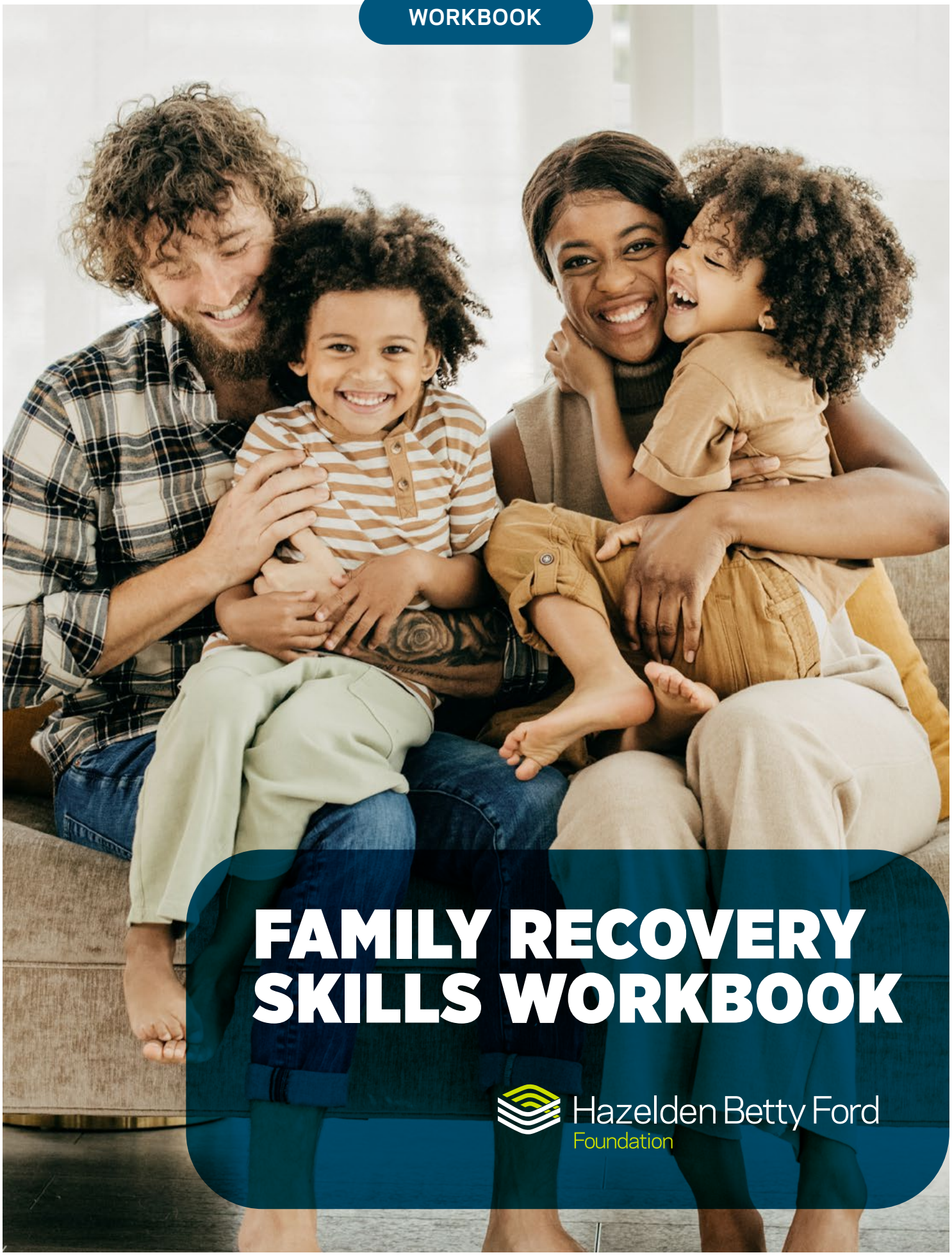
WORKBOOK



FAMILY RECOVERY SKILLS WORKBOOK

Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

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FAMILY RECOVERY SKILLS WORKBOOK

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INTRODUCTION:

Family Recovery Skills Workbook

Hazelden Betty Ford's *Family Recovery Skills Workbook* is designed to help families build practical, effective skills for supporting a loved one who struggles with addiction while also caring for their own well-being. Through a series of easy-to-use worksheets, you can **plan ahead for more effective communications, set healthy boundaries, support recovery, monitor progress, and prepare for challenging situations with greater confidence and clarity.**



Remember: You cannot control another person's choices, but you can develop the skills, knowledge, and support systems needed to respond in ways that are healthy, compassionate, and effective for both you and your loved one.

WORKSHEET 1:
Conversation Planner



We know that family involvement improves engagement, retention and long-term outcomes in treatment. While you cannot control or make choices for your loved one, you can have influence by engaging in healthy communication, responding with intentionality and caring for yourself.

Small intentional shifts in family interactions can create opportunities for healthier patterns, stronger relationships and meaningful change over time. One way to shift the dynamic in your communication patterns is to **prepare in advance.**

Completing the guide below and reviewing the conversation Do's and Don'ts in advance of a conversation with your loved one is one way to begin healthier communication patterns.

What is My Goal for the Conversation?

- Express concern
- Communicate a boundary
- Encourage treatment
- Improve communication
- Repair trust
- Other

Goal Notes:

My Main Concern:

What I Want to Communicate: (the key message I want my loved one to hear from me is)

Communication Pattern to Shift	New Communication Goal	Why the New Communication Goal Works
Lecturing	**Be brief and to the point**	Helps the other person stay engaged and more open to hearing what you're saying
Arguing	**Listen and express understanding**	Reduces defensiveness and creates space for perspective and empathy
Threatening	**State my boundary clearly and calmly**	Provides clarity, reduces miscommunication, and helps others know what to expect
Diagnosing / expressing judgement	**Use curiosity**	Lowers defensiveness, reduces judgment, and encourages conversation
Dredging up past	**Focus on the present**	Keeps attention on what can be changed moving forward rather than triggering old conflicts
Trying to "win" or convince	**Share concern and invite dialogue**	Promotes understanding and support rather than a power struggle

I Will Focus on Applying: (new communication goal)

Conversation Opener

Complete this sentence:

"I'm bringing this up because I care about you, and..."

Tips for communication that works.

Do	Don't
▪ Start the conversation during a calm moment when your loved one is sober and more likely to engage in a healthy manner	▪ Try to have the conversation when the person is intoxicated, withdrawing or emotionally escalated
▪ Speak from a place of care, concern and respect rather than frustration or fear	▪ Shame, lecture, diagnose or use labels that may increase defensiveness
▪ Share specific examples of how the substance use is affecting areas that matter deeply to them, such as relationships, health, work, parenting or personal goals	▪ Don't put pressure on yourself to solve the problem or convince someone to change in a single conversation
▪ Focus on listening as much as talking so the conversation feels supportive instead of confrontational	▪ Argue about whether the addiction is "bad enough" to deserve help
▪ Learn about a variety of treatment options and support resources before the conversation so you can speak with confidence and offer options	▪ Lose hope if the reaction is anger, denial or silence; compassionate, consistent conversations create openings for change later
▪ Consider reaching out to a counselor, trusted family member or support group for guidance before having the discussion	▪ Give up; you can continue to look for opportunities to engage in conversations regarding getting help again
▪ Remind yourself that meaningful conversations happen over time, not all at once	▪ Address too many issues at a time, instead pick the most important one at that time

WORKSHEET 2:
Healthy Boundary Builder

Boundaries are not about controlling another person's behavior. They are about deciding how you will use your time, energy, money, and other resources in ways that align with your values. They help you become intentional about **what you do and do not want to reinforce, and what you are willing to or not tolerate.**

Step 1: What Matters Most to Me?

Our values help guide our decisions and boundaries. Assess in which areas of your life you feel the need to establish a boundary to protect what is important to you.

Boundary Examples:

- "I want my home to feel safe and respectful."
- "I want honesty in my relationship."

Physical or emotional safety | **Follow-through** | **Respectful communication**

Honesty | **Shared responsibilities** | **Time for self-care**

The values that matter most to me are:

Step 2: What Do I Want More of in This Relationship?

Think about the behaviors, interactions, and experiences you would like to see more often.

Boundary Examples:

- "I want honest communication."
- "I want my home to be safe for everyone."

Truth telling | **Apologizing after causing harm** | **Speaking without yelling**

Time together | **Arriving on time** | **Connection**

What do I want more of in my relationships? What behaviors am I willing to reinforce?

Step 3: What Gets in the Way?

Think about behaviors that make it harder to create the environment you want.

Dishonesty, accusing or blaming

Shutting down difficult conversations

Breaking agreements or canceling plans

Not listening or interrupting

Boundary Example:

- "I am only willing to engage in calm and respectful conversations."

What gets in the way of the environment I want to create? What behaviors am I no longer willing to reinforce?

Step 4: How am I Using My Resources?

When we use our resources (time, finances, transportation, emotional support, etc.) in ways that don't align with our values, we end up reinforcing the very behavior that's standing in the way of the environment we want to create.

Boundary Examples:

- Spending more time together during positive interactions.
- Reducing financial support that contributes to unhealthy behavior.

What resources am I currently using in ways that do not align with my values and how would I like to use those resources differently?

Step 5: My Choice

A boundary focuses on what **I will do**, not what I expect someone else to do or change.

Boundary Examples:

- If a conversation becomes disrespectful, I will take a break and return later.
- I will only have important discussions when my loved one is sober.

What is a situation that I would like to respond to differently?

Step 6: Natural Consequences

Sometimes choosing not to reinforce a behavior means stepping back and allowing natural consequences to occur.*

Questions to consider:

- What have I been fixing, rescuing, or protecting?
- What responsibility belongs to my loved one?
- What might happen if I step back? Is this safe "enough"?

Boundary Examples:

- Allowing a late bill to be handled by the person responsible for it.
- Allowing a loved one to replace or repair something they damaged.
- Family members go about their normal routines, including regular household activities and noise levels, even if this interrupts the person's sleep after a night of substance use.

One situation where I may be able to step back is? What consequences may occur?

***Note About Safety**

When someone is experiencing an acute medical or mental health crisis (e.g., overdose, alcohol poisoning, psychosis, suicidal thoughts or behaviors, or another serious safety concern), it is critical to seek appropriate medical intervention. This may include calling 911, administering Narcan, contacting a crisis response service, or taking the person to an emergency department.

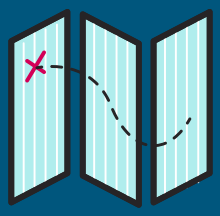
This is important because safety comes first. The person should receive the medical care and support needed to address the immediate crisis.

Intervening in a crisis is not "rescuing" or preventing a natural consequence. Serious medical or mental health emergencies are situations where safety takes priority. In many cases, receiving emergency medical care, hospitalization, legal involvement, or other crisis-related outcomes may themselves be natural consequences of the person's substance use or mental health symptoms.

Boundaries are values-based choices about what you will do.

Small, consistent changes matter.

WORKSHEET 3:
Recovery Support Map



You are not alone, and your loved one is not the only person who needs support.

Living with substance use in the family can be stressful and isolating, and your well-being matters too.

Think about the people you can turn to for encouragement, understanding, or practical help. This may include friends, family, support groups, faith communities, coaches, counselors, or others you trust.

If you do not currently have support people in your life, there are still places to find connection through community resources, peer support groups, and professional services.

Having a support team can help you feel less alone, gain new perspectives, and navigate challenges more effectively.

Who Is On My Team?

Friends

- _____
- _____
- _____

Family

- _____
- _____
- _____

Community

- _____
- _____
- _____

Professionals

- _____
- _____
- _____

Who can I call when things become difficult?

- _____
- _____
- _____

WORKSHEET 4:

Weekly Family Recovery Tracker

Setting goals for how you want to care for yourself and be intentional in your interactions can be an important part of your journey.

Regularly checking in on your goals can help you assess what is working well, what may need adjustment, and whether your goals continue to meet your needs.

When setting goals, it can be helpful to **focus on actions that are realistic, measurable, and within your control**. Small, meaningful steps often lead to lasting change and can help build confidence along the way.

This week, I will:

- ☐ Practice healthier communication
- ☐ Practice one boundary
- ☐ Attend a support meeting or reach out for support
- ☐ Read recovery education materials
- ☐ Speak with a professional
- ☐ Schedule self-care time



Weekly Family Recovery Tracker

Notes for Week's Goal:

Wins This Week: (what went well?)

Challenges This Week: (what didn't go well?)

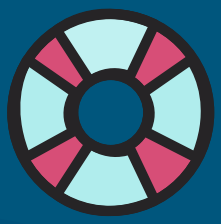
One Thing I Learned:

One Thing I Will Do Next Week:

Photocopy this page and try to keep track for 1 month.

WORKSHEET 5:

Crisis Plan



Communicating about how a crisis will be handled and creating a plan in advance can help family members feel more prepared and supported.

A crisis plan provides clarity about what steps to take, who to contact, and what each person can expect if a difficult situation arises.

The person that struggles with substance use disorder and the family should talk about and agree on the following parts of their crisis plan.

1. We consider the following a crisis that needs a response

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Triggers or early warning signs that have been present prior to past crisis or could contribute to one in the future

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. When we see these triggers, the following actions/people/resources might be useful in preventing a crisis

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. **If there is a crisis involving safety including (but not limited to), threats of suicide, homicide, psychosis, violence, signs of overdose, etc. we will engage the following emergency services:**

- **Call 911**
- **Go to local Emergency Department**
  - Name: _____
  - Address: _____
  - Phone: _____
- **Call crisis helplines**
  - Helpline #1 (name): _____
    - Phone number: _____
  - Helpline #2 (name): _____
    - Phone number: _____
  - Helpline #3 (name): _____
    - Phone number: _____
- **Additional Crisis Resource(s)**
  - Crisis Resource 1: _____
    - Phone number: _____
  - Crisis Resource 2: _____
    - Phone number: _____
  - Crisis Resource 3: _____
    - Phone number: _____

CLOSING

Progress is often measured in small steps, not dramatic breakthroughs.

Every healthy conversation, every boundary you uphold, every act of self-care, and every effort to learn new skills is moving your family toward healing.

You don't have to do this perfectly.

You don't have to do it alone.

You only need to *keep taking the next step.*

Call: 800-344-6132

Email: families@hazeldenbettyford.org

Focus on progress, not perfection.

Help is available. Recovery is possible. And support exists for you, too.

