
- We determine if our self-doubts are valid about what caused us to react, reject the accusations, and reassure our Inner Children they have nothing to be ashamed of.
- We build a support group to help us verify our own reality and reassure us.
- We use our adult perspective to understand our childhood abuse, trauma, and losses.
- We understand that all humans have flaws, weaknesses, and make mistakes.
- We identify, sit with, and accept the things that hurt us in the past and present.
- We understand the dysfunctional origins of our core values, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, grieve them, and let go of those which impede our progress toward goals.
- We accept our past lack of self-awareness and make amends to our Inner Children.
- We respond more and react less.
- We recognize anger as an ineffective coping skill we often use to avoid shame.
- We replace self-criticism with positive affirmation.
- We recognize that while we strive for success, failures provide us with information that help us reach our goals.
- We invite our own Loving Parents to come and take care of us.



### **To Overcome Debilitating Doubt**

- We realize we react in the present because of the abuse from our parents/caretakers who deliberately changed rules and blamed, shamed, and attacked us.
- We grieve the abuse of childhood.

- We recognize when we are overreacting, calm the fears of our Inner Children, and stop criticizing ourselves.
- We learn to take smaller steps toward our goals rather than freeze.
- We recite or write down a list of past successes and accomplishments and share them.
- We break down tasks into small steps and celebrate each step toward our goal.
- We recognize and reject unfounded criticism from ourselves and others.
- We prepare for upcoming tasks and performances.
- We keep our recovery focus on our own feelings, thoughts, words, and behavior, and not on what others say or do.
- We use positive affirmations, read positive material, and limit negativity.
- We use supporters and support groups to determine if our self-doubts are valid or not.
- We converse with our Inner Children each morning, evening, and throughout the day.



### **Parents' Job - Recovery from What We Never Got**

The job of our actual parents was to toilet train us, teach us self-control, encourage us to focus our energy and effort on doing good things, and reward us for putting off gratification. In recovery, the Loving Parent guides us to learn proper toileting, self-control, doing positive things, and extending gratification.



### **Recovery to Learn Skills We Did Not Learn as Toddlers**

As Loving Parents, we guide our Inner Children to learn the skills they did not learn growing up. We read or take classes to learn our limits and enforce our boundaries. We discover ways to get our needs and wants met without manipulating others. We allow our Inner Children to do the adult version of exploring our environment by watching (social experiments), poking (testing boundaries), grabbing (weightlifting or cliff climbing), and pulling (towing children in wagons). The adult adaptation of mimicking adults or fictional heroes may be imitating behaviors of successful speakers, entrepreneurs, statesmen, or actual heroes.



### **Recovery by Teaching our Inner Children What Functional Children Learn**

Our Loving Parents show our Inner Children that they are loved, lovable, and wonderful. They proudly display and share their Inner Child's work and accomplishments and teach them to be proud of themselves for their efforts. Rather than doing things for their Inner Children, Loving Parents show their Inner Children how to complete a task by breaking it up into small steps, cheering on their efforts, and patiently waiting for their Inner Children to complete the tasks by themselves or with minimum direction and assistance. Loving Parents supply tools and toys and show their Inner Children how to use them. They teach their Inner Children to cooperate, take turns, lead, and follow. They teach their Inner Children how to negotiate to get their needs and wants met. With this encouraging support, our Inner Children develop initiative. They develop the

self-confidence to think and act independently. They begin to exercise free will and learn the limits of self-will. They begin to detach from their parents and become autonomous because of their improved self-esteem.



### **Recovery by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”) Learned in Dysfunctional Homes**

Some of us came to believe as children that we were vile, inept, stupid, and worthless, that we were unworthy of love, attention, courtesy, or respect. We learned to keep our feelings to ourselves. We were afraid to be seen, much less respond to a question. We were terrified of our abusers to the point of abandoning ourselves to please them. Some of us became almost catatonic, paralyzed, unable to think clearly to make rational decisions. We learned our worth was in providing for the needs and wants of our abusers, that we were never to know free will or joy.

In recovery we grieve the experiences that resulted in our shame and doubt. We review what happened to us as children and come to understand we did nothing wrong. The shame was projected upon us by the abusers. The doubt foisted upon us was a tool the abusers used so we would not question or challenge them.

We challenge our own false thoughts that we adopted to survive. We become aware that we are feeling shame and doubt. We reject those thoughts by sharing them with participants at meetings, sponsors, or therapists.

We admit and own our worth. We develop and use positive affirmations in place of the negative beliefs (“I am proud of who I am, what I believe, think, say, and do, and the decisions I make”). We analyze our thoughts and behaviors when we become frozen, overly submissive to abusers, or insist that others make decisions for us. We make our own decisions freely and decisively, and then we act assertively.



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Children Do**

We experience the arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities of this life stage or the adult versions of them in the effort to mature emotionally. Enrolling in arts and crafts classes such as painting, pattern stamping, sculpting, leatherwork, sewing, or welding may serve to release the creativity of adult children. Reading children’s books, comics, graphic novels, fantasies, or science fiction may be the adult adaptation of inspiring imagination in our Inner Children. Singing childhood and adult songs with or without instruments may fill in the gaps of the unfulfilled life stage. Participating in simple dances (Hokey Pokey, simple hula, conga lines, line dances, or horas) may provide missing enjoyment of this life stage. The adult might put together unassembled furniture, build firepits with mortar and bricks, or fix automobiles in lieu of childhood building blocks. Board games, word searches, crosswords, sorting, connecting dots, etc. can help our Inner Children grow up. Adult activities may include assembling 1000-piece puzzles in place of the 6-piece puzzle of the toddler. Reciting nursery rhymes may give way to memorizing or acting out historic documents or writing and performing poems and songs. Acting in plays, dressing up for

Halloween, or attending a Renaissance Faire in costume may help our Inner Children to complete this life stage.



### Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities

Some of us did not have experiences that helped us improve our motor skills or play freely as children. In recovery, our own Loving Parents give our Inner Children those experiences. The adult adaptation of balance in walking may be to walk on balance beams of various heights or do gymnastics. Bouncing, chasing, and catching balls for toddlers may be to play or coach ball sports as adults. Running through sprinklers, rolling down hills, and chasing birds and butterflies may be accomplished at an ACA play day or by experiencing these things with an actual child. Touching, grabbing, and opening and closing cupboards and doors might be games at ACA Halloween parties or retreats using blindfolds, timers, or prizes. Riding a tricycle for an adult may be riding an adult-sized tricycle, bicycle, scooter, or motorcycle.



### Exercise 1 – Shame

Examples are given below of ways parents shame their children. After a volunteer reads down each column, participants may take 3-5 minutes to share similar examples from childhood.

Body Shaming	Identity Shaming (focus is on identity rather than undesired behavior)	Shaming What the Child Wants	Shaming What the Child Feels	Shaming What the Child Needs	Shaming to Manipulate Desired Behavior	Shaming Secrets Shared with Parent or Caretaker
He still wets the bed.	You are stupid.	All the toys I give you are never enough.	Oh, poor little baby, wants attention all the time.	You do not need to use the bathroom; hold it.	This little one always eats his boogers.	This one told me about pretty, little Linda kissing him.
He is so fat he cannot see his shoelaces to tie them.	You are a real f____ - up.	You do not need to wear what other children wear.	You do not mean that.	There are poor people dying without water; you can wait.	He always has his hands in his pants playing with himself.	She peed in front of her entire class.
She is so little she needs to sit on books to eat dinner.	You are such a cry-baby.	I do not have time for your silly problems; I have <i>real</i> problems.	What do you have to cry about?	You do not need to eat until I get ready to cook.	Princess here is always whining and crying to get what she wants.	He let that bully beat him up and take his lunch money again.
She is so clumsy she trips over her own feet.	I do not know why I put up with you; you are a worthless piece of garbage.		That is your mother you are talking about.	You do not need clean clothes for school; you just get them dirty anyway.		
He cannot even wipe his butt clean, so his clothes are soiled every day.	You are evil, bad to the bone.					
	You are just like your no-good father / mother / brother / sister...					



## Exercise 2 – Techniques Abusers Use to Instill Self-Doubt in Others

Examples are given below of some methods abusers use to instill fear, uncertainty, and doubt to intimidate, manipulate, or dominate others. The target of the abuse becomes frozen in fear or becomes hopelessly confused rendering him/her impotent to protect him/herself or challenge the abuser in any way. The victim questions his/her own memory, sensory perception, reality, and sanity. A volunteer reads through each column below that list examples of types of abuse. The group then spends 3-5 minutes per column sharing examples of similar abuse they experienced and how that caused them to doubt themselves.

Physical	Verbal	Social	Cyber
Hit	Persistent denial of reality	Lying about the person	Post abuse in texts, e-mailed photos or videos
Kick	Blame others	Spreading rumors	Exclude others online
Pull	Contradict others	Making negative faces or physical gestures	Post nasty gossip or rumors
Trip	Making up and repeating falsehoods about individuals	Threatening or contemptuous looks	Imitate person online to make him/her look bad to others; humiliate them in some way (catfishing)
Push	Misdirection	Nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate	
Punch	Overwhelming onslaught of repeated, negative statements and innuendos	Mimic someone's behavior unkindly	
Grab at	"Teasing" – taunts, insults, name-calling	Encourage others to socially exclude someone	
Pinch	Assign and repeat unkind nicknames	Saying bad things about a person so others will not accept that person	
Strangle	Racial and ethnic slurs, homophobic remarks, gender abasement, religious smears	Saying bad things about a person so others will think less of that person	
Beat	Threaten death or harm	Campaign of "gas lighting" (effort to control someone by making the victim question his/her own sanity rather than focus on the behavior of the perpetrator)	
Threaten physical harm		Uses question form and theatrics to make a lie credible; falsely paints a vivid picture of a person saying or doing something "bad"	



### Exercise 3 – Ways Loving Parents May Foster Autonomy in Our Inner Children

A volunteer reads the statements in column 1. Put checkmarks in column 2 if you, as your own Loving Parent, already do this for your Inner Child. In column 3, put checkmarks for the items you will begin to do for your Inner Child. The group then takes 5-10 minutes to discuss what each will begin to do as Loving Parents.

	I Already Do This for My Inner Child	I Will Start Doing This for My Inner Child
Help the Inner Child make good decisions		
Encourage the Inner Child to do things for him/herself		
Show the Inner Child how to do something and practice doing it		
Establish a daily activity schedule – brush teeth, shower, dress, eat meals...		
Do daily chores – make bed, hang up clothes, put things away after use...		
Provide proper tools to do daily and weekly housekeeping chores		
Encourage responsibility by completing daily and weekly chores		
Encourage doing things rather than asking for unneeded help		
Encourage acting on own ideas, taking risks, trying new things, and adapting processes to do things		
Adopt belief that successes are good, and failures merely provide information toward goal achievement		













### Exercise 4 – Autonomy in My Life

A volunteer reads the lists below. Put a checkmark next to all the activities below in which you meet your own needs and wants. Write N.A. for those not applicable in your life. Take 3-5 minutes to designate your first, second, and third priorities of those areas you did not check to work on in recovery. Spend 5-10 minutes for each person to share those priorities.

Bathing	Driving	Recovery	Shopping
Caring for Child / Pet	Eating	Relating to Bosses	Sleeping
Cleaning the House	Exercising	Relating to Co-Workers	Studying / Learning
Cooking	Grooming	Relating to Family	Technology - phone and public media
Communicating	Managing Finances – Make a budget Pay bills on time Reduce expenses Save money Pay off debts Buy a car Buy a house Invest Start a retirement account	Relating to Lover / Spouse	Toileting / Hygiene / Doctors / Dentists
Dental and Medical Care	Playing	Relating to Neighbors	Washing Clothes
Dressing	Property - own, maintain, and improve	Relaxing	Working

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

*In this meeting a volunteer reads across each row. Cross out the statements that are true for you in the boxes below. Circle one statement you will work on this week. When asked in the next meeting what you did as your Loving Parent for your Inner Child, share what you did during the week to gain more autonomy in your life.*






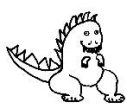

	I am autonomous	I always feel ashamed of myself	I second-guess myself; I never think I am right	To overcome shame and doubt I recall and grieve the childhood event that caused this	I practice good hygiene	
I exercise self-control	I put forth positive effort		I define and enforce boundaries and set limits		I identify and meet own needs and wants	I interact appropriately with others
I imitate healthy role models	I tell my Inner Child he/she is loved, lovable, and wonderful	I show my Inner Child how to be creative	I help my Inner Child break down tasks into small steps and work toward those milestones	I encourage, praise, and reward my Inner Child for his/her efforts	I tell others about my Inner Child's accomplishments and display awards	I keep my Inner Child safe and secure as he/she exercises free will
I am quite proud of my efforts and achievements	My Inner Child initiates activities with others	My Inner Child cooperates, takes turns, leads, and follows well		My Inner Child understands the limits of self-will and imposes self-limits	My Inner Child and I negotiate to get our needs and wants met	I encourage my Inner Child to act on his/her ideas independently
I often delay gratification	I show my Inner Child how to do things	I teach my Inner Child to share his/her own strengths and achievements	I guide my Inner Child to participate and interact with others in healthy ways	I teach my Inner Child to take responsibility and make amends when appropriate	I allow my Inner Child to explore arts such as finger painting or adult versions of them	I allow my Inner Child to explore crafts such as sculptures, stamp designs using ink or paint or adult versions of them
I allow my Inner Child to explore music such as singing the alphabet and children's songs, and dancing, or doing adult versions of them	I allow my Inner Child to explore toys such as building blocks, balls, books, and puzzles or adult versions of them		I allow my Inner Child to explore games such as sorting, memory games, and hide-and-seek or adult versions of them		I allow my Inner Child to explore activities such as dressing in costumes, connecting dots, and reciting nursery rhymes or adult versions of them	I allow my Inner Child to practice balance in walking or an adult version of this activity
	I allow my Inner Child to bounce, catch, and chase balls or adult versions of these activities	I allow my Inner Child to run through sprinklers, roll down hills, and chase birds or adult versions of these activities		I allow my Inner Child to touch, grab, and open doors and cupboards or do adult versions of these activities	I allow my Inner Child to pedal a tricycle or an adult version of this activity	



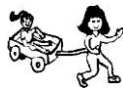


## Chapter 18 - Completing Life Stages - Initiative vs. Guilt (Pre-School Children)

**Question: In your adult life, are you a self-starter or a leader to others?**

Life Stage – Pre-School Child		Ages 3 – 6 Years	Family Members are Significant
		Recovery	
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Initiative vs. Guilt</b>	If one has memories of specific abusive events about initiating, exploring, or creating, grieve the abuse If one has no memories of specific events, grieve the guilt issues	
	<b>Parent's Job</b> Encourage child to explore and create Keep child safe	Set up opportunities for Inner Child to explore and create Ensure safety while Inner Child explores and creates	
	<b>Skills Pre-School Children Normally Learn</b> Social skills through play	Set up play dates with people in ACA to practice social skills	
	<b>Child Learns in Functional Home</b> Self-start Plan and initiate activities Make up games Make decisions Ask questions Have direction and purpose	Encourage exploration, play, and creating with safe people Encourage sense of direction and purpose as an ACA board member or committee chair to plan and initiate activities, make decisions, and communicate	
	<b>Child Learns in Dysfunctional Home</b> I am a burden I am worthless I am not a leader; I am a follower I cannot function on my own I deserve to be punished, forbidden, and restricted I must constrain myself; I cannot be curious or creative I cannot think for myself or do anything I control everything, or I control nothing I am a champion of morality, or I have no principles at all	Grieve false, negative beliefs ("critical parent tapes" or "stinkin' thinkin'") – <i>see examples to the left</i> Challenge and reject false, negative beliefs Replace them with positive affirmations Stop the negative belief-thought-words-action behavior	
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Games &amp; Activities Children Do</b> Arts – color, paint, shapes, draw, balance Crafts – stamp projects, macaroni necklace or picture Music – nursery rhymes, songs, hokey pokey dance Toys - Toy dinosaurs, Legos, zoo animals Games – board games, marching, Simon Says, Red Rover Activities – act out community careers – police, fire, nurse, builder, housewife, store clerk; engages in fantasy as pirate, fairy, prince/princess, super-hero...	Engage in arts, crafts, music, games, and activities or adult versions off them Volunteer for community activities – neighborhood policing, volunteer firefighter or homebuilder, babysitter, or fund raiser Get involved in local theatre, fantasy games, or Halloween activities in costume	
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Tricycles Soccer drills Wagon – push, pull, ride Bowling	Use mobility devices or play sports or adult versions of them: Ride on or race adult-sized tricycles or other vehicles Play baseball or other sports with friends or on teams Push, pull, or ride on wagons and carts or adult versions of them Bowl on lawns or in bowling alleys	

## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Initiative vs. Guilt**

From about ages 3 to 6, pre-school children explore their environments and create. Members of their nuclear family are the important people in their lives. At this age, the children learn to exercise their free will to initiate activities. When they succeed, they feel more confident.

If children have been discouraged from free exploration, they develop an ever-present sense of guilt. As adults in recovery who have memories of specific abusive events about exploring or creating, they grieve the specific abuse. Without memories of specific events, they grieve the guilt issues. In recovery the Loving Parent gently encourages the Inner Child to talk to ACA members after a meeting, ask for a Sponsor, participate in fellowship after a meeting, or ask for someone's phone number.



### **Parent's Job - Recovery to Get What We Never Got**

In a functional home, loving parents set up opportunities for their children to interact with other children to freely explore the people, places, and things in their environment. The parents provide the supplies to create with building blocks, color with crayons, dance to music, pose for photos, or sculpt with mashed potatoes, cookie dough, or clay. Loving parents supervise the play and the exploration to keep their children safe.

In recovery, Loving Parents help their Inner Children to set up exploratory experiences on an adult level. To find out more about people, the Loving Parent may encourage the Inner Child to study archeology or watch people at a public gathering. To learn about new places, the Loving Parent may encourage the Inner Child to go to a local museum or travel to another city or country. To learn about things in the environment, the Loving Parent may set up a visit for the Inner Child to visit the local nuclear plant, fish hatchery, or apiary.



### **Recovery to Learn Skills We Did Not Learn as Pre-Schoolers**

Some of us did not get the message to be both a leader or a follower with playmates or explore the exciting world around us. We were restricted by parents and caretakers because of the mess we might make, the time it might take from their pursuits to supervise us, and the distraction we might be to their melodramatic roles as victims, perpetrators, or heroes. In recovery our Loving Parents set up ACA programs or play dates to improve our social skills through work and play. In our recovery groups, we learn to share by working in a service position and then letting go of that position to allow someone else to serve.



### **Recovery by Teaching Our Inner Children What Functional Children Learn**

A Loving Parent encourages his/her Inner Child to explore, play, and create while keeping the Inner Child safe. One way to ensure safety is to engage with program people who have recovery when setting up play dates. The main goal in the activities is to allow the Inner Child the chance to talk freely, ask multitudes of questions, plan activities and initiate activities, create rules, and make decisions. Exploration may include the city or county around it. Zoos, museums, tidepools, planetariums, nature preserves, and trails may be explored. Playtime may include active games like baseball, miniature golf, tag, or paintball. Board games and card games allow the Inner Children to be comfortable interacting socially. Art, music, dance, crafts, and building activities allow Inner Children to discover who they are, what they like, and what they want to do. They gain a sense of purpose.



### **Recovery by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”) Learned in Dysfunctional Homes**

We adopted certain false and damaging beliefs about ourselves in dysfunctional homes. We were taught to believe that we were so defective that there was no reason for us to act on our ideas, rally others to action, or attempt to do anything. We felt guilty for being, for taking up space, and for breathing.

In recovery we share the lies we had adopted. We trace those false ideas back to childhood to remember where we heard them and why we ultimately adopted them. With that information, we challenge the false belief (“I am not worthless”). We reject the guilt we feel (“It’s not my fault; I did nothing wrong”). Then we affirm who we are using positive affirmations (“I am acting on my ideas,” “I can inspire others to act with me,” “I can do anything I set my mind to do”).



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Children Do**

In the effort to grow up emotionally, it is necessary to fully experience the free and easy playfulness of this life stage. It is important to create happy childhood experiences so we do not default to our learned, negative behaviors. We can recreate the childhood experiences and/or explore the adult versions of them.

Art for this life stage includes learning about color, shapes, and visual balance. Pre-school children explore the materials (crayons, paint, scissors, etc.). They practice techniques using the materials. The Loving Parent may enroll in drawing or painting classes.

Crafts may include using sculpted potato stamps to make patterns in ink or paint, threading macaroni to create necklaces, or gluing paper dots or squares or pasta onto paper. An adult version of these activities might be taking a class in making jewelry.

For music, rhythm, and dance, recovery may include reciting nursery rhymes, singing children's songs, moving to music, or playing kazoos, drums, or tambourines. Adult variations may include reading poetry, singing contemporary songs, dancing, and playing instruments.

The toys typical pre-school children play with are tiny toy dinosaurs and zoo animals as well as building blocks. Someone in ACA recovery could easily make elaborate dioramas or video creations of the animals in their habitats. Lego, Erector Set, or model train structures or environments can be built.

Using games as a recovery tool, an adult version of Candyland might be Chess or Scrabble. Childhood marching for an adult may be drill sequences in marching bands, cheerleading, or military exercises. The game of Simon Says may be learning new dance steps. Red Rover, for an adult, may become selecting players for a soccer team or work project.

The adult versions of dressing up as community helpers (police, firefighters, nurses, teachers, homemakers, pirates, fairies, royalty, superheroes) might be experienced doing a "ride along" with police, participating in a neighborhood watch assignment, or becoming a police officer. Volunteering at the local hospital might serve as the adult version of playing a doctor or nurse as a child. Acting in a local theater production might also be a way to recreate the fun missed as a pre-school child.



### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

Using the mobility or sports equipment of the pre-school child, or the adult adaptations of them, will also help to complete this life stage. While the pre-school child is working on following directions, learning rules, and mastering his/her coordination, the adult in recovery is filling in the blanks of his/her "Swiss Cheese" identity. The child's tricycle experience may be created by pedaling an adult-sized tricycle or revving up a Harley-Davidson Trike motorcycle. Soccer drills of pre-school children may become participation by an adult on a community soccer team. Wagon play may be replaced with riding on or driving horses, golf carts, or sports utility vehicles. Lawn bowling or bowling in bowling alleys as adults would recreate the pre-school child's experience knocking down plastic pins with plastic balls.



## Exercise 1 – Guilt

*A volunteer reads the passage below and then the statements. Participants circle the numbers of the statements below that are true for you. The group then spends 5-10 minutes sharing experiences about guilt.*

Guilt has two basic components: disapproval of oneself (which engenders self-hate and a belief one can never be happy) and a fear of humiliation if the designated “bad” behavior is revealed publicly (which ensures the belief that “no one can help” and results in ever-present sadness).

1. I have no control over myself.
2. I can never do anything right.
3. I am always sad.
4. I am always worried people will find out who and what I really am.
5. I am an awful person.
6. I will never be happy.
7. I should be punished.
8. I am terrified I will be caught or found out.
9. I get angry when someone finds out a secret about me.
10. I do not like who I am.

*If you circled most of these, you likely have unresolved guilt issues to address in recovery. Trace your guilt feelings to a childhood event and resolve the original event by expressing your grief. If you still cannot name the event, work on recovering from guilt.*



## Exercise 2 - Initiative

*A volunteer reads the passage below and then the statements. Participants circle the numbers of the statements below that are true for you. The group then spends 5-10 minutes sharing experiences about taking initiative.*








Children who initiate activities with others are assertive. They feel secure in their ability to take their original ideas, make good decisions to create plans to make those ideas happen, and lead others to participate.

1. I feel good when I respectfully tell people what I want and need.
2. Figuring out how to solve a problem and sharing my plan is exciting.
3. Brainstorming with others to solve problems and developing a plan is stimulating.
4. I stand up for myself when others say or do abusive things.
5. I like to start new projects.
6. I make sound decisions to develop my action plans.
7. I like being a leader.
8. I love to see my ideas come into being.
9. I like to share information and collaborate with others to work out solutions.
10. I enjoy taking the responsibility that comes with leadership.

*If you circled most of these statements, you seem to have mastered the skills of this life stage.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

During this meeting, complete the exercise below. Fill in the last column with one thing you will do this week in recovery. In the next meeting when you are asked what your Loving Parent did for your Inner Child, share one or more of these things that you worked on in recovery during the week.








		One Thing I Will Do This Week
Initiate an activity with safe members of ACA		Activity, date, and time:
Explore, create, or build something		What I will explore, create, or build:
Set up play date to practice social interaction skills on a given date at a given time		What we will do on the play date, who I will invite, and the day and time we will do it::
Play respectfully, share, and cooperate		What I will play and how I will play, share, or cooperate with others:
Grieve a time I was not allowed to explore, create, or build		What I was not allowed to do and what I will to do grieve it:
Engage in arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and other activities for pre-school children or an adult version of it		Arts, crafts, music, toys, games, or activities for pre-school children or adult versions of them that I will do:
Participate in a pre-school child's physical activity or sport or an adult version of it		Child's physical activity, sport, or activity or the adult version of it that I will participate in:



## Chapter 19 - Completing Life Stages - Industry vs. Inferiority (Elementary-School-Aged Children)

**Question: How can we become industrious when we feel inferior?**

**Life Stage – Elementary-School-Aged Child** Ages 6 - 12 Years Neighbors & Teachers are Significant

		<b>Recovery</b>
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Industry vs. Inferiority</b>	Grieve memories of specific abusive events Grieve feelings of inferiority if one has no memories of the abuse or trauma
	<b>Parent's Job</b> Teach good behavior Encourage child to make friends, participate in school and community activities, and solve problems Facilitate participation (transport, pay fees, provide tools...) Keep child safe and secure	Encourage Inner Child to feel industrious (competent, confident, and enthusiastic) in achieving goals Set up participation activities for Inner Child Ensure safety while Inner Child interacts Model kind and healthy behavior
	<b>Skills Elementary Children Normally Learn</b> Work ethic – to commit, participate, and follow-through Think – abstractly, organize, plan, solve problems, distinguish between fact and fiction Social Skills - Make friends, earn peer approval, work with groups or independently Awareness – at home, school, and community Confidence – state own opinions Learn how things work; learn to read, write, and do math	Encourages Inner Child to participate in groups and situations in which children work together Teach the distinction between an unsafe situation and one that is uncomfortable Support work ethic, clear thinking, situation awareness, confidence, processes, and academics
	<b>Child Learns in Functional Home</b> Self-Care – hygiene, dress, clean up after self Care of Others – younger children and pets Responsibility – chores, homework, follow-through, work and play well with others, admit and atone for mistakes Follow Rules – play games and sports Get Needs and Wants Met - ask for and accept help Activities – explore, experiment, and produce Contribute to society by volunteering	Models breaking tasks into steps Encourages self-care Models caring for small children and pets Teaches taking responsibility, following rules, getting needs and wants met Encourages exploring, experimenting, producing, and volunteering
	<b>Child Learns in Dysfunctional Home</b> Has no skills or abilities; cannot think, organize, or plan Is inferior, does not try or hope, will never succeed Distrust for self and others Judge and criticize self and others harshly Be a perfectionist or a slob, be highly competitive or not competitive, always or never takes risks Associates with antisocial people or isolates Lies, breaks his/her promises, rules, and laws, and hurts others Takes no responsibility – blames others	Grieve false, negative beliefs ("critical parent tapes" or "stinkin' thinkin") Challenge and reject false, negative beliefs Replace negative beliefs with positive affirmations Stop the negative belief-thought-words-behavior sequence
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Children Do</b> Arts – explore elements of art, tools, and techniques Crafts – make jewelry, mosaics, origami, and string art, carve or sculpt Music – Sing historic songs, recite poetry, play instruments, dance Toys - action figures and dolls, toy cars, Legos, balls, puppets Games - word, board, card, and video Activities – fantasy and war games, fly kites, camp, attend marathons Construct models and use science kits	Explore or take classes in arts, crafts, singing, dancing, and playing or writing music Play word, board, card, and video games Participate in local theater, play paintball war games, fly kites, camp, have slumber parties, or attend marathons Build models with kits or use science kits
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Ride bicycles, skateboards, or scooters Team sports – track, baseball, football, basketball, soccer, volleyball Individual skills - archery, marksmanship, running, tetherball, handball	Use mobility vehicles – bicycles, skateboards, scooters or adult versions Play team sports – track and ball sports Play individual sports - archery, marksmanship running

## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Industry vs. Inferiority**

From ages 6 to 12, elementary-school-aged children are learning about work. In recovery, our own Loving Parent guides us to learn what work is, the skills and tools needed to do the job efficiently, how to work alone or with others, how to distinguish fact from fiction, how to think, plan, and solve problems, and how to communicate confidently. When children learn these things, they are constantly active, involved, and working towards goals. If they do not learn them, they become idle, destructive, and feel worthless and inferior to others. If they have memories of specific abusive events about working, or school, or the absence of support when these events occurred, they grieve the abuse. Without memories of specific events, they grieve their feelings of worthlessness.



### **Parent's Job - Recovery to Get What We Never Got**

In childhood, our parents were supposed to get us involved in opportunities where we worked with others to achieve common goals. They were supposed to get us the tools to use, the guidance and training to be productive, encourage our efforts, and keep us safe. That is now the job of our own Loving Parent. Our Loving Parent will provide us with the tools, guidance, and training we need to be productive. Our Loving Parent will actively assist us to get involved with groups (such as ACA service committees or boards) working toward common objectives and be successful while working with others. The Loving Parent 1) assures us that there are plans in place if a social situation does not go as expected and helps to carry out those plans, 2) cheers us on in our endeavors, 3) rewards our efforts, and 4) assures us that we are not alone. Our Inner Children can learn to call our Loving Parent for help and support.



### **Recovery to Learn Skills We Did Not Learn as Elementary Children**

In recovery, our Loving Parent encourages our Inner Child to participate in groups and situations for children to work together effectively. We develop a work ethic when we commit ourselves, show up, listen, participate, follow-through, and let go of the results. Our Loving Parent provides our Inner Children with opportunities to think linearly and abstractly, plan, organize, solve problems, separate fact from fiction, work alone and with others, and become involved in our homes, schools, and communities. Our Loving Parent encourages our Inner Children to speak confidently when sharing ideas and opinions. Our Loving Parent supports the efforts of our Inner Children to learn how things work and encourages them to apply their reading, writing, and math and financial skills to real situations and solve the problems that arise.





### **Recovery by Learning the Lessons Taught in Functional Homes**

In a functional home, a child learns to dress appropriately, to clean up after him/herself, and care for pets and younger children. The child learns to do chores, homework, and play fairly with others. The child is taught to own up to mistakes and atone for them. Through games and sports, the child learns to follow rules and how to win and lose graciously. He or she learns to get his/her needs and wants met, ask for assistance, and accept help offered. The child in a functional home is encouraged to explore, experiment, and produce. The child learns to contribute to his or her world by volunteering.

In recovery, the Loving Parent guides his or her Inner Child through these lessons – dressing appropriately, caring for others, taking responsibility, and admitting and atoning for mistakes. The Loving Parent teaches the Inner Child how to follow rules, get his/her needs and wants met, and ask for help when help is needed. The Loving Parent encourages the Inner Child to explore, experiment, and produce. Finally, the Loving Parent encourages the Inner Child to volunteer at home, in the neighborhood, and in the community.



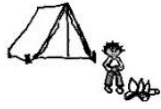
### **Recovery by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”) Learned in Dysfunctional Homes**

In a dysfunctional home a child learns and internalizes a variety of negative “truths.” He/she is told by parents’ words and/or behavior that he/she has no skills or abilities. Because the child believes he cannot think, organize, or plan, the child believes he/she is inferior, has no hope for the future, and does not believe he/she can ever succeed. This child learns to distrust him/herself and others. He/she judges him/herself and others harshly. The child grows up to become a perfectionist or a slob, becomes extremely competitive or never competes, and takes extreme risks or no risks. The child associates with antisocial people or isolates completely. The child may lie, break promises, violate rules and laws, and deliberately hurts others. This child takes no responsibility for anything and consistently blames others.

“Stinkin’ Thinkin’” was a useful survival tool (“Because Dad thinks I have nothing intelligent to say, I will keep quiet so that he does not belittle me”). In recovery we identify these old, false messages and the underlying traumatic events that caused us to believe them. The behavior we adopted with these false messages may have saved our young lives. We often continue to use these old survival tools as we work to replace the old false messages with thinking that reflects who we are today. Eventually we learn that the false, negative thinking does not serve us well as adults, and we let go of it.

Recovery involves grieving the situations that led to adopting the belief he or she is inferior to others. When the false thoughts arise (“I am inferior to others”), are spoken aloud, or are acted out, the person in ACA recovery learns to recognize them (“I just had a false thought”), stop to analyze them (“This dysfunctional thought came from my childhood when...”), challenge the validity (“This is false”), reject them (“I don’t believe that”), grieve them (cry to express the sadness), and replace them with a positive thought, phrase, or action (“I am a wonderful person, a

child of my Higher Power, equal to all others, capable of doing anything I choose to do. I am enough”).



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Children Do**

In recovery, creating a happy childhood allows our Inner Children to become complete human beings. To ignore this piece of recovery allows us to default to dysfunctional thinking, words, and patterns of behavior.

Art exploration at this life stage may include color, shapes, patterns, materials, techniques, and placing objects while creating masterpieces in crayons, markers, paint, clay, popsicle sticks, tin foil, beads, yarn, cardboard, or macaroni. Community classes in art abound for adults.

Crafts may include making jewelry with beads, sculpting with clay, creating mosaics with paper or tiles, origami, sewing, tie-dying t-shirts, or using painted string to create three-dimensional art. Recovery for this life stage may include taking classes in crafts such as welding, metal work, construction, sewing, handcrafts, and design.

Experiences for adults in recovery in music may include singing childhood, folk, historic, patriotic, and contemporary songs. It may also include reciting poetry, playing instruments, or participating in dances.

The toys of this life stage are action figures and dolls, toy cars and trucks, Legos, balls, kites, balsa wood planes, slinkies, and puppets. Adult versions of these toys (bobble heads, new cars and trucks, furniture kits, basketball, and drones...) help in recovery.

Word games, card games, board games, and video games are enjoyed by children 6 to 12. Adult versions of games may be bridge, Scrabble, or mahjongg.

Activities to complete this life stage include wearing costumes, playing fantasy and war games, camping, attending slumber parties, building models, or using construction or science kits. For recovery, one can wear a costume in local theater productions, Halloween parties, Haunted House, Renaissance Faire, or comic convention. Playing paintball war games or staging snowball fights, flying kites or drones, or going up in air balloons might be fun. Adult adaptations of slumber parties may be playing poker all-night, binge-watching movies, or attending 12-Step marathon meetings.



### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

Mobility devices for children are bicycles, skateboards, and scooters. Adult versions of are bicycles, skateboards, scooters, recreation vehicles, ocean liners, planes, or trains. Typical team

sports of this life stage include track, baseball, football, basketball, soccer, and volleyball played by children and adults. Yoga and Tai chi may be practiced. Community Centers, municipal parks, and colleges offer opportunities to participate in team sports and classes. Individual skills such as archery and marksmanship may require trips to archery fields and gun ranges. Walking, jogging, or running daily or three times a week may require scheduling and personal commitment.



### Exercise 1 - Inferiority

*A volunteer reads the statements below. Circle the number for those that are true for you. Circle those where one of two opposite choices are also true. The group then spends 5-10 minutes to share examples of feeling inferior.*

1. I have no skills or abilities worth mentioning.
2. I cannot think, organize, or plan well.
3. I do not try to do anything because I always fail.
4. I have nothing to hope for or look forward to.
5. I do not trust myself or anyone else.
6. I judge and criticize myself just as harshly as I judge and criticize others.
7. I am a perfectionist, or I do not care how or if things get done.
8. I am overly competitive, or I never compete.
9. I take extreme risks, or I never take risks.
10. My friends are all antisocial like me, or I completely isolate.
11. I lie, break rules and laws, and hurt others.
12. I never make mistakes; other people always ruin my life.

*If you circled many of these, you may want to help your Inner Child find ways to overcome feelings of inferiority.*



### Exercise 2 - Industriousness

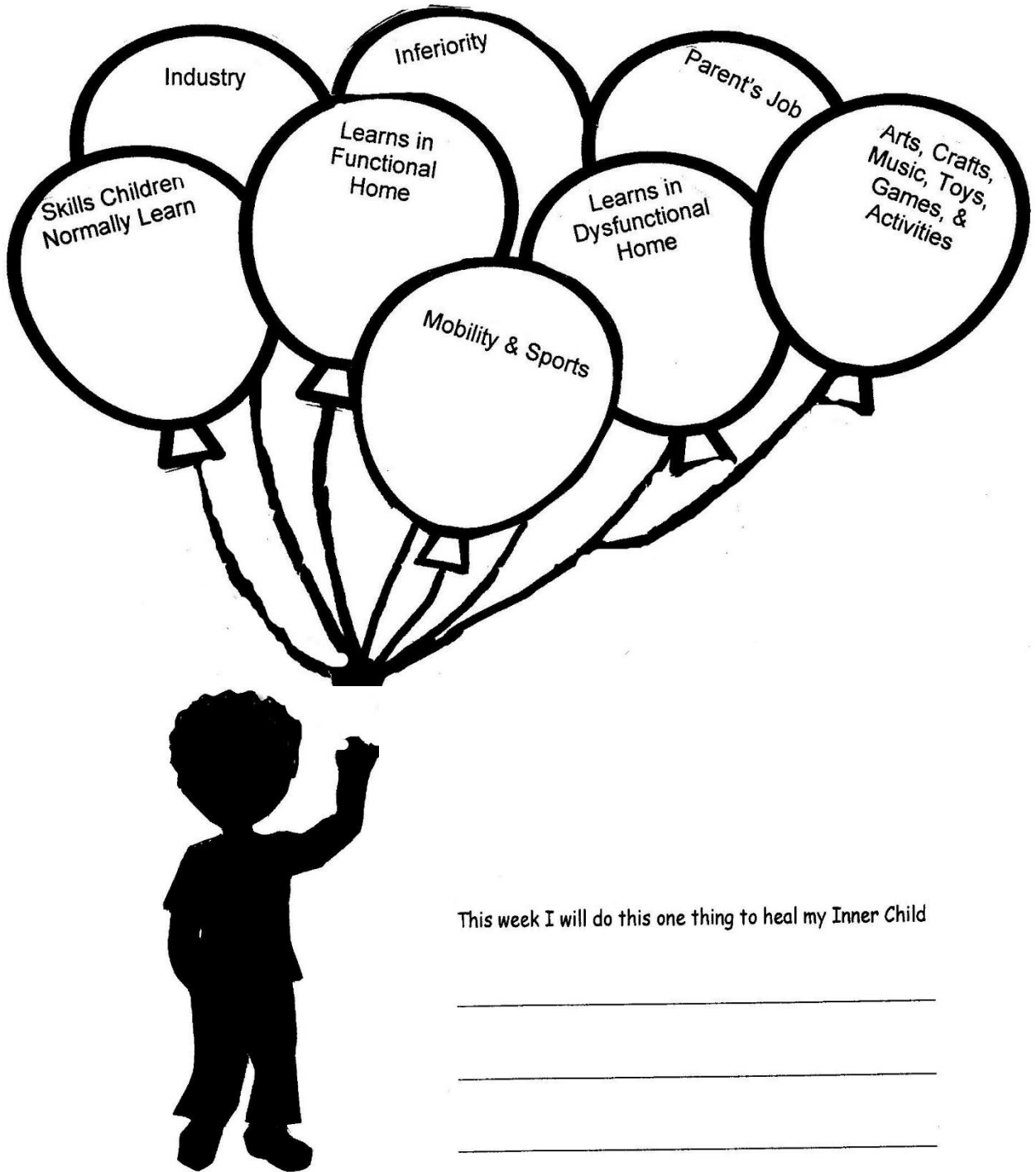
*A volunteer reads the statements below. Circle the number for those that are true for you. The group then spends 5-10 minutes to share examples of feeling industrious.*

1. When I commit to doing something, I show up on time, properly dressed, and ready to work.
2. I get jobs done by persevering and overcoming obstacles.
3. I take care of the tools I use; I keep them accessible, clean, and orderly.
4. I work respectfully as a leader or follower as part of the team effort.
5. When I have a job to do that I do not know how to do, I educate myself on how to do it or find someone to show me how to do it correctly.
6. I follow rules, laws, and procedures.
7. I figure out responsible ways to get my needs met.
8. I like to explore and experiment safely.
9. I volunteer regularly in my program and in my community.

*If you circled many of these, you have learned the lesson of this life stage and can move on to the next one.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week







Do this exercise in the meeting. Attach the balloons to the child's hand. Fill in each balloon with one thing you need to work on in that category (see page 71). Select the one thing you will work on this week and write it on the lines next to the child. Take 5-10 minutes to share the one thing you will work on during the week. That is what you will share on at the next meeting when you are asked what you did the past week as your Loving Parent for your Inner Child.





## Chapter 20 - Completing Life Stages - Identity vs. Confusion (Adolescents)

**Question: How have I defined myself sexually and vocationally?**

Life Stage – Adolescents		Ages 12 - 18 Years	Peers are the Significant People
		Recovery	
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Identity vs. Role Confusion</b>	Defines self sexually Defines self vocationally	
	<b>Parent's Job</b> Encourage independence, exploration, and achievement Provide the security of rule compliance	Encourages the Inner Child to be independent, excited to explore, and motivated to achieve Imposes limits and enforces consequences for violations of boundaries	
	<b>Skills Adolescents Normally Learn</b> Personal identity - to separate from parents in values, thoughts, words, and behavior Loyalty to groups Critical thinking Sexual awareness, acceptance, and integration Relationship skills Prepare for future careers through education and skills acquisition	Identify own values, thoughts, words, and behavior Help Inner Child determine where to place loyalty Provide guidance in critical thinking Provide models of people comfortable with own sexual identity Provide education in relationship skills Improve education and skills for a career	
♂ ♀ ?	<b>Child Learns in Functional Home</b> Faithfulness, reliability, and dependability Trust in self and others who earn it Become independent Define sexual identity Relationship skills Define vocational identity Plan a career Interact in groups appropriately Learn how to belong Become aware of family, community, and world	Encourage fidelity, reliability, and dependability Recognize trustworthiness and become trustworthy Make own decisions on thoughts, words, and behavior based on own values Dress and groom to attract mates Join clubs and groups to meet friends and mates Assess vocational assets, improve deficits, and enhance skills Determine ideal career, steps to it, and work toward it Participate in groups Affiliate with chosen groups Participate in family, community, and world activities	
	<b>Child Learns in Dysfunctional Home</b> Distrust of self and others Unsure of who and what he/she is or who to be Holds extreme views, rules are too harsh or too lax Gets needs met in gangs and inappropriate, risky or antisocial behavior, "saving victims," or disconnecting Drawn to people who violate boundaries of others	Learn how to trust and be trusted Define who and what he/she is and who he/she will be Analyze own views and rules in terms of own values Work to successfully meet own healthy needs Assess quality of relationships in terms of values and reciprocity	
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Children Do</b> Arts – draw, paint, sculpt, photography, write Crafts – work on crafts of interest Music – sing, play instrument, dance, compose Toys – educational, electronic, computer, skill development, and models and kits Games – strategy, intellectual, skill development Activities – dating, club, or group participation, and giving service in ACA or the community	Help Inner Child define identity in exploring arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities Encourage relationships in dating and groups Volunteer in ACA and/or community activities	
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Outdoor activities, travel, vehicles, team sports	Encourage the Inner Child's participation in outdoor activities, team sports, traveling, and using vehicles	

## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Identity vs. Role Confusion**

At this life stage adolescents are exploring their own values, thinking, expressions, and behavior independent from those of their parents. They are becoming sexually aware, sexually active, and attracted to potential mates. They are assessing their academic strengths, weaknesses, and skills to plan how they will support themselves as adults. People in ACA who did not master the lessons of this life stage or get the support of their parents or caretakers during it, become their own Loving Parents to guide their Inner Children through the life stage lessons.

In recovery, the Inner Child needs to learn what his/her values are and ensure they are in alignment with his/her thinking, speaking, and behavior. In this way the Inner Child learns who he/she is. The Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to define him/herself sexually and vocationally.

Sexually, the Loving Parent helps the Inner Child explore feelings about his/her body by mentally scanning the entire body and noting the positive and negative reactions to each body part. The Loving Parent assesses the level of confidence he/she has in relating to others intimately. The Inner Child assesses what he/she learned about sex when growing up, challenges negative attitudes, and replaces them with positive mindsets. The Loving Parent encourages the Inner Child to communicate with a sexual partner to find out by asking, exploring, and sharing what is pleasant and what is not. The Loving Parent also guides the Inner Child to share and ask the sexual partner how each interprets a sexual encounter (intimacy, physical release, power...).

Vocationally, the Loving Parent may focus his/her Inner Child on self-appraisal of intellect, trade skills, interpersonal skills, education, experience, and job performance. The Loving Parent encourages the Inner Child to further develop his/her strengths and remediate any deficits.



### **Parent's Job - Recovery to Get What We Never Got**

A parent's job is to encourage the adolescent to define his or her identity by stating his/her views, exploring the environment, and achieving something worthwhile. It is also to set limits for the teenager and enforce consequences for breaking the household rules. When the actual parent or caretaker failed to do these things, the child did not learn to be independent, how to safely explore his/her environment, or accomplish anything.

In recovery, the Loving Parent takes on the role the actual parent failed to do. The Loving parent primarily acts in the capacity of a cheerleader, encouraging independence of thought, word, and deed, inspiring exploration, and supporting efforts to accomplish goals. A Loving Parent also communicates and enforces consequences of boundary violations.



### **Recovery to Learn Skills We Did Not Learn as Adolescents**

We were supposed to have learned specific skills during adolescence that many of us did not learn. We were supposed to have separated from our parents, but some of us became enmeshed. Affiliation to social groups often became unhealthy “loyalty” to unhealthy family members, practices, and behavior. Some of us did not learn to think critically. Some of us became overly sexual, frigid, or asexual. Most often we did not learn how to behave in a healthy relationship. Some of us did not learn to value education, information, or skills needed to succeed in careers.

A Loving Parent helps his/her Inner Child to identify and align his/her values with thoughts, words, and behavior. The Loving Parent helps the Inner Child understand that loyalty is earned for positive, healthy behavior and is reciprocal. The Inner Child is guided by the Loving Parent to learn how to think critically to solve problems. The Loving Parent puts the Inner Child in proximity of healthy people who are comfortable with their sexuality and sexual identity and assists the Inner Child to learn good relationship and career skills.



### **Recovery by Learning the Lessons Taught in Functional Homes**

The lessons learned in a functional home include being dependable, reliable, and trustworthy. The adolescent is nurtured to establish his/her identity and independence. This is the life stage where the child defines sexual identity, learns relationship skills, and plans for a productive, satisfying vocation. The teenager learns how to behave successfully in groups and how to belong in them. Nearing adulthood, the teenager becomes responsible for him/herself as well as the family, community, and world.

In recovery, the job of the Loving Parent to provide guidance for the Inner Child to learn these things. Character traits fostered by the Loving Parent are fidelity, dependability, and trustworthiness. The Loving Parent works with the Inner Child to think, speak, and act according to the Inner Child’s actual values. The Loving Parent encourages the Inner Child’s grooming and dressing to attract a mate and join groups to meet friends and mates. The Loving Parent may encourage the Inner Child to recognize his/her vocational aptitude, improve deficits, and prepare for a chosen career. Following the guidance of the Loving Parent, the Inner Child defines what belonging means and strives to achieve it. Finally, the Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to get more involved with the family, community, and world.



### **Recovery by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”) Learned in Dysfunctional Homes**

In a dysfunctional home a child learns no one can be trusted, not even him/herself. Because efforts in becoming a unique being are pervasively threatened, the child does not dare to recognize independent thought or act on it. In survival mode, the child does not develop a sense of self, have an idea of his/her capabilities, or dare to aspire to a fulfilling life. Instead, the child adopts the extreme views and life rules of the parents and gives up establishing any identity of his or her own. In some dysfunctional families, the rules are too loose or non-existent. In others, the consequences for violating family rules are arbitrary and/or abusive. When the child does not get his needs met at home, the child gravitates towards peers who regularly violate boundaries of others and break laws and rules, become “saviors” of victims like him/herself, or disconnect altogether and isolate. Without having formed an identity, the child does not know who he/she is sexually or who he/she will become vocationally.

In recovery, the Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to learn what trustworthiness looks like, how to behave so others trust him/her, and how to identify trustworthy traits in others. The Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to explore his/her identity and what career to pursue. The Loving Parent ensures that the Inner Child learns what his/her values are and aligns them with his/her thinking, speaking, and actions. Guided by the Loving Parent, the Inner Child finds ways to get healthy needs and wants met in appropriate ways. The Loving Parent provides education from classes, books, and media to understand the dynamics of healthy relationships. The Loving Parent also guides the Inner Child to identify and compare his/her skills with requirements of careers.



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Children Do**

To fill in the emotional gaps of this incomplete life stage, a Loving Parent guides the Inner Child to define his or her identity in exploring arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities. The Inner Child quickly learns his/her strengths and weaknesses in these areas as well as his/her likes and dislikes. Adolescents choose which skills they want to improve further.

In the back of this workbook are lists of arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and other activities that people in ACA recovery may use to explore aspects of identity. Drawing, painting, sculpting, taking photos, and writing poems, essays, or stories may be of interest. Crafts might include building dog houses, assembling furniture, creating t-shirt art, or putting together a Halloween costume. A teenager’s talents in music may be in listening, singing, playing an instrument, dancing, or writing and performing songs. Toys of note for teens may be educational (microscopes), electronic (computers), developing skills (marksmanship or cooking), and building models (space station) or kits (robots, cleaning water). Games for this age teach strategy (Chess, Stratego), logic (Monopoly, Clue), and skill development (communication – charades, vocational – model assembly). Activities may include dating, participating in clubs and groups, and volunteering in the ACA program or in the larger community.





### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

At this life stage, teenagers participate in outdoor activities. Adolescents are often mobile with access to vehicles to travel short distances from home. They often become involved in team sports.

For those who did not get these opportunities growing up, the Loving Parent provides the Inner Child with new experiences. Some activities may be exhilarating. Some may be unpleasant. The goal is to discover one's identity.

The Loving Parent may arrange for the Inner Child to join or coach a community baseball, basketball, or soccer team. The Loving Parent may call a travel agent to book a cruise on an ocean liner, cross the country or continent on a train, or fly to another city or country.

The Loving Parent may also provide the resources to explore various types of vehicles such as dog sleds, race cars, motorcycles with sidecars, pedal boats, or heavy equipment.



### **Exercise 1 - Identity and Role Confusion**

*A volunteer reads the statements below. Circle the number for all that are true for you. Circle those with opposite choices if either are true for you. Take 5-10 minutes to share on these items.*

1. I do and say things I saw my parents do and say that are not right.
2. When people ask me what I want for my birthday, I never have an answer.
3. I never know what to do or say.
4. I let people walk all over me, or I walk all over other people if they do not stop me.
5. I do not make commitments to anyone, or I take on too many responsibilities.
6. I use sex as a tool to get what I want.
7. I hate sex, or I love having sex constantly.
8. To be safe in my childhood home, I learned to be asexual.
9. Relationships are just too much work.
10. I did not do well in my high school; the classes were boring.
11. In high school I did not know what I wanted to do vocationally.
12. If people want my help, they need to pay me; I do not volunteer.
13. I only work for the money, the connections I can make, or the social experience.
14. I like jobs without responsibility; I hate stress.

*If you circled many of these, you have not learned the lesson of this life stage. You need to work on completing this life stage in recovery.*



## Exercise 2 - Healthy Sexual and Vocational Identity



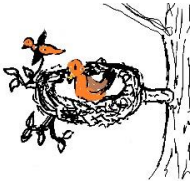


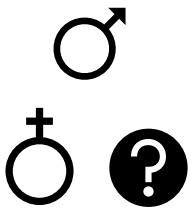

*A volunteer will read the sentences below. Circle the number for all statements below that are true for you. Then spend 5-10 minutes to discuss items you may work on in recovery.*

1. The things I believe, think, say, and do are consistent with one another.
2. I help friends and family when I have the extra time.
3. I know what I want and need, and I tell others what I want and need from them.
4. I know how to get what I want and need by setting goals, planning the steps, and working to achieve those milestones.
5. I enjoy helping others and volunteering my time for worthy causes if I have the extra time to spare.
6. I am comfortable in groups and enjoy being with people.
7. I know what limits and boundaries are, and I set limits and enforce my boundaries.
8. I only commit to doing things if I have the desire, time, energy, and resources to do them.
9. I enjoy dating.
10. I enjoy having both feminine and masculine traits.
11. I like to be in healthy, reciprocal relationships.
12. Sex is the physical form of positive intimacy between my lover and me.
13. The classes I liked best in high school lead me to a satisfying career.
14. I enjoy the career I have chosen that allows me to make the world better.

*If you circled most of these, you have learned the lesson of this life stage and can comfortably move on to the next one.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week

Do the exercise below in your meeting. Volunteers read aloud the activities in each row below. Put an X on the boxes for those you do not need to work on or that do not apply to you. Of those remaining, select one or more to work on this week. Take 5-10 minutes to share on boxes not crossed out. During the week ahead, work on one recovery activity. This is what you will share about in the next meeting when asked what you did as your Loving Parent for your Inner Child during the last week.








	I excite and please others sexually. I get my sexual needs and wants met by my partner.	I have a fulfilling career that sustains the lifestyle I want and improves the world.	I groom and dress to attract mates	
I am at peace with my sexuality.	I watch others, read books, and/or take classes on relationships to improve my relationships.		I can list my vocational strengths and deficits.	I am working on or have achieved my ideal career.
I am doing at least one thing right now to improve my family, my community, and/or my world		I am encouraging my Inner Child to improve his/her vocational skills.		I am eliminating toxic relationships in my life that sap me of energy. I am spending more time with people in healthy relationships that give me energy.
	I am meeting new people each week and/or improving my existing relationships.	I volunteer for at least one organization in my community.	After talking with my Inner Child, we have decided to do one outdoor activity, team sport, or drive or pilot a vehicle.	



## Chapter 21 - Completing Life Stages - Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young Adults)

**Question: How do we become intimate with others?**

**Life Stage – Young Adults**      Ages 18 – 40 Years      Lovers, Friends, & Co-Workers are Significant

		<b>Recovery</b>
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Intimacy vs. Isolation</b> Learn about intimacy Learn how to become more intimate	Learn types of intimacy – experiential, emotional, Intellectual, sexual Learn to become more intimate Resolve trust issues from early childhood dealing with: abandonment, rejection, loss of control and independence, trauma, or abuse
	<b>Young Adult's Job</b> Make friends Make long term commitments with friends Make long term commitment to mate	Learn about and implement ways to make friends Learn about and implement ways to keep friends Learn about and practice ways to maintain long term commitment to mate
	<b>Skills Needed by Young Adults</b> Communication Understand personal space Understand relationship principles Affiliation Make commitments Show love	Learn and practice respectful communication Learn about and respect personal space Learn to make friends and maintain relationships Consider aspects of healthy affiliation and affiliate Learn how to make commitments and keep them Learn and practice ways to show love respectfully
	<b>Learn to Have Good Relationships</b> Learn how to be in happy, healthy, loving, reciprocal, committed relationships	Learn about healthy relationships Learn ways to love and accept love from others Define and practice reciprocity Learn the process of commitment and practice it
	<b>Learn to Recover from Isolation</b> Identify the false, negative beliefs, challenge them, grieve them, and adopt positive life rules	Identify the false, negative beliefs Challenge the false, negative beliefs Grieve the losses Replace the false, negative beliefs with positive affirmations
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Adults Do</b> Arts – draw, paint, sculpt, photography, writing Crafts – see the list at the back of this workbook Music – sing, play instrument, dance, or compose Toys – educational, electronic, computer, skill development, and models and kits Games – strategy, intellectual, skill development Activities – become more intimate, cultivate friends, improve job skills	Encourage Inner Child to explore arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities Guide Inner Child through behavior to become more intimate Help the Inner Child grieve childhood trust issues
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Childhood mobility things or adult versions of them Childhood sports and games or adult versions of them	Drive or ride in or on vehicles (scooters, planes, motorcycles, golf carts, motorboats, trains...) Participate in sports as a spectator or player (indoor and outdoor sports and activities)

## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Intimacy vs. Isolation**

Children often isolate themselves to avoid the chaos and uncertainty present in their childhood homes. When grown, they continue to isolate themselves. Not only did they fail to learn about healthy intimacy in their childhood homes, but they missed the modeling of ways to achieve it, too. People in ACA recovery learn about types of intimacy, practice becoming more intimate, and explore their unresolved trust issues of early childhood.

Four types of intimacy are experiential, emotional, intellectual, and sexual. Experiential intimacy is bonding between people working toward a common goal. Emotional intimacy occurs when individuals share their thoughts and feelings. Intellectual intimacy is attained when people offer ideas and differing opinions. To achieve sexual intimacy, both parties in the relationship work to learn what the partner needs, wants, and desires in the effort to please them physically and emotionally.

#### Levels of Intimacy

1. Initiate small talk (pastimes, jobs, local news, weather...).
2. Discuss current news, interests, or personal information.
3. Share opinions. Move from introductory general opinions into more deeply held opinions. Where there are disagreements, agree to disagree, but establish where both individuals have common ground and accept one another's differing opinions.
4. Share hopes and dreams with one another.
5. Share true feelings about people, places, and things.
6. Share shame, shortcomings, failures, faults, and fears.
7. Become respectfully reciprocal in meeting the needs and wants of the other person in the relationship.

To become more intimate, a person can consciously, systematically, work to move from level one (initiate small talk) to level two (discuss events, pastimes, news...). One might follow a comment about the rain outside with the statement of the 40-foot-high wave in the Johnstown Flood of 1889. Moving to the third level intimacy in the conversation, one might share an opinion about the responsibility of the government for the South Fork Dam failure that killed 2209 people. In the fourth level, someone might say he/she dreams of a world where responsible politicians pass legislation that ensures safety in infrastructure projects like dams. In level 5, the person tells his/her true feelings about specific individuals, the place the dam was built, or the materials used to build it. In level 6, the person may share the shame he/she felt and even shed tears for voting for a politician who failed to ensure the safety of the dam that hurt or killed a loved one. Finally, the individual allows his/her partner to embrace and comfort him/her for the loss of the loved one.

As one moves from one level to the next, both parties in the relationship decide if the other can be trusted. If reciprocal trust has been established, each may decide whether to test the next level of intimacy. When the trust is broken, however, the intimacy stops growing further or the relationship ends.



## **Young Adult's Job**

Friends are trustworthy, respectful, reciprocal, understanding, and supportive. They want to know how others are doing, thinking, and feeling. They accept others as they are. Friends listen without judgment and do not interrupt or change the topic. They do not tell others how to think, feel, or be. Friends share their own beliefs, ideas, hopes, and ambitions.

To find new, healthy friends, people in ACA look for those who share their interests. Potential friends may be found in classes, at work, in clubs, in program, or in the community. Those in recovery may volunteer in ACA, sign up for classes, or join community service clubs.

The person in ACA recovery may screen potential friends. The Inner Child is attracted to individuals who excite him/her in some healthy way, rather than sap him/her of energy. The Loving Parent asks the Inner Child about each potential friend:

- Can this person be trusted?
- Is this person safe to be around?
- Does the person in recovery have to be careful of what he/she says and does when around the potential friend?
- Is this person supportive and nurturing?
- Can the person in ACA act normally when this new person is present?
- Is this someone who uses others, saves “victims,” or treats others disrespectfully?
- Does this potential friend give the program person energy and good feelings?

To keep the chosen friend, the person in recovery shows interest in the new friend by listening carefully and asking appropriate questions about that person's statements, feelings, experiences, opinions, and life. To become more intimate, the person in ACA shares more revealing information about him/herself.

With today's focus on social media, people in ACA may be hyper-focused on incoming messages from media sources. The addictive quality of the instantaneous message-response may have taken precedence over spousal interaction and communication, and the person in recovery may choose to turn off the phone or computer to devote more quality time to the spouse or mate. Other pastimes, interests, and commitments may also interfere with maintaining intimacy, so the person in recovery and mate may opt to schedule less time on those activities and more time with one another.

Being aware of the emotional needs of a mate and providing support encourages intimacy. Participating together in physical, intellectual, cultural, or spiritual activities helps maintain relationships. Each partner in a relationship needs to balance his/her personal focus on and time with the partner. The couple may develop a menu of mutually “fun” activities from which they regularly choose. If discord develops that becomes a pattern in the relationship, the couple may reach out to program members, sponsors, or therapists for help.



## **Skills Needed by Young Adults**

### Communication

Young adults in ACA recovery learn to communicate clearly, compassionately, responsibly, and empathetically. The goal is for both parties to communicate clearly to get their needs and wants respected and met. To get this result, they listen, observe, and respectfully restate the words or behavior of the other person without labelling it or interpreting it; for example – “I noticed you bought a gift for someone.” The next step is to state one’s feelings honestly – “That hurt my feelings. I am afraid of losing you to someone else.” The third phase is to state what is wanted from the other person – “I want to feel I am the most important person to you.” Finally, one states his request for specific behavior in similar situations in the future – “I want you to tell me who and why you are buying gifts for to reassure me I am important to you.”

### Awareness of Personal Space

While the need for personal space differs among cultures, social space norms have been established in some cultures. Social space in dysfunctional families is often different from the social norms in polite society due to habitual boundary violations.

Personal space norms in mainstream American culture have specific distances which are listed below. As we become more intimate with others, we automatically move in closer to them.

- Public Space: goes from 12 feet (3.5 meters) to 25 feet (7.6 meters). This is the distance we keep between ourselves and strangers.
- Social Space: extends from 4 feet (1.2 meters) to 12 feet (3.5 meters). This is the space we keep between ourselves and others at large gatherings and public places. This may include co-workers, bosses, and new acquaintances.
- Casual Space: goes from 1.5 feet (.045 meters) to 4 feet (1.2 meters). This is one arm’s length away from another person. Perfunctory, somewhat distant, hugs and handshakes take place in this space with acquaintances and neighbors.
- Intimate Space: extends 1.5 feet (.045 meters) from a person. This is touching and hugging distance usually reserved for family, lifelong friends, and lovers.

Predators are often drawn to individuals whose personal space boundaries have been repeatedly violated. Victims of childhood abuse are drawn to those who violate their personal space boundaries because they have grown accustomed to having their personal space violated.

People in ACA recovery learn about and practice keeping a respectful distance from others depending on the relationship established. They also learn that when their verbal communication becomes more intimate with someone, they physically move in closer to one another.

### Dynamics of Dysfunctional Relationships

Dysfunctional relationships are those in which two addicts come together, two codependents join with one another, or one addict and one codependent find each other. In functional relationships, two functional individuals form bonds.

In a dysfunctional relationship with two addicts, both vie for power. This is the explosive dynamic between Kate and Petruchio in Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew." Unlike that play, two self-oriented people seldom manage to stay together. In a relationship with two codependents, while the noise level and volatility decreases, the drama continues. The nature of codependency requires each of the codependents to serve addicts they feel inferior to (parent, child or children, guru, boss, former lover, sibling, or random acquaintance). Often, one addict and one codependent strike up a relationship where the addict absorbs the energy of everyone near him/her while the codependent keeps on giving.

### Functional Relationships

Functional relationships are those where two healthy people come together, generate energy between them, support one another, and work to achieve harmony and reciprocity. People in recovery also work diligently to keep their relationships healthy, meet their own needs and wants, support and encourage their partners, and share power respectfully and equally.

### Affiliation

A basic human need is affiliation, the connectedness one feels with others, a sense of belonging to a group. Many in ACA did not feel welcome in their families where the dysfunctional parents did not experience connectedness themselves and could not model it.

A person in ACA recovery may educate him/herself about the basic human need to affiliate with others. The next step may be sharing feelings about warm, pleasant, healthy connections that were made with someone or some group. Following that, the program person shares on the benefits of being part of a group. The final step is for the ACA participant to select a group to join, join it, and work at achieving a sense of belonging. He/she may share in a meeting about the attitudes and goals he/she has in common with that group.

Opportunities abound for people to assist their friends, family, groups, and community. The request for help may be made as a general announcement, a direct request to an individual, or a situation presents itself that is both important and urgent. A person in recovery considers if he/she has the motivation, time, expertise, and/or resources to adequately work on the resolution of the problem or situation. If so, the ACA member may choose to lend a hand.

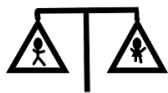
### Types of Love

The Greeks defined eight types of love. "Eros" was romantic, passionate love. "Philia" was about affection, friendship without physical attraction. "Agape" was the selfless, unconditional love for humanity, nature, or Higher Power. The love between family members, team spirit, or love of country was called "Storge." Obsessive love, "Mania" refers to stalking, codependency, jealousy, and violence. "Ludus" referred to playful attractions of young lovers that is sometimes called "puppy love." "Pragma" is the love of long-term commitment where partners understand one another and make joint decisions, including compromises, for the best interests of both



individuals in the relationship. Self-love, called “Philautia.” is the basis of all love, since love for others extends from, and cannot exist without the love of self.

Loving Parents reconnect with their Inner Children to build the foundation of self-love that is required for them to love anyone else. People in recovery may begin to clarify their ideas of who they love and how they love the important people in their lives. As they become whole human beings by supplying their own needs of each life stage, their focus turns to becoming more thoughtful, nurturing, and supportive of all people and less focused on finding and securing “significant others.” In romantic love pursuits, the fairytale notion of love (eros) learned in movies gives way in recovery to developing more intimate relationships with family, friends, and lovers (storge and pragma).



### **Learn How to Be Intimate with Others**

People in ACA focus on becoming happier by taking care of themselves, changing how they think, changing how they act, and adopting healthy behavior. People in recovery eat nutritiously, exercise regularly, get enough quality sleep, reduce stress, and stop being reactive to social media by periodically unplugging their devices. They replace their negative thoughts with positive affirmations. They review their strengths and improve weaknesses. They stop comparing themselves to others. They look for the good in all situations. They focus on being present. They change their behavior by aligning their beliefs with their thoughts, words, and behavior. They have fun daily. They feel and express their feelings. Ultimately, they build a support system of positive people, connect with others at work and in the community, and join clubs where people share common interests.

People in ACA educate themselves about healthy relationships. They take classes in interpersonal relationships, watch healthy people interact, read about relationships, and/or work with counselors and therapists. They apply what they have learned in their own relationships.

Individuals in recovery show their love by listening, being respectful, telling others they love them, showing others their love in cards, gifts, and actions, and forgiving human errors. They learn to love themselves by being compassionate and self-accepting, rejecting shame, and accepting their human propensity for making mistakes. Learning to accept love from others require people in recovery to revisit unresolved childhood experiences and grieve the loss of trust. They work at disclosing their identity without fear. They let go of control. They accept support from those who accept who they are. They learn to say “no” to others. They learn to recognize and avoid abusive people.

Reciprocity in relationships is about giving and accepting for mutual benefit. The less intimate the relationship, the more immediately the trade-off needs to be completed. A balance of equality and power is achieved over time by both people in the relationship. An equal exchange might entail that one person provides financial stability while the other maintains connections with extended family or the community. Both people contribute to the relationship to the best of their abilities.

To demonstrate commitment, the individuals in the relationship express aloud and demonstrate their love through romantic gestures, thoughtful gifts, or sexual overtures regularly. They communicate honestly, tell each other the truth, and are trustworthy in the relationship. They tell and show one another their respect and appreciation for each other. They work together for the good of the union, make decisions together, and compromise where necessary. When they cannot find agreement, they keep their harmony by respectfully disagreeing with one another.



### **Avoid Isolation by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”)**

In this life stage young adults connect to or isolate from others. The message a child often receives in a dysfunctional home is that it is safer to isolate him/herself in the effort to survive. If a parent left a child alone to fend for him/herself, the child may have learned to believe that being alone was comfortable and safe. Perhaps the child left alone felt he/she was so awful that no one wanted to be near him/her. Being alone sometimes meant he/she would not hear or see the abuse or become the victim of it. Regardless, many children who grew up in dysfunctional homes adopted the belief that being alone was better than being abused. The result is that these children long for recognition, connection, and acceptance from others.

The person in recovery challenges and rejects that false idea when it arises. If asked to work on an ACA committee or do a meeting chore, the dysfunctional inclination is to decline the offer with excuses (I am too fragile, I am too new in program, I am overwhelmed at work right now, I work better alone...). The answer from someone working a program of recovery, however, is, “Sure. What can I do to help out?” If one can remember and grieve childhood experiences of abuse, loss, or abandonment, he/she can grieve them. If he/she does not have the memories, he/she grieves the isolation and loneliness.

When the false, negative life rule arises (“I am better off alone”), the positive affirmation for it might be, “I am comfortable when I am alone, but my life is fuller and richer with others in it.” The positive affirmation is repeated until it becomes comfortable and true.



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Adults Do**

Arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities of interest to people ages 18 to 40 are likely to cost more money than those in childhood. They sometimes involve traveling to participate.

Arts for adults may include appreciating the work of others or honing skills to improve the ability to draw, paint, sculpt, shoot pictures, or write. Taking classes, reading about techniques, and practicing the arts are all options in recovery.

Crafts for the young adult are limited only by interest and willingness to invest in education about a specific craft and tools, supplies, and cabinets to store the paraphernalia. While knitting only requires knitting needles, yarn, and a comfortable chair, welding requires acetylene tanks, arc welders, helmets, and cement floors. Considerations are made before starting a new endeavor.

The young adult may listen to or participate in singing groups (glee club, choir, theater). He/she may play basic instruments (kazoo, tambourine) or more challenging ones (piano, violin...). Moving to music may be tapping feet to follow the beat or choreographed dancing. Composing music may include writing musical scores, lyrics, musical plays, or operas.

Toys for adults in recovery might be limited only by their cost. Toys for adults might include a jet ski, a Stradivarius, or a robot that retrieves soda from a refrigerator.

Adult versions of childhood games may include paintball wars, playing poker in a casino, or becoming a contestant on a television game show. Adults in recovery have unlimited choices in unlimited venues.

Activities may include taking classes and practicing ways to achieve intimacy in relationships or cultivate friends in the neighborhood, community, or workplace. Taking classes and participating in training to improve or enhance vocational skills may be helpful in recovery for this life stage.



### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

Mobility at this life stage may include traveling by bicycles, motorcycles, planes, trains, ships, trucks, and automobiles. This is the time when young adults participate in local sports such as soccer teams or become spectators at professional ballgames.



### **Exercise 1 – Too Close for Comfort**

*If this is a virtual meeting, take 5-10 minutes to discuss personal space violations members of the group have experienced and their feelings about it. For in-person meetings, a volunteer leader will read these directions as the group participates in the exercise. After the exercise, spend 5-10 minutes to discuss feelings of comfort and discomfort felt as participants got closer and closer to one another.*

Leader: “Please form 2 lines, fifteen to twenty feet apart, with the same number of people in each line. Turn and face the other line. The person in the line across from you is now your partner. All the people in line 1 take one step toward your partner in line 2 and stop. All the people in line 2 may now take a step toward your partner in line 1. As you get nearer to your partner in the opposite line, make a mental note on how you feel after taking each step forward.”

*The leader tells each line to take one step and stop until the people in the lines are almost chest to chest.*

Leader: “Please take your seats now so we can discuss what you felt and when you felt it.”

Leader: “Now that you are seated, I will call on 3 to 4 volunteers. Who can tell me how far apart you were when you started feeling uncomfortable?”

Leader: “I need 3 to 4 volunteers to share. When did you stop making eye contact with your partner?”

Leader: “Do we have volunteers to share on your comfortable space distances? On page 87 of this workbook are personal distance norms for many mainstream Americans. How do those distances compare to what you felt?”

## Exercise 2 – Moving from One Level of Intimacy to the Next

### Examples of Statements that move Relationships from One Level of Intimacy to the Next

Examples are given in columns below of statements that one might make to become more intimate with another person.

Volunteers read down each of the columns. Take 3-5 minutes after each column to discuss how the progression leads to more intimacy.

	Weather	Hobby - Hiking	Job	Local News
<b>Small Talk</b>	We had a lot of sunshine recently.	I go hiking on weekends.	I like my job as an investor.	I read about the low-cost housing complex being built in town.
<b>Facts</b>	Sun helps the crops grow.	There are many trails in this area.	I make money when I buy low and sell high.	They laid the foundation for it last week.
<b>Opinions</b>	Too much sunshine will give me skin cancer, so I stay indoors.	The best trails have the steepest inclines.	Oil and pharmaceutical stocks make the most money.	Low-cost housing will destroy our property values.
<b>Hopes and Dreams</b>	I want to live to be 100 years old.	I want to climb Mt. Everest one day.	I hope to be a millionaire in 5 years.	I look forward to the day when everyone has good jobs and homes.
<b>Feelings</b>	I am terrified that the blemish on my face is melanoma.	I feel exhilarated when I get to the top of a mountain.	I am ecstatic when my stocks go up and horrified when they drop.	I am afraid of the poor people who will move in and commit crimes.
<b>Shame Shortcomings Failure Fault Fears</b>	I do not know what I will do if it is cancer; I am afraid of dying alone.	I college I climbed up the peak to watch the football game and froze halfway to the top.	I lost over \$1,000,000 day-trading and my spouse took the kids and left me.	I was so ashamed when I spit on a dirty, homeless beggar.
<b>Reciprocity in Needs and Wants</b>	Now that we are together, I want to know what you need and want from me before I die.	I will be happy to hike flat trails with you. Maybe we can try some climbing with harnesses next time.	My new partner and I are learning about stocks and bonds, and we will decide together which ones to buy.	If I show folks in the housing complex how to garden, they are likely to give me fresh vegetables.

### Group Examples of Statements that move Relationships from One Level of Intimacy to the Next

Break into pairs or small groups and fill in one of the columns below. The group will discuss and write in statements for each level of the column. A volunteer from each group will read the statements to the whole group. Take 3-5 minutes after each column to discuss how the progression leads to more intimacy.

	Weather - Cloudy	Hobby – Travel	Job – Doctor	Local News
<b>Small Talk</b>				
<b>Facts</b>				
<b>Opinions</b>				
<b>Hopes and Dreams</b>				
<b>Feelings</b>				
<b>Shame Shortcomings Failure Fault Fears</b>				
<b>Reciprocity in Needs and Wants</b>				

### **Exercise 3 – Isolation**

*A volunteer reads the statements below. Circle the numbers for all statements below that are true for you. Take 5-10 minutes for the group to share on items circled.*

1. I have no friends to help me if I need help; I have no one to talk to.
2. I never disagree with anyone.
3. It is my job to give everyone, except me, what they need and want.
4. It is hard for me to make new friends.
5. I drink or take drugs to have fun.
6. I am “on stage” playing a role when I am around others.
7. My friends are people I feel sorry for, people I can help, or people I can fix.
8. I make sure I get my sexual needs met; I am not responsible for my lover’s satisfaction.
9. I make sure I satisfy my lover’s sexual needs; I hope my lover will satisfy me.
10. I do not tell my lover what I like during sex; it is his/her job to figure it out.
11. I avoid getting involved with anyone because my body is ugly.
12. I avoid sex because I do not get or stay aroused like I used to.

*If you circled many of these, you have not learned the lesson of this life stage. You need to work on completing this life stage in recovery.*

### **Exercise 4 – Intimacy**








*A volunteer reads the sentences below. Circle the numbers for all those below that are true for you. Take 5-10 minutes for the group to share on items circled.*

1. I deserve to love and be loved.
2. Fidelity and honesty are important in relationships.
3. I have many old friends and many new ones.
4. I enjoy dating people with whom I am compatible and comfortable.
5. I like to have healthy, reciprocal relationships.
6. I get my needs and wants satisfied in my relationships.
7. I know I can trust me, and I know who I can trust.
8. I feel happy and satisfied most of the time.
9. I enjoy talking to people where I give and get new ideas.
10. I have deep, meaningful conversations with others.
11. I tell my lover what I like, utter sounds of satisfaction, guide him/her into position, or change my position during sex to let him/her know what I like.
12. I ask my lover what he/she likes, or I explore his/her body during sex to find ways to give him/her maximum pleasure.

*If you circled most of these, you have learned the lesson of this life stage and can comfortably move on to the next one.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Intimacy vs. Isolation

Complete this exercise during the meeting. In the last column, please enter the one thing you will do this week to begin recovery on this life stage. The group then shares their recovery commitment for the following week. At the next meeting when you are asked what your Loving Parent did for your Inner Child during the week, share on what you worked on, your “aha” insights, and your feelings.




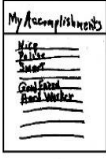



		Write Down One Thing You Will Do This Week in Each Row
<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Intimacy vs. Isolation</b> Learn types of intimacy – experiential, emotional, Intellectual, sexual Learn how to become more intimate Resolve trust issues from early childhood: abandonment, rejection, loss of control and independence, trauma, or abuse		
<b>Young Adult's Job</b> Learn to make friends Practice ways to make and keep friends Learn about and practice ways to maintain long term commitment to mate		
<b>Skills Needed by Young Adults</b> Learn and practice respectful communication Learn about and respect personal space Learn to make friends and maintain relationships Consider aspects of healthy affiliation and affiliate Learn how to make commitments and keep them Learn and practice ways to show love respectfully		
<b>Learn to Have Good Relationships</b> Learn about healthy relationships Learn ways to love and accept love from others Define and practice reciprocity Learn the process of commitment and practice it		
<b>Recover from Isolation to Achieve Intimacy</b> Identify the false, negative beliefs Challenge the false, negative beliefs Grieve the loss Replace the false, negative beliefs with positive affirmations Stop participating in unhealthy relationships		
<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Children Do</b> Arts – draw, paint, sculpt, photography, writing Crafts – see list at back of this workbook Music – sing, play instrument, dance, compose Toys – educational, electronic, computer, skill development, and models and kits Games – strategy, intellectual, and skill development Activities – Grieve childhood trust issues, become more intimate, and improve job skills		
<b>Mobility and Sports Opportunities</b> Drive or ride in or on vehicles (scooters, planes, motorcycles, golf carts, motorboats, trains...) Participate in sports as a spectator or player (indoor and outdoor sports and activities)		



## Chapter 22 - Completing Life Stages - Productivity vs. Stagnation (Middle-Aged Adults)

**Question: What things can you do to inspire others (beyond your family) to make the world a better place?**

**Life Stage – Middle-Aged Adults**    Ages 40 - 65 Years    Coworkers & Spouses are Significant People

		<b>Recovery</b>
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Productivity vs. Stagnation</b> Is productive or unproductive Is excited about the future, does not care about it, or is waiting to die	Assess own productivity Determine causes for own inaction and resolves them
	<b>Middle-Aged Adult's Job</b> Raise own children well Contribute to the community	Learn good parenting skills and practice them Volunteer his/her time, energy, and resources to improve the community
	<b>Skills Needed by Middle-Aged Adults</b> Know how to work efficiently and productively Nurture and guide own children	Learn how to work effectively alone and with others Learn and practice good parenting Change behavior to merit self-respect
	<b>Learn to be Productive</b> Reacquaint with spouse Focus on well-being of family and society Work on important projects enthusiastically Volunteer to contribute to well-being of others Feel a sense of belonging Feel comfortable with one's own identity Makes behavior choices to benefit the future	Improve relationship with mate Focus efforts on well-being of family and society Focus vocational efforts on positive projects Volunteer in 12-Step and community programs Achieve a sense of belonging Inventory own positive traits, skills, achievements Make behavior choices to benefit the future
	<b>Learn to Recover from Being Stagnant</b> Feel stagnated, that life has no meaning Feel he/she has nothing of value to contribute Feel alienated from others; reject them Concerned only for own well-being and prosperity Is uninvolved with the world Feel overly extended and overwhelmed	Review own accomplishments in life Recall joys experienced in life Share own lifetime efforts to help others Connect with others and accept them as they are Volunteer to help others Participate in community activities Do one thing at a time
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Adults Do</b> Arts – enjoy art of others, create own masterpieces Crafts – take classes, explore materials, create or build Music – listen, sing, play instruments, move to music, create music Toys – play with childhood toys or adult versions of them Games – play childhood games or adult versions of them Activities – experience childhood activities or adult versions	Enjoy toys, games, music, and activities of interest ( <i>see lists pp. 115-116</i> ) Participate in and/or lead activities ( <i>see lists pp. 115-116</i> )
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Use childhood mobility vehicles or adult versions of them Travel Play childhood sports or games or adult versions of them	Drive or ride in or on vehicles (trucks, mopeds, canoe, ferries, jets, skateboards...) Travel Participate in sports as a spectator or player (indoor and outdoor sports and activities) ( <i>see lists pp. 115-116</i> )



## Reading



### **Recovery from Major Life Stage Issue: Productivity vs. Stagnation**

From ages 40 to 65, functional people are at their greatest level of productivity on the job and/or in their personal lives. Functional adults set goals at home, on the job, in program, and in community work. They break down the tasks into small steps, complete them in a timely manner, and reach their goals.

Program members working on recovery may have difficulty making progress or may want to increase their productivity. Immobility is often based in fear, confusion, being overwhelmed, or having a life rule prohibiting them from being productive. They grieve their unresolved conflicts of childhood that have kept them stagnant and move forward.

Personal productivity can be enhanced. Any project one works on needs to be in keeping with that person's personal values; if it is not, progress is likely to be slow. One's energy increases when one's values are aligned with thoughts, words, and actions and one's Inner Children are permitted or challenged to be creative. To reach goals, one can prioritize projects and take steps towards that goal. Of all the projects, one can determine which one is both urgent and important and work on that one first. After figuring out what time of day one is most productive, one can schedule the workday to maximize productivity. Limiting known interruptions and distractions (calls, children, noise, traffic, maintenance) can help boost performance. Taking regular breaks allows new perspectives, acquisition of information needed, and the emergence of ideas to solve problems. For some, pleasant music may help stimulate energy or calm anxiety. When mired with confusion or indecision, asking for another perspective or assistance can stimulate productivity. Rewarding milestones encourages persistence to complete projects.



### **Recovery by Doing the Middle-Aged Adult's Job**

The middle-aged adult has two jobs: continuing to raise the children well and contributing in positive ways to the community. People from dysfunctional families did not have models of good parenting. Middle-aged adults often have children who are teenagers or completely grown up, and they have already passed on the family dysfunction. Individuals in ACA recovery learn to be good role models by finding out how good parents behave from books, classes, and observation and apply what they learn. They recognize their own dysfunction, stop themselves when they become aware of their dysfunctional behavior, admit their errors, and make amends to their Inner Children and others they hurt.

Voluntary positions abound in 12-Step programs and in the community. Given the person's skillset and Inner Child's excitement, the Loving Parent finds and applies for positions that the Inner Child will know how to do and have fun doing.



### **Recovery by Learning Skills Needed by Middle-Aged Adults**

Functional middle-aged adults know how to work alone, work with a team, and be a good parent to their adult or nearly adult offspring. People in recovery analyze their performance, determine their strengths and weaknesses, and improve their deficits.

Working alone or with others successfully includes communicating well, self-discipline, organizing, multitasking, flexibility, and compromise. Working with others also requires valuing the project and possessing skills in focusing, listening, asking pertinent questions, communicating thoughts and ideas clearly, using logic, assisting, and sharing responsibility for the project.

Grown or almost grown children adopted what they were taught in their dysfunctional homes. In recovery they accept reality and respond differently than they had in the past to dysfunctional people. The role of a parent with grown children transitions from protecting, teaching, nurturing, and inspiring to responding respectfully to their offspring as they would to other adults.

Functional middle-aged parents relate well to their grown children. People in ACA recovery may need to learn and practice new behaviors with their now-adult children. They may need to extricate themselves from family enmeshment or isolationism. They may have to learn to recognize and respect the unique attributes and skills of their children. They may have to learn to share their experience, strength, and hope with their children as they do with program people. Sharing ideas or problem solving as an equal rather than as a parent is another skill to master. Setting limits, enforcing boundaries, and respecting those of adult children is paramount in dealing with grown children, too. Individuals in ACA recovery who are parents of adults, learn to listen to their children without comment unless asked. Where the grown children have spouses, children, and pets, people in ACA work on accepting and embracing them. Scheduling, planning, and participating in family conversations, fun activities, and celebrations are opportunities for recovery work.



### **Recovery by Learning to be Productive**

Functional adults between ages 40 and 65 have often been promoted to jobs with increased responsibility. Their children are graduating from high school, are in college, or are working and paying rent or mortgages. Empty nesters are finally alone with their spouses and are free to rekindle their relationships. They turn their attention to ensuring the well-being of their families and improve their community. In the workplace, the projects they participate in are personally fulfilling. They volunteer in 12-Step programs and in their communities. They think about ways they have positively impacted others and found a sense of belonging. They know who they are, what they do, and what they have achieved and accomplished.

People in recovery assess where they are in completing this life stage. They take steps to reacquaint themselves with their spouses and improve those relationships. They assess the well-being of family members and do what they can to provide comfort, support, and resources. They decide what to do to improve their 12-Step programs and communities by volunteering to lead or participate in the effort. They think about the ways they have already positively affected the lives of others and what more they can do. They figure out where they belong, how they came to feel that kinship, and replicate those steps in other parts of their lives. They are comfortable telling others who they are, what they do well, and what they have achieved.



### **Recovery by Avoiding Stagnation by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”)**

Parents who are dysfunctional model, teach, and reinforce negative thoughts that their children adopt as life rules. The recurring thoughts of their children in this life stage include variations of:

Life has no meaning; I have no purpose.

I am useless; I add nothing to anyone’s life.

I do not need anyone in my life.

I am the only person who matters; I will take, by force if necessary, what I want or need.

Whatever is going on in the world is a waste of my time.

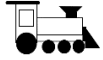
Everyone keeps demanding too much from me; just leave me alone.

People in ACA review their achievements and recall the great joys they have experienced. They share the efforts they have made throughout their lives that have benefitted others. Their Loving Parents encourage them to interact with people who interest them and learn to accept them as they are. Loving Parents guide them to find ways to help others respectfully. Loving Parents help their Inner Children to get involved in community activities. Overwhelmed Inner Children are guided by their Loving Parents to focus on one thing, do it, and then move on to the next thing.



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Adults Do**

At this life stage, middle-aged adults are improving their productivity on the job, working to improve relationships with their spouses and children, and reaching out to make the community in which they live better. In addition to these pursuits, people in recovery are exploring the fun things they may have missed in childhood. As adults with access to financial resources and control over time allocation, they explore arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities of interest by themselves or with others. In the effort to make their community a better place to live, they often become voluntary participants and leaders in community organizations and/or 12-Step programs.



### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

At this life stage, those in program recovery often have the resources to drive a variety of vehicles or ride on a multitude of conveyances. They can travel to places far and near. In recovery some people decide what vehicles are both desirable and useful, what they can afford, and then buy or lease those vehicles. Others choose to use public transportation and focus on subway trains, buses, trains, taxicabs, or airplanes. They decide where they want to go and how they want to travel to get there.

The choices are equally vast for people in recovery who have the money, time, and energy to choose how they want to participate in sports. They may want to be spectators at their grandchildren's high school football game, go to the homecoming game at their university, or get tickets to World Cup Soccer. They may become players in pick-up games at parks or on community teams. With recovery, the number of choices increase, and Loving Parents often need to rein in their Inner Children's excitement about their new-found freedom.

### **Exercise 1 - Stagnation**

*As volunteer reads the statements below, circle the numbers of all statements that are true for you. Circle those where one of the two alternatives applies to you as well. Use 5-10 minutes for the group to share on any you may need to work to overcome.*

1. I have no children, I am estranged from my children, or I cannot let go of my adult children.
2. I am an empty nester who cannot reconnect with my spouse since our children left home.
3. I am unable to engage in new, productive activities.
4. I am unable or unwilling to accept being a grandparent.
5. I am unwilling to be a mentor for others.
6. I do not participate in activities that benefit others.
7. I am plodding along at work with no enthusiasm, and I do not care about the outcome.
8. I do not participate in my community or any organization.
9. I live a reclusive existence with little or no outside contact.
10. I do not care about anyone or anything; I am generally depressed.
11. I do not communicate with or have contact with members of my family.
12. I have strained, acrimonious, or no relationships with my children, siblings, and/or parents.

*If you circled most of these, you have not yet learned the lessons of this life stage. Your own Loving Parent will help guide you to achieve the lessons of this life stage.*

## **Exercise 2 - Productivity**




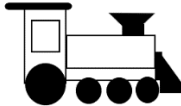

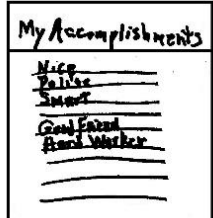
*As a volunteer reads the statements below, circle all those that are true for you. Then spend 5-10 minutes for the group to share examples of being productive.*

1. My children, if I have any, are contributing in some way to making the world better.
2. I am mentoring others.
3. I am doing things that are changing the world in a positive way that will benefit others.
4. I am productive in my job and in my life.
5. I am involved in community activities.
6. I am involved in community organizations.
7. I am doing things that are useful to others.
8. My life has purpose.
9. I am accomplishing things.
10. I care about myself.
11. I care about others, not just my family.
12. I care about the well-being of the world now and in the future.

*If you circled most of these, you have learned the lessons of this life stage and can comfortably move on to the next life stage (if you are old enough!)*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Productivity vs. Stagnation








Do this exercise in the meeting. Put an X in each box that explains what you are already doing to be productive. Look at the boxes you have not marked. Select 3 of those that you want to work on immediately. Prioritize those 3 choices by marking them with the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in the order you will work on them. Spend 5-10 minutes for volunteers to share their 3 priorities. During the week that follows, work on one of those priorities. When you are asked in the next meeting what your Loving Parent has done during the past week for your Inner Child, share about that priority.

	When I am unproductive, I consider reasons for my inaction and resolve them	I am learning about and practicing good parenting skills	
I am learning and practicing ways to work effectively alone and with others	I am improving the relationship I have with my mate	I focus my efforts on the well-being of my family	I focus my vocational efforts on exciting, fulfilling projects
I volunteer in 12-Step programs	The things I do influences others in positive ways	I feel a sense of belonging in most aspects of my life	I have accomplished many things in my life
I have experienced a lot of joy in life			I am comfortable meeting new people all the time
I help others when I can	I volunteer in my community	I regularly help others	When I realize that I am sad I did not get a toy that I wanted as a child, I get it or an adult version of it for my Inner Child
When I notice a game that I always wanted to play as a child that I did not get to play, I play it now	I periodically list 3 to 5 ways I am productive	I focus on doing one thing at a time	I participate in or watch sports I am interested in
	When I feel sad that I did not participate in an activity that I wanted to be involved in as a child, I do it now	When I am aware that I did not get to go to places as a child that I wanted to go to, I travel to those places now	



## Chapter 23 - Completing Life Stages - Integrity vs. Despair (Seniors)

**Question: How can we develop more integrity (honesty, truthfulness, honor, reliability)?**

Life Stage – Senior Age 65 Years – Death		Children, Grandchildren, & Friends are Significant
		Recovery
	<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Integrity vs. Despair</b> Act with integrity Feel depressed Feel despair	Practice being honest and reliable Recognize and share good things that happen Replace negative perceptions with positive affirmations
	<b>Senior's Job</b> Reflect on the state of society Reflect on life's accomplishments Reflect on the life led Reflect on what to do in the time remaining Reflect on death and an afterlife	Assess the state of the world and improve it Review one's own accomplishments Share about one's lifetime failures and lessons learned Share lifetime successes Decide how to spend the rest of life Determine beliefs about death and an afterlife
	<b>Skills Needed by Seniors</b> Compassion for self and others Honest reflection Enthusiasm to improve oneself	Practice being compassion for self and others Analyze life's failures and successes Improve own performance ("change the one I can")
	<b>Learn to Have Integrity</b> Be truthful Be reliable Stand up for own beliefs	State one's true beliefs and thoughts respectfully Uphold commitments made Share true beliefs and thoughts respectfully
	<b>Learn to Recover from Depression &amp; Despair</b> Dissatisfied with life Regrets the things he/she has done and not done Harbors bitterness about people, places, and things Fears his own death Fears an afterlife of misery and torment Imagines worst outcomes Has disdain for others	Recount life's successes Make amends for transgressions against others Do things wanted to do but never did Grieve unresolved hurts and boundary violations Discuss death using own spiritual perspective Discuss afterlife possibilities Define best outcomes of a life well-lived Explore feelings about others and impact of childhood on those feelings
	<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, &amp; Activities Adults Do</b> Arts – appreciate artforms; produce own art Crafts – enjoys crafts that are useful and of interest Music – listen to music, sing, play instruments, dance, and compose music Toys – play with childhood toys of interest or adult versions Games – play childhood games or adult versions of them Activities – do childhood activities of interest or adult versions	Enjoy arts, music, toys, games, and activities of interest Allow Inner Child to express likes and dislikes of these pursuits Encourage Inner Child to own good performances and accept own imperfect attempts
	<b>Mobility &amp; Sports Opportunities</b> Mobility options include types of transportation (auto, motorcycle, bus, train, plane...) or types of travel, trips, or excursions Sports may be for spectators or participants	Mobility – Decide on one mobility option to experience (drive a sportscar, ride a donkey to the floor of the Grand Canyon, book a cruise, tour a country...) and schedule it Sports – As either a participant or spectator, name one sport wanted to experience and do it

## Reading



### **Major Life Stage Issue: Integrity vs. Despair**

Seniors, from ages 65 to death, have either developed a sense of integrity or feel complete despair. Honesty, truth, honor, and reliability are the qualities of functional seniors. Dysfunctional seniors feel hopeless, miserable, and have given up on themselves and others. Individuals in ACA work on being honest, telling the truth, keeping their promises, and being dependable. When they feel depressed and hopeless, they replace negative thoughts and feelings with positive affirmations. They define who they are and what their purpose is in this lifetime.



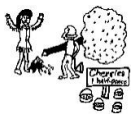
### **Senior's Job**

People aged sixty-five and over are often retired and may have all day, every day, to think about what is happening in the world, review what they have accomplished in the workplace, and examine the lives they have led. People in ACA recovery may choose to do one thing each day to improve their world locally, regionally, or on a global level. They focus on what they have accomplished and what they will do next. They apply what they have learned from past failures to avoid making the same mistakes on future endeavors. They enjoy their successes. When they complete a project, they turn their attention to the next project to make the world better.



### **Skills Needed by Seniors**

Functional seniors have compassion for themselves and others. They can honestly review and assess their own lives and what is happening around them. They have positive, hopeful mindsets to keep improving themselves. In recovery, they practice being kind, caring, and considerate of themselves and others. They note where they failed and where they succeeded. They use that information to improve their performance on future projects. They dedicate themselves to changing the only people they can change – themselves.



### **Learn to Have Integrity**

Those in recovery practice being truthful, reliable, and responsible for defending their own core beliefs. They embody the program slogan: suit up, show up, listen, participate, and let go of the results. They align their core beliefs with their thoughts, words, and actions.





### **Avoid Depression and Despair by Grieving False, Negative Beliefs (“Critical Parent Tapes” or “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”)**

Dysfunctional seniors are dissatisfied with their lives. They regret what they have done and what they have not done. They feel skeptical and resentful. They are afraid of dying, afraid of being cast into a hellish afterlife. They are cynical, distrustful people who always expect the worst outcomes. They have contempt and hatred for everyone.

Individuals in recovery grieve the experiences of childhood that resulted in their false, negative beliefs. They share the successes of their lives at meetings and with their sponsors. They immediately make amends to themselves and others for the harm they have done. They make amends to themselves for things they did not do that they wanted to do and do those things. Reflecting on their own mortality, they share their death and afterlife beliefs with meeting participants and their sponsors to solidify in their own minds what they believe. When they conclude the worst outcome for a situation, they learn to recognize their negativity, stop the thoughts, words, or behavior, and consider positive outcomes instead. When they feel contemptuous of others, they learn to stop to analyze where in their childhood experiences their fear and hatred began and grieve their unresolved childhood pain.



### **Recovery by Doing Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games, & Activities Adults Do**

Playing is important for seniors. Functional adults regularly enjoy arts, crafts, music, toys, games, and activities. People in recovery encourage their Inner Children to engage in these pursuits as a spectator or player. Recovering individuals may want to draw, paint, sculpt, or take photographs. They may explore various crafts. They may listen to music, sing, play instruments, dance, or compose music. Playing with childhood toys or their adult equivalents (plastic dinosaurs vs. visiting natural history museums) is a way to grow up emotionally. Checkers played as a child may become chess or video games of strategy for the adult. Activities may be any that the senior adult has the interest in, ability to finance, and physical ability to do. The Loving Parent allows the Inner Child to decide if he/she likes or dislikes these things. The Loving Parent reinforces the Inner Child’s successes and accepts the imperfect performances.



### **Recovery by Providing Mobility and Sports Opportunities**

As seniors become physically limited, mobility becomes a priority. Seniors in recovery, as their own Loving Parents, encourage their Inner Children to explore mobility options (plane, train, mule, skateboard...) and/or travel destinations. They may become spectators or participants in sports. Loving Parents guide their Inner Children to choose sports they enjoy, decide to be a spectator or player given their abilities, and then participate.

### **Exercise 1 – Despair**

*A volunteer reads the sentences below. Circle the numbers of all statements below that are true for you. Use 5-10 minutes for group members to share their examples of despair.*

1. I have wasted my life; I never accomplished anything important.
2. I have so many regrets.
3. I deserved a better life than the one I had.
4. My life was horrible; I cannot wait to die.
5. I am afraid of dying because I am going to hell.
6. I should have been able to be more, do more, and get more by this time in my life.
7. I would be somebody today if someone or something had not ruined my life.
8. I feel sick that I did not become who I wanted to become, go where I wanted to go, or do what I wanted to do.
9. It does not matter what I do, how I act, or what I say anymore; no one cares.
10. I just hate to have to depend on anyone for anything; can't they just leave me to die in peace?
11. I have nothing to look forward to, nothing to live for.
12. I am always bored. Nothing changes. I have no reason to take care of myself or my affairs.

*If you circled most of these, you have not yet learned the lessons of this life stage. Your own Loving Parent will help guide you to achieve the lessons of this life stage.*

### **Exercise 2 – Depression**

*A volunteer reads the sentences below. Circle the numbers of all statements below that are true for you. Allocate 5-10 minutes for group members to share their examples of depression.*

1. I do not go out, answer the door, or respond to phone calls, e-mail, or texts.
2. I cry a lot, sleep a lot, or cannot sleep at all.
3. I get agitated, defensive, and yell at people, or I bury my anger.
4. I stop eating, or I overeat to stuff my feelings.
5. I do not understand or care about what others are talking about, so I walk away.
6. I keep busy, but I do not finish anything or accomplish anything.
7. I do not brush my teeth, wash my hair, or take showers or baths for days.
8. I do not clean up after myself or take out the garbage. I wear dirty clothes.
9. I obsess on my problems, work, or clean my home to feel that I am in control.
10. I renege on commitments, miss appointments, fail to meet deadlines, and give up my dream goals.
11. I am overly sensitive to light, sound, touch, taste, and odor.
12. I spend money on things that I do not want or need.

*If you circled most of these, you have not yet learned the lessons of this life stage. Your own Loving Parent will help guide you to achieve the lessons of this life stage.*

### **Exercise 3 – Integrity**






*A volunteer reads the sentences below. Circle the numbers of all statements below that are true for you. Use 5-10 minutes for group members to share their examples of building integrity in program recovery.*



1. I am satisfied with what I have accomplished and achieved in my life.
2. I know who I am today.
3. I have few or no regrets about my life.
4. While I grew up in an alcoholic and/or dysfunctional family, I got the help I needed to become a functional human being.
5. I am honest with myself and others; I tell the truth, hear the truth, and see the truth.
6. I respect myself and others.
7. I am consistent in my beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions.
8. When I make commitments, I follow through on them.
9. I suit up, show up, listen, participate, and let go of the results.
10. I have led a rich and full life.
11. I am humbled when I realize that just showing up at meetings makes the world a better place.
12. I know how to live, so I know how to die; I accept death as a spiritual transition.

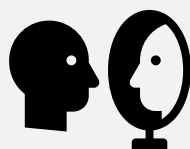
*If you circled most of these, you have learned the lessons of this life stage. You have successfully climbed the ACA 12 Steps. You have learned to entrust your will, your life, and your spirit to your Higher Power.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Integrity vs. Despair

Finish the sentences by filling in the last column for each item and share your answers. Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information, exercises, and activities.

		<b>Major Life Stage Issue: Integrity vs. Despair</b>	<b>My Sentence Endings</b>
	1	One thing I need to be more honest about is	
	2	One thing I need to be more reliable about is	
	3	When I feel bad, I tell my Inner Child	
		<b>My Job as a Senior</b>	
	4	One thing I can do to make the world better is	
	5	One time I failed, but I learned	
	6	One of my greatest accomplishments was	
	7	One thing I want to tell the next generation is	
		<b>Skills Needed by Seniors</b>	
	8	I show myself compassion by	
	9	I show compassion to others by	
	10	One thing I am proud of / embarrassed by is	
	11	I will improve myself now by	
		<b>Learn to Have Integrity</b>	
	12	I believe that my Higher Power is	
	13	When I die my soul	
	14	When I make a promise I	
	15	When people disagree with me, I tell them	
		<b>Learn to Avoid Despair</b>	
	16	When I feel bad, I make myself feel better by doing	
	17	One thing I am proud to have done is	
	18	I made amends for hurting someone by	
	19	One thing I will do now that I wanted to do as a child and did not do is	
	20	One thing in my childhood that I am still angry about, hurt, or fearful of is	
	21	I will express my feelings to grieve that unresolved experience (referred to in #19) by	
	22	When I die, I expect my soul will	
	23	My idea of the afterlife or heaven is	

		<b>Arts, Crafts, Music, Toys, Games &amp; Activities Healthy Adults Do</b>	<b>My Sentence Endings</b>
	23	One artform I will do (draw, paint, sculpt, photograph) is	
	24	One craft I will do is	
	25	In terms of music, I will (listen, sing, play an instrument, or compose music)	
	26	One toy (or the adult version of it) I will play with is	
	27	One game I will now play (or an adult version of it) that I wanted to play as a child is	
	28	One activity I will now do (or the adult version of it) that I wanted to do but never did or never did enough was	
		<b>Mobility &amp; Sports for Functional Adults</b>	
	26	The vehicle I most want to drive or ride in/on is	
	27	I want to travel by (vehicle) to (destination)	
	28	I will schedule a time to do this sport	
	29	I will schedule a time to watch this sport	



## True Happiness

True happiness is achieved by having  
 something to do (purpose),  
 someone to love,  
 and  
 something to look forward to.

## Through a Child's Eyes



Mark had taken his 7-year-old son, Anthony, on a vacation to the coast. They were back in their hotel room after breakfast. Their next activity, visiting the tidepools, was two hours later. Mark could see that Anthony was too excited to read any of the books he had packed to entertain himself between the scheduled events. Mark looked down at the magazines he brought for himself and had a brilliant idea.

He remembered that Anthony loved to put together jigsaw puzzles, the harder the better. Mark looked through one of his magazines and found a beautiful, full-color map of the world. He pulled the map out of the magazine and cut it up into small pieces for his son to put together. Not only would it keep Anthony amused, but the puzzle would also help him learn a little geography, Mark thought.

Mark gave his son the pile of paper and adhesive tape and told him, "I want you to tape these puzzle-pieces together and then come tell me what you learned." Mark was happy to have come up with a great win-win solution for his son to spend the next hour or so. Anthony skipped and hopped away into the bedroom, thrilled with getting a puzzle to be solved.

Mark began reading another magazine he had packed. In fifteen minutes, however, his son came bursting through the door waving the map. Mark, in total disbelief, looked over the map, found it was put together correctly, and asked his boy, "How did you do that so fast?"

His son replied, "There was a picture of a man on the other side, Daddy, so when I put the man together, the world came with it."

*In ACA we put ourselves together and the world comes with it.*

## MEETING FORMAT USING THIS WORKBOOK

### OPENING (20 minutes)

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to our Own Loving Parent meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

1. In this meeting we read “The Problem” or the “Laundry List.” You belong here even if your parents were not alcoholic if you identify with these common characteristics of adult children.
2. We meet here to share the experiences we had as children growing up in alcoholic or dysfunctional homes, how it infected us then, and the affect it has on our lives today. By practicing the 12 Steps, by focusing on “The Solution,” and by accepting a Higher Power of our own understanding, we find freedom from the effects of our childhood environment of alcoholism and family dysfunction. We identify with “The Problem” and learn to live in “The Solution,” one day at a time.
3. Please, let us have a moment of silence for all who have not yet found recovery, after which we will recite the ACA Serenity Prayer:

**God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the people I cannot change,  
the courage to change the one I can,  
and the wisdom to know that one is me.**

4. Will someone please read:
  - The Problem or The Laundry List
  - The Solution
  - The 12 Steps
  - The 12 Traditions
5. We will now introduce ourselves using our first names only, please.
6. We do not break for refreshments at this meeting, but you may help yourself quietly during the meeting to whatever refreshments are available. This meeting ends at \_\_\_\_\_.
7. If this is the first ACA meeting for you, please raise your hand and tell us your name. We ask you to do this because we want to get to know you. *(At in-person meetings give newcomers literature and a Welcome chip on which you write (using permanent ink) the month, day, and year they are starting their ACA recovery).*

### ***Read only if Newcomer is present:***

- This program is not easy, but if you keep coming back to these meetings, you will start to come out of denial. This will give you freedom from the past. You and your life will change.
- Many of us could not recognize or accept that some of our current attitudes or behaviors result from our childhood experiences related to alcoholism or family dysfunction. Having not yet solved the mystery of our own selves, we often behave as adult children without realizing it.
- By attending 6 meetings in a row at the beginning, and attending regularly thereafter, we come to know our real selves and learn to behave responsibly. We do this by identifying with the listing of characteristics that we read in “The Problem” and “The Laundry List.”

- In ACA, we learn to live in the solution and choose to become our own Loving Parents. We come out of denial and share the pain of our childhood memories. We experience love and acceptance from members of our ACA group. We become aware that feelings of the past and present form a pattern; and we learn that the pattern can change. Newcomers are encouraged to get Recovery and Service Sponsors to guide them in recovery.
- So, please, keep coming back. Listen, learn, and, most of all, share your feelings.

#### 8. 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition / Announcements

- It is now time for our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, which states, “Every ACA group should be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”
- Does the meeting Secretary have any ACA announcements? Does anyone else have ACA-related announcements?

#### **REPARENTING I DID THIS WEEK** *(5 minutes in total for all to share)*

In our last meeting, we may have finished a chapter. If so, we now share about the recovery work we committed ourselves to do this last week in one minute or less. If we did not finish a chapter, we share one thing we did as our own Loving Parent for our Inner Child during the last week.

#### **WORKBOOK** *(30 minutes)*

1. This is what our Inner Children want from us - repeat after me:  
**Love me, protect me, hear me, hug me, heal me**
2. This meeting is focusing on becoming our own Loving Parents to our Inner Children. When using the Reparenting workbook, we share on the question of the chapter, read the passages given in the workbook, do the exercises, and read the “homework” section. Turn to page \_\_\_\_.

#### **OPEN SHARING** *(30 minutes)*

We are about to open the meeting for sharing on the topics of our choice. We need to remind ourselves about the crosstalk rules and, if newcomers are here, explain the progression of sharing we do in ACA.

- **Crosstalk** - Everyone is encouraged to share. So that everyone can share, please limit your sharing to 3 to 5 minutes, and, as a courtesy, we ask that everyone be given a turn during each part of our meeting. If you do not want to share, please say, “Pass”, so we do not keep waiting for you to speak. Please, do not cross talk, distract from the speaker, or otherwise interrupt.

#### • **Sharing in ACA** *read only if newcomers are present*

In ACA, if we do not share, we cannot heal.

It is important for newcomers to share no matter how haltingly, incoherently, or disorganized the words may be. Telling our stories out loud allows us to hear our problem, recognize it, and validate that truth.

What we share about depends on where we are in our recovery process. As time goes along, our sharing evolves. The first topic is generally what brought us to an ACA meeting. Following that our sharing takes on various functions.



1. In the beginning, we often wail, complain, cry, rant, rave, blame, and whine; this is a necessary stage that brings us out of denial. When we speak our thoughts aloud, we recognize that we have a problem and what it is. Until we make our discomfort real by voicing it, we cannot recognize our problem so we cannot solve it.
2. When we start sharing our problems, feelings start to rise within us, and we begin to learn how to express them appropriately.
3. We describe how we overreacted to a situation and our feelings about it.
4. We describe our current problem and our feelings about it.
5. We trace our feelings about a current situation back to a similar problem we experienced as children, recognizing that neither have been resolved.
6. We grieve our losses.
7. We talk about possible solutions to resolve the childhood problem and the current problem.
8. We commit ourselves to a plan of action to solve the past and present problems.
9. We share our healing as we progress.
10. Finally, we share on topics introduced by others; we describe our own problem, how it was rooted in the past, and how we resolved the past and present problems. In this way we affirm our own recovery and display for our fellows that recovery happens in ACA.

- We often have a volunteer to time the sharing so the most people get an opportunity to share. Do we have a volunteer to be our timer? The meeting is now open for sharing.

## CLOSING

- Will someone please read “The Promises?”
- We sometimes have fellowship directly after this meeting. Meeting participants may want to ask questions about the meeting or recovery, share comments, or just talk. You are invited.
- This is a fellowship of recovering adults intended to complement, not replace, other 12-Step programs. You are encouraged to attend your other 12-Step recovery support groups during the week to support your recovery journey.
- Please respect the confidentiality and anonymity of each person here. We have trust and confidence that what we shared with you at this meeting will remain here at this meeting. Who you saw here, what was said here, when you leave here, let it stay here.
- Will all, who care to, join me in the ACA Serenity Prayer?

**Chapter 3, page 12, Aligning My Beliefs with what I Think, Say, and Do, Exercise 7**

1. Words do not match
2. Behavior is misaligned
3. Thought does not match
4. Words do not match
5. Words do not match
6. Belief is not aligned

**Chapter 12, page 39, Identify Key Aspects of a Successful Negotiation with Your Inner Child**

1. Inner Child or Loving Parent
2. Inner Child
3. Loving Parent
4. Loving Parent
5. Keep his job
6. Recognize Inner Child's feelings; validate Inner Child
7. Ask Robert to give official recognition
8. The Loving Parent is recognizing his Inner Child. The Loving Parent has promised to stand up for his Inner Child. Robert has shared his alternate plan to get recognition.
9. Both win

## Fun Things to Consider Doing

<b>ACA</b>	Needle Arts	Flying		Puppet Making
Attend Fellowship	Sculpture	Galas		Quilting
Attend Social Events	Painting	Gardening		Rug Hooking
Attend Workshops	Photography	Genealogy		Scrapbooking
Call Others in ACA	Video Game Design	Hang Gliding		Sewing
Chair Committees	Writing	Hiking		Silk Screening
Greet at Events		Hunting		Silversmithing
Greet at Meetings		Jigsaw Puzzles		Soap Carving
Plan Social Events		Jogging	<b>CRAFTS</b>	Stained Glass
Plan Workshops		Juggling	Basket Weaving	String Art
Provide Literature		Jumping Rope	Batik	Tapestry
Provide Refreshments		Metal Detecting	Baking	Tatting
Put on Special Events	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	Model Kit Construction	Beadwork	Tie-Dye
Put on Townhalls	Amateur Radio	Model Trains	Cake Decorating	Tole
Put on Workshops	Amusement Parks	Museums	Calligraphy	Toy Making
Represent Groups	Animal Husbandry	Openings (Attend)	Candle Making	Weaving
Serve on Boards	Animal Rescue	Parades	Card Making	Wood Burning
Serve on Committees	Animal Training	Parks	Carpentry	Wood Carving
Serve as Officers	Arboretums	Picnics	Collage	
Speak at Events	Art Shows	Premieres	Cooking	
Speak at Meetings	Bazaars	Previews	Decoupage	
Speak on Panels	Biking	Puzzles	Design	
Sponsor Others in ACA	Billiards	Races	Doll Making	
Timer for Sharing	Birdwatching	Rafting	Dollhouse Construction	
Write Literature	Book Clubs	Reading	Drafting	
	Bungee Jumping	Running	Egg Decorating	
	Calligraphy	Sky Diving	Embossing	<b>DANCE</b>
	Camping	Snorkeling	Etching	Ballet
	Carnivals	Star Gazing	Flower Arranging	Ballroom
	Climbing	Swap Meets	Glass Etching	Belly Dancing
	Collect Baseball Cards	Swimming	Glassblowing	Bunny Hop
	Collect Books	Tai Chi	Jewelry Design	Cha-Cha
<b>ART</b>	Collect Coins	Target Practice	Lapidary	Chicken Dance
Acting / Improvisation/Mime	Collect Comics	Tours	Leatherworking	Circle Dance
Architecture	Collect Stamps	Trade Shows	Macrame	Conga Line
Ceramics	Do Magic Tricks	Travel	Metalworking / Welding	Corridos
Coloring	Driving	Tree Climbing	Model Building	Cumbia
Comedy	Exercise	Trekking	Mosaics	Folk Dance
Design	Expos	Thrift Stores	Needle Arts	Foxtrot
Drama	Fairs	Waterskiing	Origami	Hip Hop
Drawing	Darts	Windsurfing	Papier Mache	Hokey Pokey
Illustration	Dodgeball	Yoga	Pressing Flowers	Hora
Jewelry Making	Fishing	Ziplining	Print Making	Hula

Irish Dances	Handball	Yahtzee	<b>MUSIC</b>	Snowboarding
Jazz	Hearts		Chanting	Soccer
Limbo	Dominoes		Composing	Surfing
Macarena	Duck, Duck, Goose		Dancing	Swimming
Mambo	Follow the Leader		Karaoke	Tennis
May Pole Dance	Foosball		Lip Syncing	Track and Field
Rhumba	Four Square		Listening	Volleyball
Salsa	Game of Life		Playing Instruments	Weightlifting
Samba	Go Fish	<b>MOBILITY</b>	Singing	Wrestling
Square Dance	Fireworks Shows	Backpacking	Yodeling	
Stick Dance	Flying Kites	Ballooning		
Swing	Hide and Seek	Biking		
Tango	Hopscotch	Boating		
Tap Dance	Jacks	Canoeing		
Twist	Keep Away	Climbing	<b>SPORTS</b>	
Two Step	King of the Mountain	Ferrying	Archery	
Waltz	Mahjong	Flying	Auto Racing	<b>TOYS</b>
	Marbles	Gliding	Badminton	Balls
	Monopoly	Hiking	Baseball	Blocks
	Old Maid	Horseback Riding	Basketball	Bouncers
	Operation	Ice Skating	Bowling	Dolls
	Paintball	Kayaking	Curling	Drones
	Pictionary	Motorcycle Riding	Cycling	Grab Toys
	Poker	Off-Roadng	Fencing	Jacks
	Pool	Pedal Boats and Cars	Figure Skating	Jigsaw Puzzles
	Red Rover	Planes	Fishing	Legos
<b>GAMES</b>	Risk	Public Transportation	Football	Marbles
Backgammon	Rook	Rappelling	Golf	Models
Battleship	Rummy	Roller Skating	Gymnastics	Mumblety-Peg
Billiards	Scrabble	Running	Hockey	Pull Toys
Bingo	Shuffleboard	Scooters	Ice Skating	Push Toys
Boggle	Simon Says	Skateboarding	Lacrosse	Robots
Bridge	Slap Jack	Skiing	Marksmanship	Slinkies
Canasta	Solitaire	Sledding	Martial Arts	Sports Toys
Candyland	Sorry	Swimming	Pickleball	Stuffed Animals
Charades	Spades	Train Riding	Ping Pong	Tops
Checkers	Stratego	Walking	Polo	Toy Cars and Trucks
Chess	Sudoku		Pool	Toy Soldiers
Chinese Checkers	Tag		Racquetball	Toy Weapons
Chutes and Ladders	Tetherball		Rowing / Sculling	Yoyos
Clue	Trivial Pursuit		Rugby	
Crazy 8s	Twister		Running	
Cribbage	Uno		Scuba Diving	
Crosswords	Video Games		Skiing	
Five-Second Rule	War		Sledding	

## Planning Life Stage Play Days or Workshops

Chapter	Page	Life Stage	Ages	Issue	Arts/Crafts	Sports/Mobility	Issue Activity	Toys to Play With or Prizes
16	52	Infants	0-18 mo.	Trust vs. Mistrust	Fingerpainting	Bouncers	With partner, one falls back and other catches	Rubber Ducks Teddy Bears
17	57	Toddlers	18 mo. – 3 yrs.	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	Create art with stamps and paint	Walk on balance beam Play catch Roll down hill	Tell 3 – 5 things you are good at	Balls
18	65	Pre-Schoolers	3 - 6	Initiative vs. Guilt	Glue cut-outs of basic shapes on paper	Do soccer drills Play T-ball (hit baseball off T-stand)	Play Duck, Duck, Goose Play Simon Says	Zoo animals Jacks
19	71	Elementary	6 - 12	Industry vs. Inferiority	Create origami animals and other things	Races – hopping walk backwards skipping rolling carry egg on spoon in mouth first in wins prize	Throw beanbags into basket – most beanbags in basket wins	Toy cars Word searches
20	77	Adolescents	12 - 18	Identity vs. Confusion in Job and Relationships	Paint self-portrait of future job, achievements, or future mate	Team Sport - Relay race with water balloon under chin – no hands transfer of balloon; if drop, stop, pick up, put under chin; if balloon breaks, team loses	Play skill games – Chess, Rubik's Cube	Winner shares 3-5 things he/she does well
21	84	Young Adults	18 - 40	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Sculpt with clay, sand, ice cream, or play dough	Play Red Rover Play Tug-of-War	With a partner Solve a crossword puzzle - prize for fastest solution Play Spin the Bottle - hugs not kisses	Teddy Bears
22	96	Middle-Agers	40 - 65	Productivity vs. Stagnation	On cut out hearts write names of all present and 1 positive trait Vote for winner of best overall compliments	Golf – prize for most putts into hole in 2 minutes	Partner up, one person jumps and one counts – most jumping jacks in one minute is the winner	Big bag of jelly beans
23	103	Seniors	65 +	Integrity vs. Despair	Draw pictures of 3-5 best life achievements	Prize voted on for best story of travel (plane, train, boat, burro...)	Share best thing did in life; vote for winner	Deck of cards

## **The Laundry List**

These are characteristics we seem to have in common due to being brought up in an alcoholic household.

- a) We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
- b) We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
- c) We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
- d) We either become alcoholics, marry them, or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.
- e) We live life from the viewpoint of victims and are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
- f) We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. This enables us not to look too closely at our own faults.
- g) We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
- h) We become addicted to excitement.
- i) We confuse love with pity and tend to “love” people who we can pity and rescue.
- j) We have stuffed our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (denial).
- k) We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
- l) We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.
- m) Alcoholism is a family disease, and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of the disease even though we did not pick up the drink.
- n) Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

Tony A., 1977

## **The Problem**

Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional household. We had come to feel isolated, uneasy with other people, and especially authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people-pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. All the same we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat. We either became alcoholics (or practiced other addictive behavior) ourselves, or married them, or both. Failing that, we found another compulsive personality, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our sick need for abandonment.

We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving in to others. Thus, we became reactors, rather than actors, letting others take the initiative. We were dependent personalities, terrified of abandonment, willing to do almost anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to be abandoned emotionally. Yet we kept choosing insecure relationships because they matched our childhood relationship with alcoholic or dysfunctional parents.

These symptoms of the family disease of alcoholism or other dysfunction made us “co-victims”, those who take on the characteristics of the disease without necessarily ever taking a drink. We learned to keep our feelings down as children and kept them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we confused love with pity, tending to love those we could rescue. Even more self-defeating, we became addicted to excitement in all our affairs, preferring constant upset to workable relationships. This is a description, not an indictment.

## **The Solution**

The Solution is to become your own loving parent. As ACA becomes a safe place for you, you will find freedom to express all the hurts and fears you have kept inside and to free yourself from the shame and blame that are carryovers from the past. You will become an adult who is imprisoned no longer by childhood reactions. You will recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself.

The healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Feelings and buried memories will return. By gradually releasing the burden of unexpressed grief, we slowly move out of the past. We learn to reparent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love and respect. This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is a Higher Power whom some of us choose to call God. Although we had alcoholic or dysfunctional parents, our Higher Power gave us the Twelve Steps of Recovery.

This is the action and work that heals us: we use the Steps; we use the meetings; we use the telephone. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. We learn to restructure our sick thinking one day at a time. When we release our parents from responsibility for our actions today, we become free to make healthful decisions as actors, not reactors. We progress from hurting, to healing, to helping. We awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible. By attending these meetings on a regular basis, you will come to see parental alcoholism or family dysfunction for what it is: a disease that infected you as a child and continues to affect you as an adult.

You will learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now. You will take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting. You will not do this alone. Look around you and you will see others who know how you feel. We will love and encourage you no matter what. We ask you to accept us just as we accept you. This is a spiritual program based on action coming from love. We are sure that as the love grows inside you, you will see beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with God, yourself, and your parents.

## **The Twelve Steps of ACA**

1. We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## **The Twelve Traditions of ACA**

- 1) Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.
- 2) For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority --- a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
- 3) The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.
- 4) Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other 12-Step programs.
- 5) Each group has but one primary purpose --- to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.
- 6) An ACA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
- 7) Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8) Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- 9) ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10) Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11) Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media.
- 12) Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



## **The ACA Promises**

1. We will discover our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves.
2. Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves approval on a daily basis.
3. Fear of authority figures and the need to "people-please" will leave us.
4. Our ability to share intimacy will grow inside us.
5. As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
6. We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure.
7. We will learn how to play and have fun in our lives.
8. We will choose to love people who can love and be responsible for themselves.
9. Healthy boundaries and limits will become easier for us to set.
10. Fears of failure and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices.
11. With help from our ACA support group, we will slowly release our dysfunctional behaviors.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power's help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.