

LIFE Recovery Model and Sample Pack

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Welcome!

Thank you for taking the time to view this LIFE Recovery Model (LRM). What you are about to read is a compilation of “Best Practices” for addiction recovery from practitioners, group facilitators and those who have implemented these practices to successfully **Live In Freedom Everyday**. LIFE Recovery International is dedicated to continually provide proven addiction recovery information from a biblical and clinical basis. We hold great expectations for those who view this model and follow its practices.

*May God richly bless your efforts.
LIFE Recovery International dba Captives Free*

Established in 2000, the Lord has equipped LIFE Recovery International with excellent materials written by the foremost authorities in sexual addiction recovery. The **LRM**, LIFE Recovery Model, written by Sue Moore, CPSAS, is fully endorsed by Mark Laaser PhD, a renowned Christian authority on sexual addiction recovery, a national board certified Christian counselor and a member of the Advisory Board for LIFE Recovery International.



Elements of the Addictive Condition excerpts from the LIFE Recovery Guide An Introduction

SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE: **If God can heal disease then He can heal me!**

As a Christian, you may be wondering why you should submit yourself to a “man-made” recovery program. Why not, instead, spend your time praying for an instantaneous deliverance brought about by an outpouring of God's power? After all, the Bible speaks of the POWER of the Holy Spirit that works within you, the Bible says that God did not give you a spirit of fear but of POWER, the Bible says that the same POWER that raised Jesus from the dead resides inside you...so why the need for a PROCESS?

Well, this is a very fair question with a very simple answer. The truth is, nearly every addict that comes to our ministry has been praying intensely and often for God to deliver them from their addiction. This is a good thing to do and therefore it is something we encourage. God DOES pour out His power to bring healing to addicts. His power to heal addictions, however, does not strike once like a lightning bolt; it flows continually like a river. It is a power that can only be experienced through simple, authentic Christian fellowship. It requires the conduits of transparency, confession, debriefing, and relearning - all of which can only be experienced through community. So it's not a question of power vs. process; it's an embracing of God's power *through* process.

God often heals cancer and other physical ailments instantaneously because doing so does not compromise the overall health of our physical body. In the case of addiction, however, an instantaneous healing *would* compromise our overall emotional and mental health. Such an experience would teach us that our deepest emotional conflicts (that are at the core of our addictive condition) can be healed in isolation and this is not possible. This would be a lesson that is counter-productive to God's design for us, as He has created us for intimacy – with Himself, with His Son Jesus and with each other. We were wounded in relationship; therefore God has chosen to bring healing through relationship. Of course He could bring instant relief of the craving, but years of experience and biblical evidence indicates that He has chosen to bring wholeness through our active participation in a transparent Christian community. If in this transparent environment we address core issues that have hindered our spiritual maturity we will remove the tendency to switch addictions altogether. We will talk more about this later. Meanwhile, welcome to a LIFE Time of recovery!

FAMILY SYSTEMS: **This looks familiar...**

If there is one thing you need to understand about addiction it's this: Coping or self-medicating doesn't need an invitation...it only needs an opportunity.

At one time, you were an innocent, unsuspecting child. You, most likely, weren't guided through the experiences in your life that opened the door for a need to escape. Your family, much like any other, may have been unreliable and unskilled themselves to bear the challenge of making it through the day's circumstances. Maybe the best model you saw was how to simply survive. Perhaps you learned at an early age that life cannot be trusted to turn out well so you made your way through the turmoil by using any opportunity to cope and escape the reality. Yet this was your home, your family, your relationships and extended family. In fact, there is an entire psychological discipline about this. It was originally formulated by Dr. Murray Bowen and is called **family systems theory**. As Dr. Bowen explains,

A family is a system in which each member had a role to play and rules to respect. Members of the system are expected to respond to each other in a certain way according to their role, which is determined by relationship agreements. Within the boundaries of the system, patterns develop as certain family member's behavior is caused by and causes other family member's behaviors in predictable ways.

In short, Dr. Bowen believed that you, as a person, cannot be understood (or understand yourself) apart from your family system. This is true because of the following widely recognized principle: early influences operate to shape future behavior. And the majority of your early influences came to you through your family system. Unfortunately, the chaos and injury some of us experienced within our family systems set us up to be vulnerable to compulsive and addictive behavior as adults. Some family systems can even go so far as *modeling* this type of behavior for us! Is it any wonder that our addictive condition looks familiar?

FRAGMENTATION: I think I'm going mad...

Well, speaking in terms of the work that was done by Christopher J. Charleton, M.A., LCSW, an internationally known addiction specialist, licensed clinical therapist and specialist in the resolution of addictive and cross-addictive behaviors, your dependency can certainly be driving you to **fragmentation**. According to Charleton, fragmentation is a result of disintegration, which is in direct contrast to God's design of integration. That sounds a bit confusing to me, so think of it this way: you were created in the image of the Triune God; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is a perfect example of integration; each aspect of the trinity is in union with the other, glorifying and reflecting each other's true value in relationship. Similarly, as someone created in God's image you were also designed to be integrated in relationships, thereby illuminating the true value of yourself and others.

The problem is, your family of origin experiences challenged your belief in God's design and skewed your perception of the value of being integrated in community. When your relationships were subsequently compromised (or even avoided altogether), disintegration occurred. Now, here's the main point: **fragmentation perceives both integration and disintegration to be true**...and an internal war between intimacy and isolation ensues. The apostle Paul said it this way, "I don't understand what I do. For what I want to do (intimacy) I don't do, and the very thing I hate (isolation) I do. Now if I do what I do not want to do it is no longer I who does it, but it is sin (dependency) living in me. So then, this LIFE Recovery Guide you're holding, its Principles and Journal Assignments will prove to be a huge benefit by giving you the tools to examine yourself and your experiences. After all, don't we want to live in freedom? It's our skewed perception that fuels the war between intimacy and isolation in the first place.

ADDICTIVE CONDITION: So one more time... What's my problem?

It's not alcohol. Alcohol does not create alcoholics. It's not pornography. Pornography doesn't create sex addicts. Neither is your addictive condition a box of Twinkies or a deck of cards or a freshly rolled joint or an eighty hour a week job.

The problem is your underlying addictive *condition* and it consists of a whole host of issues; neurochemical imbalances, arrested development, unresolved emotional wounds, fragmentation, and an incapacity for emotional wholeness and intimacy. These are the things that create addicts. The problem does not resemble a pair of dice, a sexual encounter, or a box of chocolates, although it likes to play with things like these - especially when you are in pain.



Given enough pain and enough opportunity, these things then become the focus of your addictive *behavior*.

In recovery terms, your addictive behavior is simply your attempt to medicate the pain of some past trauma or relational wounding that has not been resolved, and the fact that it remains unresolved becomes the (often subconscious) excuse for continuing in your addictive behavior. It is a self-perpetuating cycle of destruction. And on top of that, Satan is always there to cooperate, using and intensifying your addictive behavior and further disabling your ability to have relationships with those you care about (or even with God Himself). Your problem, your addictive condition, is your enemy and is used by the enemy to bring devastation to your life. Nevertheless, your addictive condition, your coping method or self-medicating always masquerades as your friend.

You very likely found your method(s) of coping amidst the turmoil of your family system. Acting out was fun and even helpful at first, but as you continually fed your addictive condition through years the behavior became pretty burdensome. And so you're here, in need of a community of people who can help you to more clearly identify what's driving your addictive condition and help you through God's healing power to uncover and heal those wounds, for good!

Oh...so what you are really saying is I just need to get sober.

Nope.

Huh?

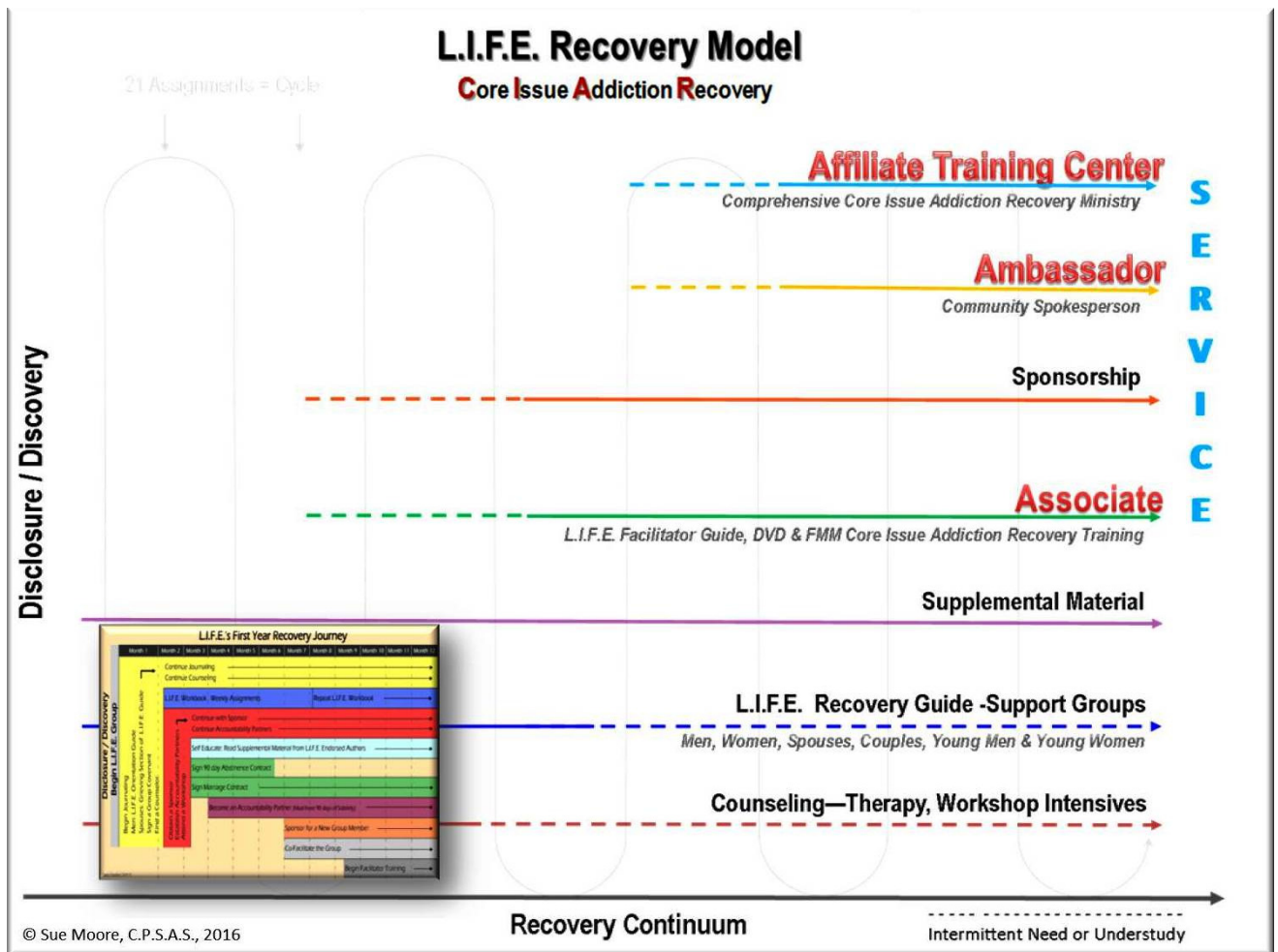
Sobriety is measured in time. You will be deemed "sober" when you have not engaged in addictive behaviors for twenty-four hours, or a week, a month, etc. That's a great start, but it is not enough.

Your addictive condition is clever, resourceful and sinister, and it will let you be sober for a while if it means it can hang around for the long haul. Even Satan, after unsuccessfully tempting Jesus in the desert, simply waited for a more opportune time. Your addictive condition will do the same.

What you need is wholeness. Sobriety is a part of the equation but by itself sobriety does not equal wholeness. Being whole means you are practicing real intimacy. It means you are self-aware and capable of modulating negative emotions through healthy means. It means you are present in the moment instead of being lost inside your head. It means you no longer hide behind "fine." Being whole means God is having His way with you, and as a result you are being transformed inside and out. The point is, you can be sober and still be acting out of your addictive condition. But when you are whole your addictive condition is not only *not* driving - but has no opportunity to re-establish itself and get a seat within you.

By joining a local LIFE Recovery Group and completing the work that is found in the LIFE Recovery Guide you are holding, we believe you can achieve wholeness. Accomplishing this will require a lot of consistent effort on your part, but know this; there are thousands of men and women throughout the world who can give testimony to the fact that it was the community and self-discovery they found through LIFE Recovery that God used to set them free. You can live in freedom everyday! Welcome to LIFE!

For a more in-depth study of the topics that were introduced here please see Christopher J. Charleton's, book, Relapse.



The **LRM** was created out of compassion for persons seeking sexual addiction recovery in an ever increasing and diverse market of programs, materials and books of which most offer incomplete or misguided information.

The **purpose** of the LRM is now to provide proven methods for general addiction as well as sexual addiction recovery methods that unite the recovery strategies of individuals, organizations and ministries to work together, worldwide.

As a forerunner in core issue addiction recovery, the LRM is intended to set the industry standard by providing practical applications for individual recovery and service that is designed to duplicate the ministry at every level. We invite you to join us as LIFE Recovery seeks to be obedient to God's mandate and carry out His kingdom work in the area of addiction recovery.

Goal of the LIFE/PTG Recovery Model is to...

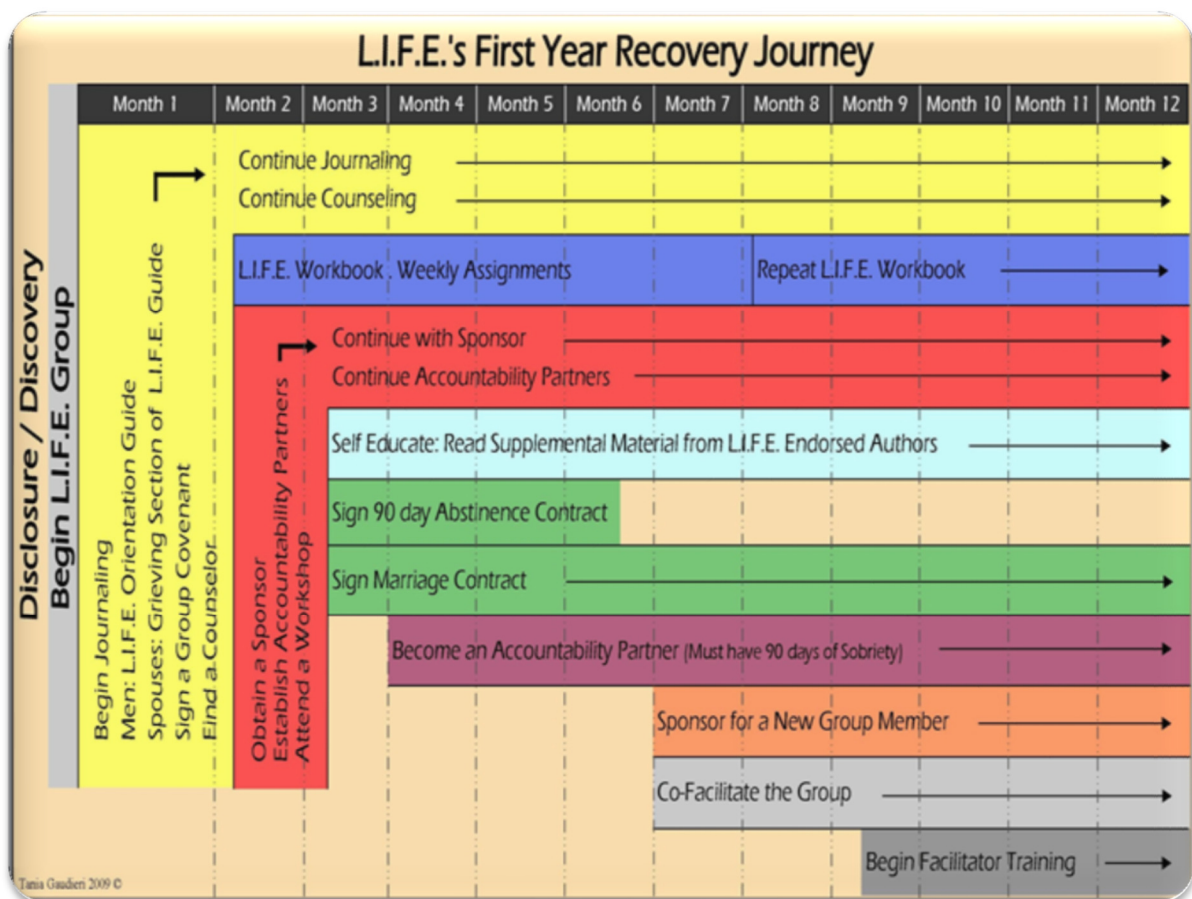
- ♦ Work Together
- ♦ Uniting Ministry Strategies
- ♦ Teaching Post Traumatic Growth Principles and
- ♦ Planting Support Groups



We are motivated to work together with...

- ♦ The Christian community
- ♦ Addiction Recovery Ministries
- ♦ Counseling Professionals
- ♦ Colleges, Civic and Social Service Agencies and Prisons

We recognize that the methods demonstrated in the **LRM** are not exhaustive and that research may uncover new insights and in this endeavor to establish an industry standard we seek to remain open to new applications. However, in order for these additions to be adopted they should embrace and enhance the current **LRM** principles for addiction recovery and be approved by LIFE Recovery review board.



Your First Year of Recovery

Before a lifetime of recovery can be experienced one must intentionally develop disciplines that pursue wholeness, all of which are presented in the **LIFE Recovery Model (LRM)**, with particular emphasis on the initiatives begun in the **First Year of Recovery**. Frequent evaluations of your “Recovery Plan” are crucial for success, especially at times when fulfillment appears illusive. See the Recovery Plan Evaluation Tool to implement this practice. Please keep in mind that every recovery journey is different. Experiences and circumstances vary for each of us. Nevertheless, the entry point for a lifetime of true recovery is through commitment. Are you ready?

The LRM details the non-negotiable aspects for a successful **First Year of Recovery**. The monthly timeframe is secondary to the sequential building of recovery disciplines and their consistent application within and after each period represented.

1st Month

One of the first things to do on your recovery journey is view the LIFE Recovery Model video to better understand the investment and expectations for healing and wholeness. No matter if you are male or female, addict, spouse, or loved one if you want to uncover what's driving behaviors, discipline yourself to journal daily. Journaling should be one of the first skills that you practice and implement for the rest of your life.

Since addiction is an intimacy disorder and intimacy disorders are healed in a group, your corresponding step with journaling is connecting with others in your support group so you can become known on your road to recovery. All group members are on the same Principle but different assignment levels. For a few weeks, it's likely that during the first hour of group you will have an opportunity to listen to Principle discussions before you participate in the homework assignments yourself. You will jump in when the group cycles back to Principle One. This allows observation of the group process and time to practice journaling your experiences, identifying emotions and processing thoughts to share with your small group during the second hour.

Once you start your homework assignments you will find them predominantly introspective during the first four weeks. You'll learn the basic Reflective Listening exercise to express feelings and process pain and end the first month by listing potential sponsors and starting a 90 day marital sexual abstinence period to increase spiritual and emotional intimacy in your marriage. Signing a Marriage Sexual Abstinence Contract with your spouse will establish healthy boundaries and encourage commitment that allows the couple to work on their individual recovery without fear that the marriage will end.

Also during this time frame you should obtain a counselor for individual and couple counseling. An ideal counselor would be a spiritually mature Christian with experience in trauma model (core issue) addiction recovery, preferably with sexual addiction, sexual abuse and family systems training and experience.

2nd Month

Your second month of recovery continues the disciplines taught in the first as you begin weekly Principle Assignments, obtain accountability partners and select your sponsor. Remember, group members are peers. Accountability partners are ahead of you on the recovery journey. We encourage you to attend recommended workshops enhancing your knowledge of trauma model core issue addiction recovery.

The second month's Principle Assignments move away from denial, blame and self-pity and assess the damage from our addictive behaviors and list the nature of the damage and our character defects associated with them. We begin the discipline of Daily Inventory for seven weeks to reveal patterns and assess areas where we need to focus and rebuild. With six weeks sobriety, we start writing our first draft of our story: What was it like? What happened? What's it like now?

Our homework progress takes us into the deeper healing of the second level assignments revealing our "Stinking Thinking," anger inventory, rituals and feelings behind our rituals. We continue to grow in emotional expression and processing pain using the Reflective Listening

exercise and are given an opportunity to momentarily pause the Principles for deeper work in the Grieving Guide.

3rd Month

Building on all of the disciplines, practices and gained knowledge from previous months, we continue journaling, attending group and counseling. We are maintaining accountability by practicing our “Daily Call” check-ins, sharing our Top and Bottom Lines and emotional processing with alternating group members. Journaling, the Reflective Listening exercise and “Daily Calls” all practice the same skill - expressing feelings and processing pain. In short, these practices are the antidote of addiction. Specifically, that is, connection and intimacy. We are becoming known. ***Don’t miss this.*** The sooner you master these skills and push thru the vital 5 minute check-in call, the sooner your isolation and intimacy disorders are broken. Sound too simple? Try it, I dare you. When we master becoming known our freedom from having nothing hidden, holding no secrets, is an inexpressible joy that some barely recognize. And that is some good news to those who are bound.

Continue self-education; absorb all the addiction recovery and spiritual knowledge that you can digest. By the end of the third month your assignments navigate you through planning to make direct and indirect amends. Whether financially contributing to your group or investing into another’s recovery by participating in readings or leading Principle discussions or learning to co-facilitate, you are giving back to others on the recovery journey.

4th Month

Maintaining all disciplines from previous months, you will find the self-care skills taught in Principle Six Assignment One’s Daily Inventory to be essential in this season of recovery. Be vigilant! Between the third and ninth months is a dangerous time; one can become tired of disappointments, restrictions, and all the hard work involved in recovery. If you haven’t taken these recommendations seriously and started to learn how to self-soothe in healthy ways, you may be less prepared to reenergize and refresh yourself amid life’s challenges that come. Revisit the Daily Inventory routinely throughout your recovery, especially during stressful times. You’ll be very glad you did.

Thankfully, the Principle assignment work is timely and starts you on the Cycle of Recovery. Further work opens understanding about what God has been trying to teach you about Himself through your recovery, as well as, examining the core issues that drive addiction. As recovery work brings feelings that historically you’ve sought to medicate, three months of sobriety is recommended before probing into these underlying issues. Participants with six months of sobriety work on their Preoccupation: fantasies, thoughts, themes and desires.

Closing the fourth month of recovery realigns our hope in God by viewing Him accurately through the scriptures. Journaling exercises ask you to vividly picture intimacy with God so to begin experiencing “*Fathering*” from Abba Father. After obtaining 90 days sobriety and confirmed accountability you will be invited to become an accountability partner for someone else calling them up to become all they can be in Christ.

5th Month

The beautiful thing about recovery is that we learn to keep a short list. The shorter the better, I say. There is healing in telling the truth. Principle Three Assignment Three is aptly titled, “Telling the Truth: I must leave the darkness.” In the fifth month, you work through exercises that dig deep into all areas of life, addressing motivations and possible manipulation behind confessions. Later assignments focus on how to cultivate character, living amends and growing

in spirituality. The work navigates toward converting all the energy that used to funnel into addiction, now funnels into activating spiritual disciplines in the pursuit of God.

6th Month

Six months into your recovery journey and you're finishing the first of three recommended cycles through the material! Wow, a lot has changed for the better! The sixth month begins with the last of the twenty one assignments, "Discovering Your Vision." Here, instead of pursuing a fantasy where all your wounds were healed, you seek a positive mental image pursuing God's plan for your life. Wrapping up the first cycle identifies your encouragers and their affirmations, your passions, experiences and skills, lessons learned, feeling God's pleasure, your legacy and your vision statement. Having completed the first 21 weeks assignment cycle, you are gaining a new perspective on life which sets up a successful second cycle with a brighter outlook!

7 – 12th Months

You will be tempted to stop the work once the "bleeding" stops. Don't be fooled and become prey. Be on the alert for the schemes of darkness. Reexamining the Principle Assignments from a healthier place gives a rich perspective and deeper healing opportunities. In the first cycle through the material we sought sobriety. In our second cycle we gain perspective and have a new stance. We can see things in the second cycle that we couldn't see in the first, thus a richer deeper healing and ability to stand on the truth of who we are becoming.

The third cycle and beyond prepare us further for the Lord's service. Maintain Christian fellowship consistently throughout your recovery journey. The setting may change from time to time, perhaps, but Christian fellowship is a must. Who else will reflect and reveal the glory of God upon you? Continuing to acquire knowledge and a hunger for truth fuels our passion to give back, raising up others, and teaching what we've learned. Utilize trauma model resources among them are Forgiven Much® Ministries' (FMM) Core Issue Addiction Recovery training and workshops. Whether for personal recovery or becoming a community spokesperson, FMM's training is designed to equip you with a confidence of literacy for your next steps.

Consider being trained to facilitate a group in your community. There's always a need for more groups. Become an accountability partner or sponsor and definitely seek every opportunity to share your story. Why? Because there are too many in misery, someone in your sphere of influence needs to hear that recovery is possible and shown the way to freedom. When you're faithful with the one in front of you, God will open up more!

Sue Moore, CPSAS

Certified Pastoral Sexual Addiction Specialist, C-SASI

Forgiven Much® Ministries, Inc. Founder/CEO

LIFE Recovery Model and First Year of Recovery, Core Issue Addiction Recovery Training Author

E4HI, Education for Healthy Intimacy, a Buyers' School Curriculum, Co-author

The **First Year of Recovery is simply the beginning of the LRM**, which represents a lifespan of recovery. Recovery begins at the disclosure or discovery of addiction and moves toward freedom and service to the right, and stops at the end of life.

You will notice in the visual **LRM** illustration that there are solid and dashed lines in the **LRM**. Solid lines represent continual involvement, whereas a dashed line either signifies an intermittent need or, in regards to methods of service, represents a learning phase as an "understudy."

This **LRM** illustration is a lifespan continuum. Please note the "threads" or lines that represent roles or aspects of addiction recovery. There are simultaneous threads pictured in this

illustration representing different aspects of recovery occurring at the same time. Some of these threads are non-negotiable methods for successful recovery and others are opportunities for selective means of service determined by one's calling. These practices work in harmony toward the same end, a servant's heart.

The vertical curving continuous line represents the LIFE Recovery Guide workbook assignment cycle of 21 weeks. We will describe the application of each horizontal thread (line) needed for a lifetime of successful recovery. Please keep in mind, this model portrays an ideal recovery scenario. Each recovery plan consists of a unique timeline taking into consideration specific circumstances for each individual.

Recovery Continuum - Carnes and Laaser imply an active recovery of 3 to 5 years contingent on the investment of working one's program **in addition to** a maintenance phase of recovery demonstrated by continual service that invests into those ensnared by addiction. Leaving the recovery process increases the incidence of relapse substantially. In alignment with biblical principles, transformation continues until we pass from this life into the next.

Counseling, Therapy, Workshop Intensives - Participants need the benefit of Christian counseling, therapy and workshop "Intensives" to help work through deep rooted issues or troubling areas to maintain growth and sobriety. In addition to the benefits of counseling in the beginning of the recovery process, a need to return to counseling may occur intermittently to move beyond obstacles revealed on the journey. Professionals aid in the process by working through hidden factors that hinder our complete surrender. Workshops provide brief but intense help with underlying spiritual and emotional issues in the recovery process. In an intensive, participants can work on dynamics that might have taken many months if not years of counseling to uncover.

LIFE Recovery Guide Support Groups

The LIFE Recovery Guide principles and assignments are vital to revealing hidden factors needed to heal from addiction and to establish a lifetime of recovery. The LIFE Recovery Guides are based on 7 biblical principles and 21 assignments, plus 7 grieving assignments in the Spouses Guide. To ensure successful recovery, the authors recommend multiple cycles of the LIFE Recovery Guides in an ongoing, open or closed, group.

"LIFE Recovery Guides have been recommended as the most adaptable workbooks on the market today. They can be used in groups, mentoring one-on-one, adapted for therapists and therapy groups, churches and other organizations can use the material for "free standing" support group ministry (exclusive to sexual addiction), as a part of a broader recovery ministry for all kinds of issues and addictions, as part of existing programs, or if two people had no resources whatsoever they could work the LIFE Recovery Guide together. There have not been many, if any, programs/series that have this wide of utility." Richard Blankenship, LPC, NCC - Executive Director, American Association of Certified Christian Sexual Addiction Specialists

Also vital to the **LRM** is the LIFE Recovery Group environment. Reinforcing the LIFE Recovery Guide, a LIFE Recovery Group offers the essential crosstalk component which empowers participants to speak truth in love and to hold one another accountable; this creates an "iron sharpens iron" environment that spurs growth and builds healthy intimacy skills. In the safety of a LIFE Recovery Group participants exercise their abilities to speak truth without fear and begin to practice these healthy behaviors in other relationships outside of the group environment. Please note, as one follows their recovery plan and sobriety and stability grow the LIFE

Recovery Group attendance becomes intermittent (dashed line); however, the recovery effort is picked up on another line of service. Successful recovery **never** drops off the timeline.

IMPORTANT: New group attendees should be given a list of group members and their contact information, who have volunteered to mentor them during their first six weeks. We suggest that each new attendee be called within a few days after their first visit and encouraged to choose one of these volunteers to come alongside them.

Availability of LIFE Recovery Groups – At some point the facilitator must decide if the group will remain open for anyone in need at any time or if the group will be closed. Discern the Pros and Cons presented on the illustration and then optimize your LIFE Recovery Group as a recovery resource for your community. A final note on LIFE Recovery Groups, no matter if your group is open or closed, lesson breaks, holidays and the summer season tend to disrupt attendance and progress.

Supplemental Material

Reading supplemental material is essential to the LRM. Self-education is necessary to the recovery process, but supplemental material should **never** replace or interrupt the recommended LIFE Recovery Guide assignment cycles. As new people come to your LIFE Recovery Group, they have an acute need to begin their recovery process immediately with the tested Principle work in the LIFE Recovery Guide.

Supplemental materials provide valuable information and are suggested to increase the understanding of the origins, consequences and behaviors of addiction and should complement consistent attendance in a LIFE Recovery Group. Supplemental materials are not sufficient to replace the LIFE Recovery Group's involvement in the recovery process.

In addition to utilizing LIFE Recovery materials, as supplemental material, here are some of LIFE endorsed authors to build your library and understanding, Patrick Carnes, Mark Laaser, Debbie Laaser, Marnie Ferree, Richard Blankenship, Russell Willingham, and Cloud and Townsend. To see a complete list on our website go to <http://astore.amazon.com/lifemin-20>.

As the threads in the LRM are faithfully implemented and our understanding of God's design is received, a time will come to *take recovery to the next level of giving back*. The remaining components listed in the **LRM** provide opportunities to make a difference and serve future generations.

LIFE Recovery Facilitator Training – The proper sequence for raising up future LIFE Recovery Group leaders begins with sharing the facilitator's role with other group members. Ask for volunteers to open the meeting with prayer or readings, or to be the group's treasurer passing the envelope for weekly contributions, or to lead the discussion during "Principle" group or to facilitate a small breakout group during the "get current" time. Each responsibility allows the member to "give back" and invest into another's recovery and therefore advancing their own. Offer LIFE's Facilitators Guide and Starting a Group DVD as a tool to equip new leaders and encourage everyone to subscribe to LIFE's e-newsletter to be up to date on advances in core issue recovery and Facilitator Training events.

Sponsors - One of the most honorable roles in recovery service is becoming a LIFE Sponsor for someone seeking a life of sobriety. As with Co-Facilitating, similar timing occurs for participants

to become involved as a mentor or sponsor. Dependent on prompting and personal circumstances, mentoring or sponsorship may occur simultaneously with Facilitating or Co-Facilitating or in its place. The requirements to be a LIFE Sponsor are:

- Must be a believer in Jesus Christ.
- Not necessarily be in a LIFE Group, but...
- Must have a Sponsor themselves, or have been sponsored before.
- Must be progressing in their own healing journey,
 - *Emphasize progress not perfection.*
- Should have at least 6 months sobriety, not a requirement, but highly recommended.
- If married, have completed 90 days of abstinence.

An **Ambassador** (community spokesperson) advances addiction awareness and provides solutions that address the epidemic in their area or region.

LIFE Recovery International offers core issue addiction recovery materials for Men, Women, Spouses, Couples, Young Men and Young Women in both sexual and general addiction recovery to establish an **Affiliate Hub** or Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Ministry in your community.

We are grateful for the Lord's provision for the aforementioned opportunities to use one's gifting. We also acknowledge that the Holy Spirit may lead a servant into ministry outside the realm of addiction recovery. As in every case of restored relationship with the Father, we are to be witnesses and testify of the path of redemption from sin so others may be encouraged by the hope of our calling.

Simply stated, the LIFE Recovery Model brings hope to the hopeless with proven recovery applications while offering purposeful opportunities to give back and comfort in the way we were comforted.

Our heart is that you too will be inspired to serve others and make a difference in your generation.

The LIFE Recovery Model

Sets the Biblical and Clinical Standard for Core Issue Addiction Recovery

Work the Program - the Program Works

PRINCIPLE ONE

Assignment One - Admitting Our True Condition

***We admit that we have absolutely no control of our lives.
The sin of our addiction has become unmanageable.***

Confronting Reality: I'm Shackled in My Own Prison

Congratulations! Despite long years of deceit, lies, denial, minimization, fears, shame, and manipulation, you have picked up this LIFE Guide or have come to a LIFE Recovery Group meeting. You have wanted to, thinking that perhaps you should, pondering if it was the right thing to do. You have resisted, found excuses, wondered who would find out, and worried about the consequences of getting honest. You've thought that no one would really understand. You've either believed that you have done the worst things possible – things no one else has ever done; or you've thought your stuff is not so bad - that you really don't need to come to a meeting and admit to others that you need help. Hear these words:

**Welcome.
You're in the right place.
We're glad you're here.**

That phrase, "the sin of my addiction," may stir some discomfort, if not down-right fear, for some. Addictive behavior is harmful to our physical body, mind, and spirit. During the time of "active addiction," we are living in rebellion to the will and plan of God, our Creator. In the Bible these acts of rebellion are called 'sin' and are revealed in our attitudes and behaviors that are against what God desires for us and from us. He created us to be His image incarnate, but rebellion entered into the Garden of Eden when our ancestors, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God by eating from the forbidden tree. Recognize that this act would not have taken place without there first being the attitude of rebellion against God and the decision made for the self to be in control; "to have it my way."

There are stories in the Bible called "parables:" earthly stories with a "moral" and a spiritual meaning. Imagine what it was like for the Prodigal Son. He was much like us in that he wanted to be in control of his own life. So he asked for, and received, his inheritance to underwrite his move to the city to start life on his own. Off he goes to the big city and engages in (what the Bible calls) "riotous living." He lived it up until the great economic depression (the Bible calls it a famine) came along, and the next thing he knew he had used up his resources. And there was no one to help him. (Isn't that just like "friends;" while you have plenty they are with you, but where are they when you are in need?) So he took a job (as we call it) 'slopping the hogs.' (Irony isn't it; he's not "living high off the hog" now, is he?) This was an insult to a Jewish boy. He did not even have sustenance as good as the hogs. He decided that since the servants of his father were living better than he, he would

go home and hire on as a servant to his father. He has suffered abandonment, rejection, humiliation, failure, depression, and who knows what else, and now he will add embarrassment as he goes crawling home to his father begging for a job.

Does any of this look like or sound like your experience? It is at this point that many turn to addictions, suicide, or insanity to cope with the pain of their predicament. What choices have you made? Some turn to partying, but the parties lead to other behaviors that lead to further problems. Sooner or later, the party is over, then what? The Prodigal Son just wanted to be home. He didn't think he deserved to return to his earlier status as a son because his sins were so great. He hoped merely to be (like) one of his father's hired servants. Maybe you're like that; you're just glad to be alive and able to get to a meeting. You'd like to simply be quiet and belong.

The Prodigal Son's father, however, rushed out to meet him (and don't miss this fine point: The Bible says that while he {the son} was yet *a long way off* {get those words} his father saw him {the father was looking and longing for his 'lost son'} and was filled with compassion. The father *ran* in view of the village, and threw his arms around his neck and kissed him to accept him fully and prepared a great feast. That is our picture of God's response to us. He is expectantly watching for your return.

There is great rejoicing when we come to or come back to our Heavenly Father. We in LIFE Recovery want to be imitators of God, "just like little children." It may feel like you're a little boy, or girl, who has just come on the bus or into the lunchroom or onto the playground, and you may be expecting to be rejected or at least ignored. Instead, someone rushes over to greet you! All of us have been where you've been. We understand your pain and your fears. We're glad you've come. God prepares hospitality like a feast. We can't prepare a literal great feast, but we can go to coffee later.

Many of our stories are very much like that of the Prodigal Son, and yet each will be very different in detail according to the experiences of our life's journey. Our results will depend on our choice to either face or hide from our past, present, and *expected* future consequences of our dependencies. For some, the pain of our past is more than we are equipped to manage successfully, so we hide from the pain of life we experience in the present. Trauma is a term we apply to painful experiences that overwhelm our physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual resources. **Acute** trauma is brief, less than four weeks, and we are able to regain our physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual 'footing' and return to a healthy life-style within a brief period of time. When the traumatic event, or events, persists beyond four weeks, we begin our search for relief from sources outside of ourselves, resorting to illicit drugs, alcohol, gambling, relationships, sex, work, or some other activity in which we can "lose ourselves" and "avoid the pain of living."

Eventually we find ourselves trapped in routine behaviors that are no longer working for us. It is for such a person that LIFE Recovery was given its vision and mission; to develop resources that help you find peace, and assist you with regaining "your footing" so as to return "home" to healthy living; physically, mentally and emotionally, and, most of all, spiritually ("What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own soul?" Matthew 16:26).



In a book entitled, *Ghosts from the Nursery*, the authors present extensive insight into the effects of early trauma experiences (physical, emotional, environmental) upon early development (the first 33 months – gestation to age 2) that have lifelong consequences, and to which we react (note that word as compared to “respond”) without conscious awareness. Another purpose for the first assignment exercise is to *begin* processing the awareness of our root issues, family systems or family of origin work, to answer the question, “Why do I do the things I do?”

This impact on our present behaviors makes it necessary to take a deep look at your history and answer the question, “How did I get here?” If you were taking a long road trip and found yourself “lost,” wouldn’t it be prudent to first identify where you are and where you want to go, as well as how you got lost so you could plan an effective and efficient correction to your travel plans? We need to apply the same principle in planning our journey to healthier living.

We have to come to terms with the pain in our lives. We admit the pain to ourselves first, then admit our pain to God and then admit our pain to others. Sharing your pain with others is possibly the most difficult of all, but it is in safe relationships where we begin to heal and learn to speak the truth that our lives have become unmanageable.

Your first assignment is simply to get honest with yourself. We know that the greatest enemy of our being open and honest is silence; you have been deceived to think that silence has been your friend in the sense that your silence has enabled you to continue in your addiction to the behavioral choices that you have continually made to ease the pain of life. We also know how carefully you’ve guarded the secrets of your dependencies, habits, or behaviors. It’s hard to imagine letting your secrets out. These were your comfort, safety, retreat and reward. There are thoughts in your mind telling you, “No! You can’t talk about that. Someone will go running and screaming out of the room!” Or “You did what?” and turn away from you. We encourage you to confront those demons: those voices that have kept you shackled in your pain for too long.

We know your fears of shame and rejection because we are on a similar journey of learning to live in freedom every day. We want you to tell us how bad your pain and acting out got and what it was like to feel powerless over your life. Chances are that others in your group have done some of the same things, had some of the same feelings. There is nothing, certainly no behavior or habit, that separates you from the love of God. (See Romans 8:35) No matter what you’ve thought or what you’ve done, it’s time to come home to the heavenly Father who loves you and is longing for your freedom; He is waiting for you. (John 8:36: “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” Romans 8:2: “. . .the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free. . .”)

The assignment that you are about to undertake will take great courage. It will seem to be a risk and a challenge. Don’t turn back now. Keep putting one foot in front of the other and head for home. The freedom you will experience in being in real community is worth all it will take to get there. (“Being confident of this very thing, that He Who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6) Trust in Him to rush out to meet you and guide you when the going gets tough. He will provide for you, strengthen you, and welcome you home! He will work through your LIFE Recovery

Group when and if you let Him. You need the group, and the group needs you. It is in the safety of a LIFE Recovery Group that you can find your voice and learn to speak truth without fear. Welcome, you're home!

Assignment One - Admitting Our True Condition

Thus the journey begins. Every journey has a beginning. This one starts with identifying the condition we find ourselves in, developing some insight as to how we got here, affirming our wish to leave while seeing hindrances to our ability to leave, and focusing on the destination we wish to achieve. As you work your way through the list patterns will likely emerge suggesting that these behaviors have more control over you than you have over them, and your life has become un-manageable.

On the next page unhealthy behaviors have been variously divided into categories and groups of categories. As you look at these, note the behaviors that you have struggled with and to what degree, even if you were only involved with a particular behavior once. Try to remember how many times you have done each of these. You may have to estimate. No one remembers, for example, how many times they have masturbated or how many times they've spent money compulsively. State how often this most recently took place (once a day or more, once a week, and so on). Remember, not all use is abuse and not all abuse is dependency; our motivation is key to freedom. *Are we in the behavior to change our mood, relieve stress or prove our value?*

*Identify methods of coping to change mood, relieve stress or prove value.**Began**How Often***Body Image***Sports**Fitness**Plastic Surgery***Possessions***Spending**Hoarding**Stealing***Performance – Workaholism***Career**Talent**Ministry**Acts of Service***Entertainment***Gaming**Gambling**Movies**Soaps**TV**Internet**Social websites, Facebook etc.**Novels (Romance or otherwise)***Drugs (Legal or Illegal)****Alcohol****Sex***Fantasy**Romance Obsession (Emotional Affairs, Online Stalking via Facebook etc.)**Exhibitionism / Voyeurism / Frotteurism (non-consensual rubbing)**Masturbation**Affairs, Prostitution, Strip Clubs**Pornography**Anonymous Sex (name of the sexual partner is not known)**Cyber Sex (Phone sex, Sexting, Virtual Sex-Digital/Electronic Experience)**Gaming with Sexual or Violent Stimuli, Anime (see Gaming in Definitions)**Same Sex Attraction**Offending (Rape, Incest, Child Molestation)**Bestiality**Sexual Anorexia***Food (Bulimia, Anorexia, Bingeing, Night Eating)****Relationships***Dating**Marriage**Children**Family**Friends*

Journaling Exercise: Your Timeline History

The purpose of this exercise is to eventually identify core beliefs that have developed over your lifespan; these core beliefs are foundational to decision-making processes and perceptions of your life experience and the behaviors that you have engaged in when having to manage painful emotions. I would suggest the use of a loose-leaf binder so that your history can be edited as you research among family members the time frames for which you have no recall. This is merely a suggestion; use a resource that will create the greatest comfort and ease for you. Also, this is not an overnight or one-sitting experience. Pace yourself, and take your time. Let this experience 'unfold,' not 'blow up in your face.'

To begin, describe your earliest life experience. (Age, What happened? with whom?)

Identify feelings associated with this experience (both while in the experience and, in a separate paragraph or paragraphs, your current emotional state as you reflect on the experience about which you are writing).

What did you do about those feelings during this experience about which you are writing?

What do you want to do about those feelings right now?

Journal the next experience that you can recall, using the above format.

Continue building your timeline, as you are able. If this becomes overwhelming – STOP. Discuss your experience with a counselor or with a trusted friend. This is not intended to be a re-traumatizing event.



Journaling Exercise: Your Consequences

When our attempts to fix our own problems our way begin to create problems of their own, we call these additional problems **negative consequences**. But sometimes we experience positive consequences from fixing our problems our own way, too. I invite you to be honest with yourself about the benefits of some of your negative behaviors; after all, the benefits were the ‘rationale’ you used to continue in these behaviors. Ultimately, you will need to say, “Goodbye” to these old coping behaviors. This, of course, will likely add yet another painful experience to your lifetime experiences. But just like the person who has surgery to remove a cancer, we understand that things sometimes get worse before they get better.

Positive benefits of negative behaviors:

Consider the following areas of your life:

Physical	Spiritual (your relationship with God)	Legal
Emotional (feelings)	Family	Financial
Mental (thinking)	Social	Vocational

Negative consequences of negative behaviors:

Consider the following areas of your life:

Physical	Spiritual (your relationship with God)	Legal
Emotional (feelings)	Family	Financial
Mental (thinking)	Social	Vocational