



I CHOOSE HOPE

Curriculum for Support Groups From Fresh Hope for Mental Health

A 14-Week Journey Through the
7 Principles of Recovery from Fresh Hope for Mental Health



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FRESH HOPE FOR MENTAL HEALTH
INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM HANDOUT

Welcome to the 7 Principles of Recovery

WHAT IS THIS CURRICULUM?

This is a 14-week journey through Fresh Hope's 7 Principles of Recovery. Each principle takes two weeks: the first to learn, the second to delve deeper and reflect.

It is not a class. It is a path to healing where we share experiences, support one another, and discover that recovery is possible.

HOW WILL IT HELP YOU?

This curriculum will help you:

- **Accept** your diagnosis and seek help without shame
- **Heal relationships** broken by the impact of the disorder
- **Live with purpose** despite your limitations
- **Choose hope** every day, no matter how you feel
- **Take active control** of your recovery
- **Find your identity** beyond the diagnosis
- **Redeem your pain** by serving others

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each principle includes:

WEEK 1: You watch Samantha's video, summarize the key points, and we discuss them together **WEEK 2:** We review the principle, delve deeper into the conversation, and you complete a personal activity

All in a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental environment.

WHY IS REGULAR ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?

Recovery isn't an event. It's a process. When you attend regularly:

- ✓ **You build community** — You need others, and others need you
- ✓ **You develop consistency** — Healing happens through regular practice
- ✓ **You deepen the process** — Each week builds on the last
- ✓ **You take responsibility** — Your commitment to the group reinforces your commitment to yourself
- ✓ **You set an example** — Your presence encourages others to keep going

If you skip weeks, you lose the thread and the opportunity for deep healing. However, if for any reason beyond your control you miss a session, contact your Facilitator to see what options they can offer to help you catch up. *"I Choose Hope" sessions are not recorded for the sake of participant confidentiality.*

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU:

- A SAFE space where you can be honest
- Absolute CONFIDENTIALITY
- NO JUDGMENT of any kind
- A COMMUNITY that cares for one another
- HOPE based on faith in Jesus

YOUR COMMITMENT:

- **Attend regularly** — Make this a priority
- **Participate honestly** — Share what you need
- **Respect confidentiality** — What is said here stays here
- **Be punctual** — Others depend on you

- **Open your heart** — Allow the process to transform you

WHAT TO EXPECT?

This is where REAL HEALING happens:

In small groups where we see each other, listen to each other, and validate each other. In deep conversations about faith, hope, and recovery. In moments when someone understands EXACTLY what you're going through. In self-discoveries that change your perspective.

THIS IS A 14-WEEK JOURNEY.

We ask that **you commit fully** to these 14 weeks.

Recovery isn't quick, but it is POSSIBLE.

And you are not alone.

At the end of the 14 weeks, we'll celebrate with the "Bracelet Ceremony." You can order your "I Choose Hope" bracelet in the Fresh Hope Store. Order it ahead of time!

Welcome. We're glad you're here.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

STRUCTURE OF EACH SESSION

EACH PRINCIPLE = 2 SESSIONS

- Session 1 (Part 1): Introduction to the Principle
- Session 2 (Part 2): Deepening and Application

SESSION PART 1 - Structure and Content		
Moment	Duration	Content and Activities
1. Welcome and Opening Prayer	5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator welcomes the group warmly • Short and meaningful opening prayer
2. Check-in and Community Norms	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood Level (1-5): 1=Very sad → 5=Feeling well • Hope Tank (Empty or full?) • Has it changed since last week? • Read together the 4 Community Norms • Confirmation: everyone in agreement
3. Video and Introduction to the Principle	15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the Principle video (YouTube) • Facilitator briefly explains the Principle • Invite initial questions from the group
4. Section A: People with Mental Health Challenges	15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 questions for those LIVING the diagnosis • Listen without judgment • Always validate • Do NOT give advice • Allow reflective silence • Note key stories for Session 2
5. Section B: For Loved Ones (Supporters)	15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 DIFFERENT questions for supporters • Support perspective, not patient perspective • Validate the unique and difficult role • Listen without rescuing or taking responsibility
6. Closing Prayer and Invitation	5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short prayer connected to the Principle • Invite reflection during the week • Anticipate next Session 2 (Part 2)
TOTAL: ~75 minutes		

SESSION PART 2 - Structure and Content

Moment	Duration	Content and Activities
1. Welcome and Opening Prayer	5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to the continuation of the Principle • Short and reflective prayer
2. Check-in and Norms (Reminder)	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QUICK Check-in: Mood Level (1-5) • Hope Tank (Empty or full?) • Has it changed since Session 1 (last week)? • Briefly remind the Community Norms (no full read) • Quick confirmation of agreement
3. Read the Complete Principle	5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Principle in its ENTIRETY • Recall the supporting Bible verse • Connect with what was seen in Session 1
4. Section A: Deep Dive (People with Challenge)	17 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue PENDING questions from Session 1 • Deepen exploration of specific Principle topics • Explore lies vs. truths the person believes • Listen to deeper stories and experiences
5. Section B: Deep Dive (Loved Ones)	17 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue PENDING questions from Session 1 • Their perspective on how the Principle affects them • Validate their experience as supporters • Explore personal lies they believe
6. Optional Activity (Personal)	5-6 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal declaration (write or share verbally) • Example: 'I accept that... and I choose...' • Celebrate EACH personal declaration with validation
7. Closing Prayer	3 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer connected to the Principle and progress • Invitation to the next Principle (Weeks 3-4)

Group Settings

◆ ONLY for people facing challenges

- Skip Section B entirely
- Extend Section A to 30–35 minutes
- You can ask 4–5 questions instead of 3–4

◆ ONLY loved ones

- Skip Section A entirely
- Extend Section B to 30–35 minutes
- You can ask 4–5 questions

◆ MIXED GROUP (both present)

- Read both sections within the allotted time
- Make space for both perspectives
- Mutual validation: "Ah, so that's how it is for you from that perspective"

VIDEOS BY PRINCIPLE

Principle	Session	Video
I – Acceptance	Session 1	https://youtu.be/Re9Fp5l0gZQ?si=J5fR41660XvGR44Y
II – Relationships	Session 3	https://youtu.be/YElonpU1wmA?si=hfW0zRJ-K7lI0yVr
III - Pushing Through	Session 5	https://youtu.be/QK7MyxgGvfw?si=H5zinCY7A0v9BO8A
IV – Hope	Session 7	https://youtu.be/eE1bCj13DA8?si=iRdXHSvpNuy1CgR2
V - Medicine and More	Session 9	https://youtu.be/AxuNdCY6gwA?si=F6o78bRFuSLHdhuT
VI – Identity	Session 11	https://youtu.be/WaOkJ66n3bU?si=SORP84dsgor5CVwJ
VII – Giving	Session 13	https://youtu.be/KXzhVX8_-Us?si=euLMD_Gid6dTm5_p

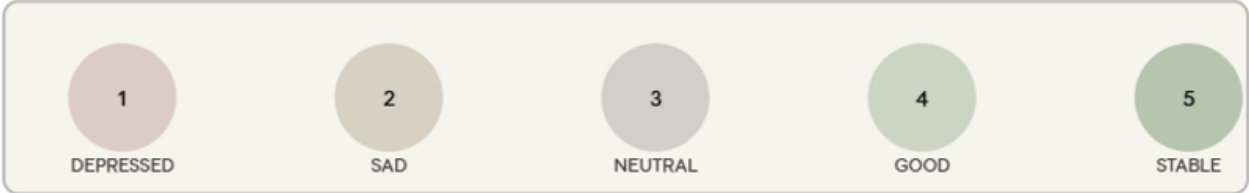
THE 4 COMMUNITY GUIDELINES (READ ALWAYS)

1. **CONFIDENTIALITY** "What is said here stays here" → Protects everyone → Allows for vulnerability
2. **WE DON'T GIVE ADVICE** "We listen without judging. We share from our own experience" → Your role: listen, validate, ask questions → NO: "You should...", "What you need is..." → YES: "I experienced...", "Tell me more?"
3. **WE ARE MUTUAL SUPPORT, NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS** "If you need professional help, we'll seek it out too" → A complement, not a substitute → Clear referrals if necessary
4. **LANGUAGE OF HOPE** "We use language of hope. We don't just vent; we seek to move forward" → Validate the pain AND believe in the possibility → Avoid triggering details for others → "That's difficult. And it's possible."

CHECK-IN FORMAT

CHECK-IN: HOW AM I TODAY?

1. MOOD LEVEL



2. HOPE TANK



- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- Each person says their Mood Level number (1-5)
 - Then indicates where their Hope Tank is (point at screen or say the percentage)
 - Facilitator notes changes from session to session to track progress

I CHOOSE HOPE

Your Journey Begins Here

ORDER YOUR BRACELET TODAY

Welcome to the I Choose Hope 14-Week Journey!

Over the next 14 weeks, you will walk through Fresh Hope's 7 Principles of Recovery. You will learn, grow, support one another, and discover that with Jesus, recovery is possible.

At the end of Week 14, we will celebrate together in a special Bracelet Ceremony on Zoom. In this sacred moment, you will put on your "I Choose Hope" bracelet—a tangible symbol of your commitment to hope and healing.

To ensure your bracelet arrives in time for this celebration, we ask that you **ORDER IT NOW**.

HOW TO ORDER YOUR BRACELET

Step 1: Visit the Fresh Hope Store

Go to: https://freshhope.us/product-category/_promotionals/

Step 2: Select Your Bracelet

Look for the "I Choose Hope" bracelet. It is engraved with "I Choose Hope" on the surface.

Step 3: Complete Your Order

Add to cart and checkout. Standard shipping typically takes 2-3 weeks.

Step 4: Keep Your Receipt

Save your order confirmation. You will receive your bracelet before Week 14.

WHY ORDER NOW?

- ✓ Ensures your bracelet arrives by Week 14
- ✓ Shows your commitment to this 14-week journey
- ✓ Gives you a tangible reminder of your choice
- ✓ Allows you to participate fully in the Bracelet Ceremony
- ✓ Creates accountability and celebration with your group

WHAT THE BRACELET MEANS

When you wear your "I Choose Hope" bracelet, you are declaring:

"I choose to walk this path of recovery.

I choose to show up, week after week.

I choose to open my heart to healing.

I choose to support my community.

I choose hope as I will learn it in each of the 7 recovery principles.

I choose hope—every single day."

The bracelet is not just jewelry. It is a declaration. It is a prayer. It is a commitment you make to yourself and to God.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about ordering, sizing, or anything else, please reach out to info@freshhope.us

We are so honored to walk this 14-week journey with you.

Let's choose hope together.

DIFFICULT MOMENTS: HOW TO RESPOND

SOMEONE BREAKS DOWN EMOTIONALLY

- Pause the group
- Offer tissues, water (in-person)
- Approach them, validate: "It's okay. We're here"
- DO NOT try to "fix it"
- Ask: "Do you need a minute?"

SOMEONE OFFERS ADVICE

- Intervene gently
- "I appreciate your concern. At Fresh Hope, we share from our own experience."
- Don't embarrass them; it's a good heart, just poor technique
- Redirect: "What was that experience like for you?"

SOMEONE IS SUFFERING IN SILENCE

- After the group session, approach them
- Privately: "I noticed you were quiet. Are you okay?"
- Listen
- Offer follow-up

SOMEONE NEEDS PROFESSIONAL HELP

- Fresh Hope is NOT a substitute for therapy
- If someone mentions a crisis: "That sounds serious. Are you seeing a professional?"
- Have crisis hotlines, local resources, and Christian psychologists on hand
- Refer with compassion: "I think a professional could help you"

CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC (POLITICS, RELIGION, DIVISIVE)

- Validate the person who brought it up
- Gently redirect: “That’s important. Today we’re focusing on [Principle]”
- This is not the place for debates
- You can talk about it later in private if it’s relevant

KEY PHRASES THAT WORK

To validate:

- "Thank you for sharing something so vulnerable"
- "That must have been very difficult"
- "Your story matters. And many people feel the same way"
- "You're not alone in this"

To dig deeper:

- "Tell me more about that"
- "How did that make you feel?"
- "What happened next?"
- "Has anyone else seen this differently?"

To redirect with love:

- "That's important. Today we're focusing on..."
- "I appreciate that. How does that connect to the Principle?"
- "Let's save that for another time. Let's continue with..."

To wrap up a question:

- "Does anyone else want to share before we move on?"
- "What a powerful answer. Thank you."

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

- ◆ LISTEN without offering solutions
- ◆ VALIDATE without judging
- ◆ BELIEVE in hope without denying the pain
- ◆ RESPECT confidentiality as sacred
- ◆ REMEMBER: You are not a therapist; you are a companion on the journey

"Who we see here remains confidential. What is said here stays here. We do not judge, nor do we lecture.
We listen, share, and grow."

SESSION 1 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE I "ACCEPTANCE"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Good morning/afternoon. Welcome to Fresh Hope. We're glad you're here. This is a safe space where we all share the same reality: mental health affects us. Some of us experience this directly, others by supporting a loved one. Whatever your situation, you are welcome here.

Let's begin with a prayer."

Dear Father, we thank you for this space. Help us to listen with open hearts, to speak honestly, and to remember that we are not alone. May this session be a place of hope and connection. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND READING OF GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Before we begin, we'll do a brief check-in. Let's go around the circle. If you'd like, you can share your name and how you're feeling today using the format. It's not mandatory; you can skip it."

[After the check-in]

"Now, let's read our Community Guidelines together. These guidelines protect everyone here."

Read aloud:

◆ CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said here stays here. This protects everyone.

◆ WE DON'T GIVE ADVICE: We listen without judging. We share from our own experience, not as experts.

◆ WE ARE MUTUAL SUPPORT, not a substitute for professionals: If you need professional help, we'll seek it out too.

◆ WE TAKE CARE OF OUR RECOVERY AND THAT OF OTHERS: We use hopeful language. We don't just vent; we seek to move forward. We avoid details that might be triggers for others.

INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE I (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "Today we begin with PRINCIPLE I: ACCEPTANCE. This is the first step in recovery.

Principle I goes like this:

For people with a mental health challenge: My life is affected by a mental health challenge and can become unmanageable and hopeless, especially if ignored or untreated. Therefore, I choose the help and support of others to overcome the struggles and find more joy in life.

For loved ones: My loved one's mental health challenge has also left me feeling helpless and hopeless. Therefore, I choose the help of others in learning about the disorder and choosing healthy boundaries for myself.

Together: Together, we have understanding. We remind each other of the Lord's love, and that He alone can do all things. He is the source of our hope, and in Him we can overcome all things.

'I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength.' — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

Let's watch a video that will introduce this topic. Afterward, we'll talk together about what it means to accept our reality."

<https://youtu.be/Re9Fp5I0gZQ?si=J5fR41660XvGR44Y>

After the video, facilitator: "Principle I talks about how our lives can become unmanageable when we ignore or leave our mental health challenges untreated. Acceptance is not resignation. It is acknowledging reality and choosing to seek help.

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: ACCEPTANCE
- Accepting the diagnosis is the first step toward seeking help
- Ways people DENY their diagnosis:
 - Over-spiritualizing: believing that faith will completely eliminate the problem
 - Self-stigma: "I'm not crazy," "I don't need help," "I'm not that bad"
 - Not prioritizing recovery: saying you have the diagnosis but not making changes
 - Ignoring symptoms: not recognizing or identifying what is happening
 - Blaming others: "It's my parents," "It's the medication," etc.
- The diagnostic process can be long and frustrating

- It is important to apply FILTERS to distinguish real causes:
 - Spiritual - Christian: Do I need forgiveness? Do I need to confess to God?
 - Physical: Hormones, thyroid, diet, exercise, neurotransmitters?
 - Emotional: My relationships?
 - Mental: My thoughts?
- There is usually a MIX of factors, not a single cause
- You must arm yourself with PATIENCE

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those of you living directly with a mental health challenge, let's explore this together."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was the most important thing you learned from this video about acceptance?"
2. "How do you distinguish between acceptance and resignation in your own life?"
3. "Is there any form of denial that isn't on the list but that you experience?"
 - Over-spiritualizing
 - Stigma
 - Not prioritizing recovery
 - Not knowing or not acknowledging
 - Blame-shifting
4. "Is there anyone or anything in your faith that has made acceptance difficult?"

[Facilitator: Validate, listen, allow for silence. Do not give advice.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those accompanying a loved one, there is a different but equally important perspective."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was the most important thing you learned from this chapter about acceptance—from the perspective of a loved one?"
2. "The beginning mentions that the loved one may go into denial. What about YOU? Have you experienced denial regarding your loved one's challenge?
 - Hopes that it would 'just go away'?
 - Downplaying how serious it is?
 - Shame or stigma that makes you not want to 'see it'?"
3. "When was the moment you had to ACCEPT the reality of their diagnosis?"

4. "Has it been easy or difficult to accept that this is a long-term reality?"

[Facilitator: Validate, listen. Remember that your loved one's acceptance is also a process.]

CLOSING PRAYER AND INVITATION (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Before we finish, let's close with a brief prayer."

Lord, we thank you for this space to listen. Help us to accept our reality with courage and hope. Remind us that we are not alone. In your name. Amen.

"In the next session, we will continue with PART 2 of Principle I, where we will delve deeper. We encourage you to reflect this week on what acceptance means in your own story.

We look forward to seeing you next time!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT: "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 1

Principle I reads as follows:

For people with a mental health challenge: My life is affected by a mental health challenge and can become unmanageable and hopeless, especially if ignored or untreated. Therefore, I choose the help and support of others to overcome the struggles and find more joy in life.

For loved ones: My loved one's mental health challenge has also left me feeling helpless and hopeless. Therefore, I choose the help of others in learning about the disorder and choosing healthy boundaries for myself.

Together: Together, we have understanding. We remind each other of the Lord's love, and that He alone can do all things. He is the source of our hope, and in Him we can overcome all things.

'I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength.' — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: ACCEPTANCE
- Accepting the diagnosis is the first step toward seeking help
- Ways people DENY their diagnosis:
 - Over-spiritualizing: believing that faith will completely eliminate the problem
 - Self-stigma: "I'm not crazy," "I don't need help," "I'm not that bad"
 - Not prioritizing recovery: saying you have the diagnosis but not making changes
 - Ignoring symptoms: not recognizing or identifying what is happening
 - Blaming others: "It's my parents," "It's the medication," etc.
- The diagnostic process can be long and frustrating
- It is important to apply FILTERS to distinguish real causes:
 - Spiritual - Christian: Do I need forgiveness? Do I need to confess to God?
 - Physical: Hormones, thyroid, diet, exercise, neurotransmitters?
 - Emotional: My relationships?
 - Mental: My thoughts?
- There is usually a MIX of factors, not a single cause
- You must arm yourself with PATIENCE

SESSION 2 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE I "ACCEPTANCE"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome back. We're glad to see you here. We're continuing with Principle I: Acceptance. Today we're going to delve deeper into what we've already started."

[Short prayer]

Father, guide our conversations today. Open our hearts to truth and hope. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND RULES REMINDER (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "We'll do a brief check-in. You can share your name and how you arrived today, using the format."

[After the check-in]

"Let's review our Guidelines: Confidentiality, no advice, we support one another, and we use hopeful language. Does everyone agree?"

READING OF PRINCIPLE I (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle I to refresh our memories. Then we'll continue with the conversations we left pending."

PRINCIPLE I

For people with mental health challenges: My life is affected by a mental health issue and can become unmanageable and hopeless, especially if I ignore it or leave it untreated. Therefore, I choose the help and support of others to overcome my struggles and find more joy in life.

For loved ones: My loved one's mental health challenge has also left me feeling helpless and hopeless. Therefore, I choose the help of others to learn about the disorder and set healthy boundaries for myself.

Together: Together, we have understanding. We remind one another of the Lord's love, and that only He can do all things. He is the Source of our hope, and in Him we can overcome all things.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is ACCEPTANCE
- Common forms of DENIAL you'll see in the group:
 - Self-stigma ("I'm not that bad")
 - Not prioritizing recovery (saying but not doing)
 - Blaming others instead of accepting responsibility

- FILTERS help identify the true cause: ◦ Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, Mental
- There are usually MULTIPLE factors, not just one
- PRACTICAL TIP: Be patient with those who deny their diagnosis

"Now let's continue our conversation."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "We'll continue with the perspective of those who live directly with the challenge."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Samantha mentions four filters: Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, and Mental. In your case, which of these is most neglected?"
2. "Have you considered that your situation is a 'combination of factors' rather than a single cause?"
3. "What was your 'moment of acceptance'?"
4. "Who or what facilitated it?"

[Facilitator: Listen to the stories. Validate. Allow for silence.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For our loved ones, we continue to reflect on acceptance from their perspective."

QUESTIONS:

1. "The Principle mentions 4 filters: Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, and Mental. As a loved one, which of THESE is most neglected IN YOU?"
2. "Do you understand that their diagnosis does not mean you MUST sacrifice your own stability?"
3. "When you accept your loved one's diagnosis, what are you really accepting?
 - That it's not 'your fault'?
 - That you can't 'fix it'?
 - That they need professional help?
 - That the relationship will be different?"
4. "Has there been anyone whose words or actions helped you accept this reality?"

[Facilitator: Validate the loved one's acceptance process as well.]

OPTIONAL CLOSING ACTIVITY CAN BE ASSIGNED AS HOMEWORK. HAND OUT THE PERSONAL HANDOUT.

(5-6 minutes)

Facilitator: "If anyone would like to share a brief personal statement of acceptance, they may do so now. This is not mandatory."

[Example: "I accept that I have been diagnosed with depression. Therefore, I choose to seek professional help."]

[Facilitator: Celebrate and validate each statement.]

CLOSING PRAYER AND INVITATION (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Thank you, Father, for helping us accept our reality. May this acceptance lead us to action, hope, and growth. Sustain us in difficult days. Amen.

"In the next session, we will address PRINCIPLE II: RELATIONSHIPS. We will explore how our challenges affect our relationships and how to heal them.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 2.

PRINCIPLE 1: ACCEPTANCE

My Personal Statement of Acceptance

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. If you wish, you can write a brief personal statement of acceptance. You are not required to share it with the group, but writing it can be an important step in your recovery process.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE?

It is a short statement in which you acknowledge your diagnosis and your decision to seek help. It doesn't need to be perfect—just sincere.

FORMAT:

You can use this structure:

"I accept that _____ [your diagnosis or situation]

Therefore, I choose _____ [the help or action you will seek]."

MY PERSONAL STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE

(Write in the space below)

I accept that _____

Therefore, I choose _____

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- This statement is PRIVATE. You don't have to share it if you don't want to.
- If you decide to share it with the group, do so in your own words.
- There is no "right" or "wrong" answer.
- You can keep this statement and review it whenever you need to remind yourself of your commitment to recovery.
- If this activity brings up strong emotions, that's okay. It's a sign that the process is working.

IF YOU WISH TO SHARE:

If you want to share your statement with the group during the closing activity, raise your hand. The facilitator will celebrate your courage and validate your statement.

REMEMBER:

Acceptance is the first step toward recovery. By accepting your diagnosis and choosing to seek help, you are already on the path to change.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

SESSION 3 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE II "RELATIONSHIPS"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. Today we begin PRINCIPLE II: RELATIONSHIPS. This principle touches on something profound: how our mental health challenges affect the people we love and how to heal those relationships."

[Prayer]

Lord, touch our hearts today. Help us to speak with truth and compassion. Heal broken relationships. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Quick check-in: please share your name and how you're doing today."

[After the check-in]

"Let's review our Guidelines: Confidentiality, no advice, mutual support, language of hope."

VIDEO AND INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE II (15 minutes)

In this session, we're going to start talking about Principle II. It goes like this:

PRINCIPLE II

For people with mental health challenges: My mental health challenge has also affected my relationships and the lives of those around me. Therefore, I choose to overcome for both my own good, and the good of those who love me.

For loved ones: I haven't always responded to my loved one's mental health issue in ways that were good for the relationship. Therefore, I choose to learn better ways to communicate with, support, and encourage my loved one.

Together: Together, we commit to speaking the truth in love, healing broken relationships and viewing each other as the Lord views us.

'So let's pursue those things which bring peace and which are good for each other.' — Romans 14:19"

Facilitator: "Let's watch the video introducing Principle II: Relationships."

[Watch video: <https://youtu.be/YElonpU1wmA?si=hfW0zRJ-K7II0yVr>]

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: RELATIONSHIPS
- Mental health disorders significantly impact relationships
- Problem behaviors include: ◦ Irritability and isolation ◦ Excessive sensitivity to rejection ◦ Last-minute cancellation of commitments ◦ Impulsive behaviors ◦ Compulsive spending, hypersexuality, infidelity
- PART 1: Personal Responsibility in Relationships ◦ Learning to offer sincere apologies (not excuses) ◦ The key phrase: "I'm sorry," not "I'm sorry BUT I have a diagnosis" ◦ Give an explanation, not an excuse
- PART 2: Motivation for Recovery ◦ Challenge the thought: "My family would be better off without me" ◦ Reframe: "My family needs me; that motivates me to recover" ◦ Recovery is not an excuse to give up, but a reason to keep going

"This principle discusses how our diagnosis has damaged relationships and how we can repair that damage. But it also discusses how, as loved ones, our responses to the situation affect the relationship.

The truth is that BOTH sides need to take responsibility and communicate honestly."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with the diagnosis, let's explore how it has affected our relationships."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What resonated with you in this chapter about relationships?"
2. "Samantha talks about 'giving in to the temptation: blaming the diagnosis.' Do you recognize that in yourself?"
3. "Are there specific behaviors during your symptoms that have hurt others?"
4. "What is the difference Samantha makes between 'explanation' and 'excuse'? Can you notice that difference in your own situations?"

[Facilitator: Listen with compassion. Acknowledge the difficulty of taking responsibility.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: “For our loved ones, the question is different: how YOU have responded to the mental health situation of the person you love.”

QUESTIONS:

1. “What resonated with you in this chapter about relationships—from the perspective of a loved one?”
2. “The Principle talks about how you respond to your loved one’s mental health situation. Have there been times when your response wasn’t the best?”
3. “Have you used the diagnosis as an excuse for your own behavior? Or the opposite—have you blamed the diagnosis entirely?”
4. “Are there specific behaviors of YOURS during your loved one’s episodes that you later regret?”

[Facilitator: Acknowledge the vulnerability of admitting this. There is no blame here; there is learning.]

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: “Let’s close with a prayer.”

Father, thank you for the opportunity to take responsibility in our relationships. Help us to be people who make amends, who listen, who love with truth. Amen.

“Next week, in PART 2 of Principle II, we’ll continue to delve deeper into how to heal our relationships.

We look forward to seeing you!”

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 3.

PRINCIPLE II

For people with mental health challenges: My mental health challenge has also affected my relationships and the lives of those around me. Therefore, I choose to overcome for both my own good, and the good of those who love me.

For loved ones: I haven't always responded to my loved one's mental health issue in ways that were good for the relationship. Therefore, I choose to learn better ways to communicate with, support, and encourage my loved one.

Together: Together, we commit to speaking the truth in love, healing broken relationships and viewing each other as the Lord views us.

'So let's pursue those things which bring peace and which are good for each other.' — Romans 14:19"

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: RELATIONSHIPS
- Mental health disorders significantly impact relationships
- Problematic behaviors include: ◦ Irritability and isolation ◦ Excessive sensitivity to rejection ◦ Last-minute cancellation of commitments ◦ Impulsive behaviors ◦ Compulsive spending, hypersexuality, infidelity
- PART 1: Personal Responsibility in Relationships ◦ Learning to offer sincere apologies (not excuses) ◦ The key phrase: "I'm sorry," not "I'm sorry BUT I have a diagnosis" ◦ Give an explanation, not an excuse
- PART 2: Motivation for Recovery ◦ Fight the thought: "My family would be better off without me" ◦ Reframe: "My family needs me; that motivates me to recover" ◦ Recovery is not an excuse to give up, but a reason to keep going

SESSION 4 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE II "RELATIONSHIPS"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. We'll continue with Principle II: Relationships. Today we're going to delve even deeper into how to heal damaged relationships."

[Short prayer]

Lord, help us to speak the truth in love. May our words heal, and may our actions restore. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Quick check-in: name and how you're feeling."

[After]

"Let's remember: Confidentiality, no advice, mutual support, hope in our language."

READING OF PRINCIPLE II (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle II to remind us where we are."

PRINCIPLE II

For people with mental health challenges: My mental health challenge has also affected my relationships and the lives of those around me. Therefore, I choose to overcome for both my own good, and the good of those who love me.

For loved ones: I haven't always responded to my loved one's mental health issue in ways that were good for the relationship. Therefore, I choose to learn better ways to communicate with, support, and encourage my loved one.

Together: Together, we commit to speaking the truth in love, healing broken relationships and viewing each other as the Lord views us.

'So let's pursue those things which bring peace and which are good for each other!' — Romans 14:19"

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is RELATIONSHIPS
- Two key areas of Principle 2:
 - 1. Personal responsibility: Ask for sincere forgiveness without excuses—Give an explanation, not an excuse
 - 2. Relational motivation: My family needs me—That motivates my recovery
- Remember: the diagnosis explains but does not excuse the behaviors

We continue our conversation on how to heal relationships."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "We continue with those living with the diagnosis. Today we delve deeper into the lies we believe about our relationships."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Are there relationships that broke down because you didn't take responsibility? Is it possible to repair them now?"
2. "Samantha talks about the devastating lie: 'My family would be better off without me.' Have you had this thought?"
3. "When does this thought arise? During depressive episodes, after conflicts, when you feel useless?"
4. "Samantha changed her thought: 'My children deserve a mother who fights for her recovery.' What would your version of this be?"

[Facilitator: Listen to the difficult stories. Acknowledge that these lies are real, but they are not true.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you, loved ones, we will now delve into the lies THAT YOU believe about your role."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What is the devastating lie that YOU believe?"
 - 'I should be able to fix this'
 - 'If I really loved them, they would be better off'
 - 'It's my fault they're like this'
 - 'I'll never be able to have a normal relationship with them'
 - 'If I leave, they'll fall apart'"

2. "Is there any proof that this lie is NOT true?"
3. "How would your relationship change if you replaced this lie with the truth?"
4. "Have you allowed that person to speak honestly with you, or have you become defensive?"

[Facilitator: Acknowledge how difficult this is. Recognize that the loved one is in a vulnerable position.]

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY (5–6 minutes) HAND OUT THE HANDOUT

Facilitator: "If anyone would like to share a statement about what they're learning in their relationships, they can do so now. This is not mandatory."

[Space for sharing]

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer:"

Father, heal broken relationships. Help us take responsibility with love. Remove the lies and replace them with your truth. Amen.

"Next session: PRINCIPLE III: PUSHING THROUGH. We'll talk about believing it's possible to live well, despite everything.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 4.

PRINCIPLE 2: RELATIONSHIPS

My Commitment to Restoring Relationships

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. Reflect on how your disorder has affected your relationships and commit to specific actions for restoration.

WHAT IS A COMMITMENT TO RESTORATION?

It is a statement in which you acknowledge the impact on your relationships and commit to specific actions to heal them.

FORMAT:

"I acknowledge that my disorder has affected my relationship with _____ [person or relationship]

Therefore, I commit to _____ [specific restorative action]."

MY COMMITMENT TO RESTORATION IN RELATIONSHIPS

(Write in the space below)

I acknowledge that my disorder has affected my relationship with _____

Therefore, I commit to _____

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- This commitment is PERSONAL and may remain private.
- Focus on the things you can control, not on changing others.
- Sincerely asking for forgiveness is a powerful act (without excuses).
- Healthy boundaries are also part of healing.
- This commitment can grow and change over time.

CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD RESTORATION:

Here are some ideas you might consider:

- Ask for sincere forgiveness without excuses
- Listen actively without defensiveness
- Fulfill the commitments I make
- Clearly communicate my boundaries
- Be consistent in my actions
- Express gratitude to those who support me
- Seek professional help to heal

IF YOU WISH TO SHARE:

If you want to share your commitment with the group, raise your hand. The facilitator will celebrate your courage and validate your commitment.

REMEMBER:

The relationships we cherish deserve our effort in recovery. Your family and loved ones need to see you doing well.

"Therefore, let us pursue what contributes to peace and mutual edification." — Romans 14:19 (NIV)

SESSION 5 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE III "PUSH THROUGH"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. Today we begin PRINCIPLE III: PUSH THROUGH. This is a principle about active hope, about believing that it is possible to live well despite the diagnosis, and then acting on that belief."

[Prayer]

Lord, help us to believe that it is possible. Strengthen us to take the next step, even if it is small. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Check-in: name and how you're doing today."

[After]

"Let's review our Rules of Conduct."

VIDEO AND INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE III (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's watch the video introducing Principle III: Push Through." The Principle goes like this:

Principle III

For people with mental health challenges: My disorder can become an excuse. Therefore, I choose to believe I can live a full and rich life in spite of my disorder. I choose the support of people who will urge me to 'push through'.

For loved ones: At times I don't understand my loved one and can allow them to either wallow in their excuses, or push them too hard. Therefore I choose to learn healthy, appropriate ways to contribute to my loved one's recovery.

Together: Together we do better than trying on our own. We will hold one another accountable for learning, growing, and choosing to push through in hope.

'Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.' — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)"

[Watch video: <https://youtu.be/QK7MyxgGvfw?si=H5zinCY7A0v9B08A>]

"This principle isn't about brute force. It's about small, deliberate action, even when we don't feel like it. It's about supporting others to move forward, but without rescuing them."

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: PUSH THROUGH
- It means doing things that are good for your recovery even when you don't feel like it
- It means keep trying even when you don't feel like it
- It means accepting help from others who give you that "little push"
- THE PREVIOUS BELIEF: "I believe it is possible to live a full and abundant life despite the diagnosis"
 - If you don't believe this is possible, you won't have the strength to push through
- It is important for the person to DEFINE WHAT a full and abundant life MEANS to them
- A full and abundant life DOES NOT mean a perfect life ◦ It DOES NOT mean health, money, and love
 - It DOES mean a life with PURPOSE—fulfilling God's purpose
- Limitations are real—work within them
- Work with the person to redefine their purpose within those limits

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with a diagnosis: let's talk about believing it's possible to live well."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What did 'pushing through' mean to you before reading this chapter? What did you learn that was different?"
2. "Principle 3 begins with: 'I believe it is possible to live well despite the diagnosis.' Do you believe that?"
3. "What would a 'full and abundant life' look like for you?"
4. "Are there things you know are good for you but that you avoid? • Exercise? • Medications? • Support groups? • Social connection? • Getting enough sleep?"

[Facilitator: Listen to their dreams. Acknowledge the real obstacles.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you, loved ones: we'll talk about supporting without rescuing."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What did 'pushing through' mean to you before reading this chapter? What did you learn—from the perspective of a loved one?"
2. "Principle 3 says that the loved one must believe they can live well. What about YOU? Do you believe your loved one can live well? Why or why not?"
3. "What would a realistic 'full and abundant life' look like for your loved one?"
4. "Are there things you KNOW are good for your loved one but that they avoid?"

[Facilitator: Listen to their frustrations. Acknowledge how difficult it is to witness self-sabotage.]

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, help us believe that it is possible. Strengthen us to push through, especially when we don't feel like it. Amen.

"Next week: PART 2 of Principle III. We'll continue discussing how to 'push through' in our lives.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 5.

PRINCIPLE III

For people with mental health challenges: My disorder can become an excuse. Therefore, I choose to believe I can live a full and rich life in spite of my disorder. I choose the support of people who will urge me to 'push through'.

For loved ones: At times I don't understand my loved one and can allow them to either wallow in their excuses, or push them too hard. Therefore I choose to learn healthy, appropriate ways to contribute to my loved one's recovery.

Together: Together we do better than trying on our own. We will hold one another accountable for learning, growing, and choosing to push through in hope.

'Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.' — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)"

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: PUSH THROUGH
- It means doing things that are good for your recovery even when you don't feel like it
- It means keep trying even when you don't feel like it
- It means accepting help from others who give you that "little push"
- THE PREVIOUS BELIEF: "I believe it is possible to live a full and abundant life despite the diagnosis"
 - If you don't believe this is possible, you won't have the strength to push through
- It is important for the person to DEFINE WHAT a full and abundant life MEANS to them
- A full and abundant life DOES NOT mean a perfect life ◦ It DOES NOT mean health, money, and love
 - It DOES mean a life with PURPOSE—fulfilling God's purpose
- Limitations are real—work within them
- Work with the person to redefine their purpose within those limits

SESSION 6 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE III "PUSHING THROUGH"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. We continue with Principle III: Push Through. Today we're going to focus on action, on small steps."

[Prayer]

Lord, help us take a step, even if it is small. May we not be paralyzed by the big picture, but rather act on the small things. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Quick check-in." Then...

"Let's review our Guidelines."

READING OF PRINCIPLE III (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle III."

PRINCIPLE III

For people with mental health challenges: My disorder can become an excuse. Therefore, I choose to believe I can live a full and rich life in spite of my disorder. I choose the support of people who will urge me to 'push through'.

For loved ones: At times I don't understand my loved one and can allow them to either wallow in their excuses, or push them too hard. Therefore I choose to learn healthy, appropriate ways to contribute to my loved one's recovery.

Together: Together we do better than trying on our own. We will hold one another accountable for learning, growing, and choosing to push through in hope.

'Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.' — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)"

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is PUSH THROUGH
- The core belief: "I can live a full and abundant life despite my diagnosis" ◦ Without this belief, there is no strength to push through
- Abundant life = life with PURPOSE (not a perfect life)
- Limits are real and must be respected
- Support from others is key—don't do this alone

"Let's continue our conversation."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's continue with the personal action: what it means to push through in YOUR life."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Why do you avoid them [the things you know are good]?"
 - Lack of motivation?
 - Paralyzing depression?
 - Disbelief that they'll work?"
2. "What would happen if you did ONE of those things this week even if you don't feel like it?"
3. "How is 'pushing through' different from 'forcing yourself'?"
4. "Is there something in your life that seems impossible? Do you need to redefine what 'abundant life' means to you?"

[Facilitator: Explore with compassion. Help redefine what is realistic without losing hope.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you: how to support without rescuing, and how to allow them to experience the consequences."

QUESTIONS:

1. "How do you respond when you see them avoiding what you know would help them?"
 - Do you rescue them (do things for them)?
 - Do you chase after them (constantly pressure them)?
 - Do you abandon them (let them suffer the consequences)?"
2. "When is it APPROPRIATE for you to do something for them, and when do they need to do it themselves?"
3. "What does it mean to 'let others push your loved one'—while you are NOT the only one pushing?"
4. "Is it possible for you to step back a little and let THEM experience the consequences of their choices?"

[Facilitator: Teach balance. Acknowledge how difficult it is to let go.]

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY (5–6 minutes)

Facilitator: "If anyone would like to share ONE small action they plan to take this week, please feel free to do so. Or one they've already done. We celebrate small steps."

[Time for sharing]

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, help us to take action, even if the step is small. We celebrate every step forward. May we not be paralyzed, but push through. Amen.

"Next session: PRINCIPLE IV: HOPE. We'll talk about how hope is a choice, not a feeling.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 6.

PRINCIPLE 3: PUSHING THROUGH

My Vision of a Full and Abundant Life

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. Imagine and write down your own vision of a full and abundant life despite your diagnosis.

WHAT IS A FULL AND ABUNDANT LIFE?

It is not a perfect life. It is not just health, money, and love. It is a life with PURPOSE where I fulfill God's plan for me, even within the limitations I have.

FORMAT:

"For me, a full and abundant life means _____ [describe what that means to you]

Therefore, I resolve to _____ [concrete actions to live that out]."

MY VISION OF A FULL AND ABUNDANT LIFE

(Write in the space below)

For me, a full and abundant life means _____

Therefore, I intend to move forward in the following ways

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Your vision is PERSONAL. It doesn't have to be like anyone else's.
- Include things that bring meaning and purpose to your life.
- Acknowledge your limitations as part of reality, not as failure.
- It may include: relationships, work, faith, hobbies, service, creativity, etc.
- This vision may evolve over time.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- What is my deepest purpose in life?
- What activities bring me joy and meaning?
- Who are the important people in my life?
- How can I serve others with my gifts?
- What are my realistic limits that I respect?
- What would my best day look like despite my diagnosis?

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE:

If you'd like to share your vision with the group, please raise your hand. The facilitator will celebrate your hope and validate your vision.

REMEMBER:

Believing that a fulfilling life is possible gives you the strength to "push through" on difficult days.

"So encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are doing." — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

SESSION 7 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE IV "HOPE"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. Today we begin PRINCIPLE IV: HOPE. This is perhaps the most crucial principle: learning that hope is not a feeling, but a choice."

[Prayer]

Lord, fill our tanks with hope today. Not based on our feelings, but on your truth. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Check-in: name and how you're feeling."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

VIDEO AND INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE IV (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's watch the video introducing Principle IV: Hope." Principle IV reads as follows:

PRINCIPLE IV

For people with mental health challenges: My disorder can lead me to feel hopeless. Therefore, I choose to believe, regardless of my feelings, that there is help and hope for my physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being.

For loved ones: At times I also feel hopeless, letting my loved one's actions and recovery define my happiness. Therefore, I choose to live with healthy emotional boundaries, and I choose my own joy despite the ups and downs of my loved one.

Together: Together we remind each other that our hope and joy come from the Lord. He alone is able to fulfill our needs in every aspect of our lives.

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

[Watch video: <https://youtu.be/eE1bCj13DA8?si=iRdXHSvpNuy1CgR2>]

"This principle teaches us that Christian hope is not blind optimism. It is anchoring ourselves in a truth we already know: that Christ has already won. That changes everything."

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: HOPE
- HOPE IS NOT a feeling; it is a CHOICE
- ILLUSTRATION: Soccer game (Pastor Brad's teaching) ◦ Watching live: You don't know the final score—if your team loses, you're sad, tense, stressed ◦ Watching a replay: YOU ALREADY KNOW who won—even if your team is losing, it DOESN'T stress you out
- HOPE IN CHRIST is like watching the game on replay: ◦ WE ALREADY KNOW WHO WON: Jesus won on the cross ◦ The score of that game was Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him"
- TOOL: The CHECK-IN to practice this distinction ◦ Repeated at the start of each group ◦ Separate MOOD from HOPE TANK ◦ Mood: reported on a scale (1-5, with 5 being stable) ◦ Hope Tank: reported like a gas tank (empty to full)
- EXAMPLE: Mood 2 (depressed), but tank of hope FULL (because she knows God's work on the cross)

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with a diagnosis: let's talk about the difference between mood and hope."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was your biggest 'aha moment' in this chapter?"
2. "Did you understand the soccer game illustration? Explain it in your own words."
3. "What is 'the ending' that you already know? For Samantha, it was: 'Christ won.' In your faith, what is the 'final score'?"
4. "When is it hardest for you to remember that 'Christ has already won'?"

[Facilitator: Listen to their real struggles. Affirm that hope is a discipline, not a feeling.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "To you, loved ones: you also need to take care of your own hope."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was your biggest 'aha moment' in this chapter—from the perspective of a loved one?"
2. "The Principle mentions 'knowing the end of the game.' In your faith, what is the 'final score' that you already know?"
3. "When is it MOST difficult for you to maintain hope? • After a crisis? • During a long episode? • When you see little progress?"
4. "Are there times when your hope wavers? How does that affect your loved one?"

[Facilitator: Acknowledge that the loved one's hope is a gift to the person with the diagnosis.]

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, fill our tanks with hope. Help us believe in an ending we already know. May that truth sustain us in the dark days. Amen.

"Next week: PART 2 of Principle IV. We'll delve deeper into how to choose hope every day.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 7.

PRINCIPLE IV

For people with mental health challenges: My disorder can lead me to feel hopeless. Therefore, I choose to believe, regardless of my feelings, that there is help and hope for my physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being.

For loved ones: At times I also feel hopeless, letting my loved one's actions and recovery define my happiness. Therefore, I choose to live with healthy emotional boundaries, and I choose my own joy despite the ups and downs of my loved one.

Together: Together we remind each other that our hope and joy come from the Lord. He alone is able to fulfill our needs in every aspect of our lives.

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: HOPE
- HOPE IS NOT a feeling; it is a CHOICE
- ILLUSTRATION: Soccer game (Pastor Brad's teaching) ◦ Watching live: You don't know the final score—if your team loses, you're sad, tense, stressed ◦ Watching the replay: YOU ALREADY KNOW who won—even if your team is losing, it DOESN'T stress you out
- HOPE IN CHRIST is like watching the game on replay: ◦ WE ALREADY KNOW WHO WON: Jesus won on the cross ◦ The score of that game was Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him"
- TOOL: The CHECK-IN to practice this distinction ◦ Repeated at the start of each group ◦ Separates MOOD from HOPE TANK ◦ Mood: reported on a scale (1-5, with 5 being stable) ◦ Hope Tank: reported like a gas tank (empty to full)
- EXAMPLE: Mood 2 (depressed), but Hope Tank FULL (because she knows God's work on the cross)

SESSION 8 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE IV "HOPE"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. We continue with Principle IV: Hope. Today we're going to delve deeper into how to choose hope when we don't feel it."

[Prayer]

Lord, when our feelings say 'there is no hope,' help us to anchor ourselves in your truth. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Quick check-in."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

READING OF PRINCIPLE IV (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle IV."

PRINCIPLE IV

For people with mental health challenges: My disorder can lead me to feel hopeless. Therefore, I choose to believe, regardless of my feelings, that there is help and hope for my physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being.

For loved ones: At times I also feel hopeless, letting my loved one's actions and recovery define my happiness. Therefore, I choose to live with healthy emotional boundaries, and I choose my own joy despite the ups and downs of my loved one.

Together: Together we remind each other that our hope and joy come from the Lord. He alone is able to fulfill our needs in every aspect of our lives.

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is HOPE (it's not a feeling; it's a choice)
- Key Illustration: Soccer Game ◦ Without hope: You don't know the outcome; you live in anxiety ◦ With hope: You know Jesus won; you live in peace
- Use the CHECK-IN in your group: ◦ Mood (1-5 scale) ◦ Hope tank (empty to full)
- These two can be DIFFERENT—that's what matters!

"We continue our conversation on how to live out hope every day."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's continue with how to hold onto hope during the darkest days."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Did you do your daily check-in on your mood versus your hope tank?"
2. "Were there days when your mood was low but your hope tank was full?"
3. "When was your 'darkest day'? What sustained you?"
4. "Do you think Christian hope is only for heaven? Have you experienced God working in your life now, not just in eternity?"

[Facilitator: Explore experiences of God in the present life. Acknowledge that some have not experienced this yet.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you: how to maintain YOUR own hope, especially during your loved one's dark days."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Did you do a daily check-in on YOUR mood versus your hope tank?"
2. "Were there days when your mood was low but your hope tank was full?"
3. "When was your 'darkest day' supporting your loved one? What sustained you?"
4. "Have you considered that your own hope is a GIFT to your loved one?"

[Facilitator: Honor the loved one's role as a bearer of hope when the other person cannot.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY (5-6 minutes)

Facilitator: "If anyone would like to share a truth they hold onto when despair strikes, they may do so now."

[Example: "My truth is: God has plans for my well-being."]

[Time for sharing]

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer:"

Father, may our hope be anchored in you, not in our feelings. May it be an anchor in dark days. Amen.

"Next session: PRINCIPLE V: MEDICINE AND MORE. We'll talk about the role of medicine and the personal work that goes beyond it.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 8.

PRINCIPLE 4: HOPE

My Declaration of Hope in Christ

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. Write a personal statement about how your hope in Christ sustains you, regardless of your current emotional state.

WHAT IS HOPE IN CHRIST?

It is not a feeling that depends on your circumstances. It is a CHOICE to believe that God has won, that Jesus triumphed on the cross, and that all your days have purpose in Him.

FORMAT:

"Even though my mood is _____ [how you feel right now]

My hope tank is _____ [empty/half-full/full]

Because _____ [reason why you have hope in Christ]."

MY DECLARATION OF HOPE IN CHRIST

(Write in the space below)

Although my mood is _____

My tank of hope is _____

Because _____

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Your mood and your hope may be DIFFERENT. That's okay.
- Hope doesn't depend on how you feel today.
- Hope in Christ is constant even as your emotions change.
- You can have a bad day (low spirits) and a full tank of hope.
- This is your personal truth with God.

FOUNDATIONS OF HOPE:

Some reasons why we can have hope:

- Jesus triumphed on the cross
- God has plans for my well-being (Jeremiah 29:11)
- All things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8:28)
- My worth does not depend on my circumstances
- God is with me on difficult days
- My life has purpose in God's plan
- Jesus' resurrection guarantees eternal hope

TOOL: THE CHECK-IN

At each meeting, you will report:

MOOD (1-5): 1 = Very depressed 5 = Stable and well

HOPE TANK: Empty  Full

These two may be DIFFERENT. And that's perfectly fine.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE:

If you want to share your statement of hope with the group, raise your hand. The facilitator will celebrate your faith and validate your hope.

REMEMBER:

Hope allows us to live in peace, even when circumstances are difficult.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

SESSION 9 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE V "MEDICINE AND MORE"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. Today we begin PRINCIPLE V: MEDICINE AND MORE. This principle is important because it addresses a sensitive topic: medicine in recovery."

[Prayer]

Lord, help us to honor medicine as a tool, but also to understand that it is not the only solution. Guide our conversations with wisdom. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Check-in: name and how you're doing."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

VIDEO AND INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE V (15 minutes)

Principle V reads as follows:

PRINCIPLE V

For people with mental health challenges: While medicine is a key component in my recovery, it is not the only answer. Therefore, I choose to explore new ways of thinking and acting in my relationships and daily living.

For loved ones: I, too, have been part of the cycle of dysfunctional living, either thinking I had all the answers or thinking the problem didn't belong to me. Therefore, I choose to submit myself to learning new behaviors and taking responsibility for my own healthy, balanced living.

Together: Together we choose freedom over suffering, and joy in living through self-knowledge in action.

'We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.' — 2 Corinthians 10:5"

Facilitator: "Let's watch the video introducing Principle V: Medicine and More."

[Watch video: <https://youtu.be/AxuNdCY6gwA?si=F6o78bRFuSLHdhuT>]

"This principle teaches us that medicine is an important TOOL, but not the only one. Samantha took medicine, but she also did spiritual, physical, mental, and relational work. Everything is important."

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: MEDICINE
- IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION: ◦ It does NOT say that recovery is impossible without medicine ◦ It does NOT require everyone to take medicine ◦ It DOES say that when a doctor determines it, medicine becomes necessary
- BUT IT IS NEVER ENOUGH—recovery requires hard work
- The person must be an ACTIVE PARTICIPANT in their recovery
- STORY: A Complicated Journey with Medication (Samantha’s Story) ◦ Initial diagnosis: depression and panic attacks ◦ Improvement with antidepressants ◦ Strange symptoms: hypomania ◦ Change of doctor: CORRECT diagnosis = bipolar disorder ◦ Solution: add a mood stabilizer
- LESSONS ABOUT MEDICATION: ◦ If a medication isn’t working for you, keep working with your doctor ◦ If your doctor isn’t listening to you, find ANOTHER doctor ◦ DO NOT make changes without medical supervision ◦ Psychiatric medications are not stopped abruptly
- FINAL TIP: ◦ We don’t generalize by saying “yes” or “no” to medication for everyone ◦ If the doctor says yes, take it and observe the results ◦ If you don’t feel better, go back to the doctor ◦ If they don’t listen to you, find another doctor
- IMPORTANCE: Keep a LOG when starting a new medication

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with a diagnosis: let’s talk about your relationship with medication."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was the most important part of Samantha’s journey with medication?"
2. "Have there been any changes or developments in your diagnosis?"
3. "Are you your own medical advocate, or do you let others be? Do you need help with that?"
4. "Where are you on that journey [depression → hypomania → correct diagnosis → resistance → acceptance]?"

[Facilitator: Acknowledge the complexity of the medical journey. Recognize that it is not always linear.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you: how to support the medicinal journey without becoming the guardian of the medicine."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was the most important part of the chapter on medicine—from the perspective of a loved one?"
2. "Have you had a complicated relationship with your loved one's medicine?"
3. "Have there been any changes or adjustments you've noticed following medication changes?"
4. "Have you taken responsibility for whether the medication is 'working'?"

[Facilitator: Acknowledge how tempting it is to want to "fix" things with medication. Teach about responsibility versus control.]

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, help us to use wisely every tool you give us. May we not place all our faith in medicine, nor reject it. Guide our decisions. Amen.

"Next week: PART 2 of Principle V. We'll delve deeper into the personal work that goes beyond medicine.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 9.

PRINCIPLE V

For people with mental health challenges: While medicine is a key component in my recovery, it is not the only answer. Therefore, I choose to explore new ways of thinking and acting in my relationships and daily living.

For loved ones: I, too, have been part of the cycle of dysfunctional living, either thinking I had all the answers or thinking the problem didn't belong to me. Therefore, I choose to submit myself to learning new behaviors and taking responsibility for my own healthy, balanced living.

Together: Together we choose freedom over suffering, and joy in living through self-knowledge in action.

'We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.' — 2 Corinthians 10:5"

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: MEDICINE
- IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION: ◦ It does NOT say that recovery is impossible without medicine ◦ It does NOT force everyone to take medicine ◦ It DOES say that when a doctor determines it, medicine becomes necessary
- BUT IT IS NEVER ENOUGH—recovery requires hard work
- The person must be an ACTIVE PARTICIPANT in their recovery
- STORY: A Complicated Journey with Medication (Samantha's Story) ◦ Initial diagnosis: depression and panic attacks ◦ Improvement with antidepressants ◦ Unusual symptoms: hypomania ◦ Changed doctors: CORRECT diagnosis = bipolar disorder ◦ Solution: add a mood stabilizer
- LESSONS ABOUT MEDICATION: ◦ If a medication isn't working for you, keep working with your doctor ◦ If your doctor isn't listening to you, find ANOTHER doctor ◦ DO NOT make changes without medical supervision ◦ Psychiatric medications are not stopped abruptly
- FINAL TIP: ◦ We don't generalize by saying "yes" or "no" to medication for everyone ◦ If the doctor says yes, take it and observe the results ◦ If you don't feel better, go back to the doctor ◦ If they don't listen to you, find another doctor
- IMPORTANCE: Keep a LOG when starting a new medication

SESSION 10 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE V "MEDICATION AND MORE"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. We continue with Principle V: Medicine and More. Today we focus on the personal work that goes beyond medicine."

[Prayer]

Lord, help us understand that medicine is one part, but we are responsible for our personal work. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Quick check-in."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

READING OF PRINCIPLE V (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle V."

PRINCIPLE V

For people with mental health challenges: While medicine is a key component in my recovery, it is not the only answer. Therefore, I choose to explore new ways of thinking and acting in my relationships and daily living.

For loved ones: I, too, have been part of the cycle of dysfunctional living, either thinking I had all the answers or thinking the problem didn't belong to me. Therefore, I choose to submit myself to learning new behaviors and taking responsibility for my own healthy, balanced living.

Together: Together we choose freedom over suffering, and joy in living through self-knowledge in action.

'We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.' — 2 Corinthians 10:5"

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is MEDICINE
- Medicine is NECESSARY in some cases, but it is NEVER ENOUGH
- Recovery requires HARD WORK on your part
- The role of medicine: to do what it can do
- Your role: Work on your thoughts and behaviors

- If a medication doesn't work: find another doctor
- If they don't listen to you: find ANOTHER doctor
- Important tip: Keep a LOG of your new medication

"Today we're focusing on personal work: the 4 spheres of recovery."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "We're continuing with personal work: the 4 areas of your recovery."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Are there expectations that someone else will 'fix' you? (Your doctor? Your pastor? Your group?)"
2. "Are there areas where you aren't taking responsibility for your recovery? What does it mean to 'do the work beyond medicine'?"
3. "In the SPIRITUAL sphere: How is your relationship with God? Has medicine affected that? Does it need attention?"
4. "In the PHYSICAL sphere: Are you sleeping? Are you eating nutritious food? Are you exercising? What is most neglected?"

[Facilitator: Explore with curiosity, not judgment. Help identify where personal work is most needed.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you: how to support their personal work without doing it for them."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Samantha emphasizes: 'I cannot have learned helplessness.' For YOU as a loved one, what is your role vs. what is NOT your role?"
2. "Is your loved one an 'active participant' in their care or a 'passive patient'? What is your responsibility vs. what is THEIRS?"
3. "In the PHYSICAL sphere of your loved one: Do they sleep? Do they eat? Do they exercise? What is most neglected? Could you motivate without controlling?"
4. "What is YOUR role in supporting these 4 areas? Where do you need to let go?"

[Facilitator: Teach the balance between support and rescue. Acknowledge how difficult it is.]

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY (5-6 minutes)

Facilitator: "If anyone wants to identify ONE area where they need to work more, they can do so now."

[Time for reflection and sharing]

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, help us take responsibility for our personal work. May medicine be a tool, not the total solution.
Amen.

"Next session: PRINCIPLE VI: IDENTITY. We'll talk about who we are beyond our diagnosis.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 10.

PRINCIPLE 5: MEDICINE

My Personal Plan for Holistic Recovery

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. Write your personal recovery plan that includes medication (if applicable), therapy, lifestyle changes, and your own work.

WHAT IS A HOLISTIC RECOVERY PLAN?

It is recognizing that medicine (if necessary) is ONE PART, but not the only one. It includes your active work on thoughts, behaviors, relationships, and lifestyle.

FORMAT:

"My recovery plan includes:

Medication/Treatment: _____

Personal work: _____

Support: _____

My commitments: _____ "

MY PERSONAL COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY PLAN

(Write in the space below)

MEDICATION/MEDICAL TREATMENT (if applicable):

MY PERSONAL WORK (thoughts, behaviors, habits):

SUPPORT I NEED (people, groups, professionals):

MY SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS:

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Medication (if you need it) is necessary BUT NEVER ENOUGH.
- YOU are the active protagonist of your recovery.
- Working on your thoughts is key to change.
- Lifestyle changes matter: sleep, exercise, nutrition.
- You need support from others to stay committed.
- If a medication isn't working, see another doctor (don't give up).
- Keep a JOURNAL when you start a new medication.

AREAS FOR PERSONAL WORK:

Consider working on these areas:

Thoughts:

- Identify toxic thoughts
- Change automatic thought patterns
- Practice self-compassion

Behaviors:

- Establish healthy routines
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain good sleep hygiene
- Eating well

Emotions:

- Recognize emotions without being controlled by them
- Develop emotional regulation strategies
- Practice mindfulness

Relationships:

- Honest communication
- Setting healthy boundaries
- Asking for and receiving support

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE:

If you want to share your plan with the group, raise your hand. The facilitator will acknowledge your contribution and validate your plan.

REMEMBER:

Recovery is hard work, but you can do it. You are not alone on this journey.

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." — 2 Corinthians 10:5

SESSION 11 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE VI "IDENTITY"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. Today we begin PRINCIPLE VI: IDENTITY. This is a principle about dignity and personal power."

[Prayer]

Lord, help us remember who we truly are: your children, not our diagnoses. Free us from the stigma we have imposed on ourselves. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Check-in: name and how you're feeling."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

VIDEO AND INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE VI (15 minutes)

Principle VI reads as follows:

PRINCIPLE VI

For people with mental health challenges: At times I have allowed myself to become a victim, 'defined' by my disorder. Therefore I choose to overcome and live in hope and joy, in spite of my disorder.

For loved ones: At times, I have viewed myself as a victim of my loved one's behavior and disorder, living in resentment, anger, unforgiveness, or self pity. Therefore, I choose to separate the disorder from the person I love, forgive and let go of the past, and live as a contributor to successful recovery.

Together: Together, we share in each other's victories and celebrate the whole person.

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.' — 2 Timothy 1:7"

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE ORIGINAL KEYWORD: VICTIM
- NEW KEYWORD: IDENTITY
- THE SHIFT: From a victim DEFINED by the disorder to a PERSON with a diagnosis
- The difference in how we speak is important: ◦ INCORRECT: "I am bipolar" (label, defines your entire identity) ◦ CORRECT: "I have bipolar disorder" OR "I am a child of God diagnosed with bipolar disorder"

- WHY DOES LANGUAGE MATTER?
 - When you say "I AM," you are completely labeling yourself
 - The diagnosis does not define who you are
 - Your identity: "I am a child of God, I am a wife, a mother, a friend"
- THE DANGER OF SELF-STIGMA:
 - When you yourself believe that the diagnosis defines you
 - Others will also start to see you only through the lens of your condition
- STORY: How Samantha overcame self-stigma
 - At first: she was the only person with her diagnosis in El Salvador
 - In the Zoom group: she saw 12 people with diagnoses
 - All of them were: graduating, working, serving
 - Seeing others LIVING WELL removed her self-stigma
- PUBLIC TESTIMONY: The event with 500 women
 - Introducing herself publicly with her diagnosis was liberating
 - People saw a successful person, not just a diagnosis
- LEVELS OF DISCLOSURE:
 - Closest people: I can be open
 - Other people: use more neutral language ("mood disorder")
 - The key: People have different biases based on their experiences

Facilitator: "Let's watch the video introducing Principle VI: Identity."

[Watch video: <https://youtu.be/WaOkj66n3bU?si=SORP84dsgor5CVwJ>]

"This principle teaches us a fundamental truth: we have a diagnosis, but we are not our diagnosis. Self-stigma is often more harmful than the stigma imposed by others."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with the diagnosis: let's talk about your identity beyond the diagnosis."

QUESTIONS:

1. "How do you introduce yourself when you meet someone new? Is the diagnosis part of how you describe yourself?"
2. "Samantha says, 'I have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder type 2. But I am a child of God...' What difference is that making?"
3. "How has the diagnosis defined your identity? For better or for worse?"
4. "Are there things you DON'T do because 'someone with my diagnosis' can't do them? Is that true, or is it a belief that stigma has given you?"

[Facilitator: Listen with compassion. Acknowledge that self-stigma is real and common.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "To you, loved ones: you also need to reclaim your full identity."

QUESTIONS:

1. "How do you introduce yourself when you meet someone new? Is your identity centered on being 'the support' for your loved one? Is that healthy?"
2. "At some point in your life, did your identity become 'the loved one of someone with [diagnosis]'? When did that happen?"
3. "Has your identity been limited in other ways—such as being a parent, a professional, a friend, a dreamer?"
4. "Are there things you WANTED to do but didn't because 'I have to be available to support'?"

[Facilitator: Acknowledge that the role of loved one is important, but it is not the whole identity.]

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "We'll close with a prayer."

Father, help us reclaim our full identities. May we not be defined by diagnoses or roles. We are more than that. Amen.

"Next week: PART 2 of Principle VI. We'll delve deeper into how to live in our true identity.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 11.

PRINCIPLE VI

For people with mental health challenges: At times I have allowed myself to become a victim, 'defined' by my disorder. Therefore I choose to overcome and live in hope and joy, in spite of my disorder.

For loved ones: At times, I have viewed myself as a victim of my loved one's behavior and disorder, living in resentment, anger, unforgiveness, or self pity. Therefore, I choose to separate the disorder from the person I love, forgive and let go of the past, and live as a contributor to successful recovery.

Together: Together, we share in each other's victories and celebrate the whole person.

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.' — 2 Timothy 1:7"

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE ORIGINAL KEYWORD: VICTIM
- NEW KEYWORD: IDENTITY
- THE SHIFT: From a victim DEFINED by the disorder to a PERSON with a diagnosis
- The difference in how we speak is important: ◦ INCORRECT: "I am bipolar" (label, defines your entire identity) ◦ CORRECT: "I have bipolar disorder" OR "I am a child of God diagnosed with bipolar disorder"
- WHY DOES LANGUAGE MATTER? ◦ When you say "I AM," you are completely labeling yourself ◦ The diagnosis does not define who you are ◦ Your identity: "I am a child of God, I am a wife, a mother, a friend"
- THE DANGER OF SELF-STIGMA: ◦ When you yourself believe that the diagnosis defines you ◦ Others will also start to see you only through the lens of your condition
- STORY: How Samantha overcame self-stigma ◦ At first: she was the only person with her diagnosis in El Salvador ◦ In the Zoom group: she saw 12 people with diagnoses ◦ All of them were: graduating, working, serving ◦ Seeing others LIVING WELL removed her self-stigma
- PUBLIC TESTIMONY: The event with 500 women ◦ Introducing herself publicly with her diagnosis was liberating ◦ People saw a successful person, not just a diagnosis
- LEVELS OF DISCLOSURE: ◦ Closest people: I can be open ◦ Other people: use more neutral language ("mood disorder") ◦ The key: People have different biases based on their experiences

SESSION 12 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE VI "IDENTITY"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. We continue with Principle VI: Identity. Today we are going to reinforce who we really are."

[Prayer]

Lord, may we today write down and declare our true identity. Free us from the power we have given to the diagnosis. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Quick check-in."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

READING OF PRINCIPLE VI (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle VI."

PRINCIPLE VI

For people with mental health challenges: At times I have allowed myself to become a victim, 'defined' by my disorder. Therefore I choose to overcome and live in hope and joy, in spite of my disorder.

For loved ones: At times, I have viewed myself as a victim of my loved one's behavior and disorder, living in resentment, anger, unforgiveness, or self pity. Therefore, I choose to separate the disorder from the person I love, forgive and let go of the past, and live as a contributor to successful recovery.

Together: Together, we share in each other's victories and celebrate the whole person.

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.' — 2 Timothy 1:7"

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is IDENTITY
- The key question: WHO ARE YOU? ◦ NO: "I am bipolar" (label) ◦ YES: "I am a daughter of God diagnosed with bipolar disorder"
- The language we use defines how we see ourselves
- Seeing others LIVING WELL with a diagnosis reduces self-stigma
- Levels of disclosure: you don't have to tell everyone
- Use language that doesn't create prejudice in others

"Today we're focusing on your true identity, beyond labels and diagnoses."

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "We'll continue discussing your whole identity and the roles you play in life."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Are there things you don't do because 'someone with my diagnosis' can't do them? Is that true, or is it a belief fueled by stigma?"
2. "When was the last time someone saw you for who you are beyond the diagnosis?"
3. "If we take away the diagnosis, who are you really? What are your roles, values, dreams, and talents?"
4. "How would your life change if you truly believed that you are NOT defined by the diagnosis?"

[Facilitator: Help explore deeper identity. Celebrate roles and talents.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you: reclaim your identity beyond the support role."

QUESTIONS:

1. "At any point in your life, did your identity become primarily 'the loved one of someone with [diagnosis]'?"
2. "Is there a difference in how people treat you when they know vs. when they DON'T know about your loved one's diagnosis?"
3. "When was the last time someone saw you for who you are—beyond your role?"
4. "Is there someone who needs to hear who YOU are—without the support role?"

[Facilitator: Affirm that your life is important, separate from the other person's diagnosis.]

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY (5-6 minutes)

Facilitator: "If anyone would like to share their identity statement, they may do so now. This is not mandatory."

[Example: "I am NOT my diagnosis. I am [true identity]."]

[Space for sharing and celebrating]

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, may these statements replace the lies. May we live in our true identity. Amen.

"Next session: PRINCIPLE VII: GIVING. We'll talk about how to serve others as part of our recovery.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 12.

PRINCIPLE 6: IDENTITY

My Statement of Who I Really Am

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. Write a clear statement about who you REALLY are, beyond your diagnosis.

WHO ARE YOU REALLY?

You are not your diagnosis. Your diagnosis is something you HAVE, not something you ARE. Your identity is much deeper and more valuable.

FORMAT:

"I am not _____ [what you are NOT]

I am _____ [who you really are]"

MY IDENTITY STATEMENT

(Write in the space below)

I am not _____

I am _____

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Your diagnosis is part of your story, NOT your whole story.
- Your identity includes: your gifts, your faith, your relationships, your purpose.
- The language you use about yourself is powerful.
- Saying "I have depression" is different from "I am depressed."
- You can have a disorder and still be completely valuable.
- Your worth does not depend on your mental health.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- What are my strengths and gifts?
- How does God see me?
- What important roles do I have? (child, friend, parent, professional, etc.)
- What are my deepest values?
- What can I offer others?
- Who do I want to be despite my diagnosis?

REMEMBER THIS:

The next time someone (including yourself) defines you by your diagnosis:

WRONG: "I am bipolar" **RIGHT:** "I have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder"

WRONG: "I am depressed" **RIGHT:** "I have depression, but that doesn't define who I am"

HOW TO TALK ABOUT YOUR DIAGNOSIS:

Depending on the person:

- **Close friends and family:** You can be completely honest
- **Colleagues/Professionals:** You can use neutral language: "I have a mood disorder that I'm being treated for"
- **You don't have to tell everyone:** Your diagnosis is private information

IF YOU WISH TO SHARE:

If you want to share your identity statement with the group, raise your hand. The facilitator will celebrate your intrinsic worth and validate your identity.

REMEMBER:

You are loved. You are valuable. Your diagnosis does not define your worth.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of self-control." — 2 Timothy 1:7

SESSION 13 - PART 1: PRINCIPLE VII "GIVING"

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome. Today we begin PRINCIPLE VII and the final one: GIVING. This is the principle about purpose and redemption."

[Prayer]

Lord, may our pain have purpose. May we serve others based on what we have learned. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Check-in: name and how you're feeling."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines."

Let's read Principle VII:

PRINCIPLE VII

For people with mental health challenges: "At times, my mental health challenge has caused me to focus only on myself and my needs, leading me to believe the lie that I don't have much to offer to others. Therefore, because focusing on others will help me grow, I choose to give back, sharing my story with others, that my past pain might provide insights for someone else's journey to living well.

For loved ones: I, too, have become focused on my loved one's situation and how it has affected me. I can easily become so consumed by our issues that I fail to see those around me who would benefit from what I've learned. Therefore, I choose to give back by seeking opportunities to help others by sharing my insights and experiences.

Together: Together we recognize that sharing helps both us and others heal. Sharing helps us find our voice and becomes empowering as we see our pain redeemed by the Lord. As we share, it helps reaffirm our own hope while also giving hope away to others.

'(The Lord) helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.' — 2 Corinthians 1:4 (Good News Translation)"

VIDEO AND INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLE VII (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's watch the video introducing Principle VII: Giving."

[Watch video: <https://youtu.be/KXzhVX8-Us?si=euLMDGid6dTm5p>]

"This principle teaches us that you don't have to be completely 'healed' to serve others. Your experience, your story, your pain—it all has value to someone else."

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: GIVE (Serving others)
- It's NOT about money, but about SERVING
- When someone puts the 6 previous principles into practice and empowers their recovery, the next step is to SERVE
- When you SERVE OTHERS, God REDEEMS your pain
- STORY OF LOSSES: The things Samantha lost ◦ Time (a year without a diagnosis) ◦ Money (many unnecessary tests) ◦ Business (she couldn't run it) ◦ Reputation ◦ A baby (lost during all of this)
- THE PROMISE: God restores what has been lost ◦ NOT only returning it to its previous state ◦ BUT restoring it BETTER THAN BEFORE
- EXAMPLE: Restored relationships ◦ She lost friends due to isolation ◦ Through service at Fresh Hope, they were restored ◦ And she gained new friends all over the world
- THE POWER OF SERVICE: ◦ There are days when you're crying from sheer pain ◦ But someone needs you to listen ◦ You take the time to listen—AND THAT HAS POWER ◦ Service helps you process your own pain
- STORY: Fresh Hope Course ◦ She was invited but said no (she didn't feel capable) ◦ She prayed and said, "Yes, Lord, I will do it" ◦ Three years later: God has redeemed EVERYTHING He promised
- THE RESULT: ◦ Principle 7 is what has truly redeemed her ◦ Past pain is bearing fruit in the lives of others

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with a diagnosis: let's talk about how serving others has been part of your recovery."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was your reaction when you read about the power of 'giving' in recovery? Have you experienced the healing that comes from helping others?"
2. "Samantha talks about the lie: 'I have nothing to offer.' Have you felt that way?"
3. "In what ways has that lie paralyzed you?"
4. "Is there anyone who believes you DO have something to offer? Who?"

[Facilitator: Listen to the stories of service. Validate the transformative power of giving.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (15 minutes)

Facilitator: "To you: you also have a valuable story to share as loved ones."

QUESTIONS:

1. "What was your reaction to reading about the power of 'giving' from the perspective of a loved one? Have you experienced the healing that comes from sharing what you learned?"
2. "What is the lie that YOU believe as a loved one? • 'I have nothing to offer—all my energy goes into support' • 'My story as a caregiver isn't important enough' • 'Just because my loved one is in recovery doesn't mean I can serve'"
3. "In what ways has that lie paralyzed you?"
4. "Is there anyone who believes that YOU have something to offer?"

[Facilitator: Validate the loved ones' experience as valuable and transformative.]

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a prayer."

Father, help us see the value in our story. May our pain be redeemed through service. May we be a blessing to others. Amen.

"Next week: PART 2 of Principle VII, our conclusion. We'll talk about finding our purpose in service.

We look forward to seeing you!"

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 13.

PRINCIPLE VII

For people with mental health challenges: "At times, my mental health challenge has caused me to focus only on myself and my needs, leading me to believe the lie that I don't have much to offer to others. Therefore, because focusing on others will help me grow, I choose to give back, sharing my story with others, that my past pain might provide insights for someone else's journey to living well.

For loved ones: I, too, have become focused on my loved one's situation and how it has affected me. I can easily become so consumed by our issues that I fail to see those around me who would benefit from what I've learned. Therefore, I choose to give back by seeking opportunities to help others by sharing my insights and experiences.

Together: Together we recognize that sharing helps both us and others heal. Sharing helps us find our voice and becomes empowering as we see our pain redeemed by the Lord. As we share, it helps reaffirm our own hope while also giving hope away to others.

'(The Lord) helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.' — 2 Corinthians 1:4 (Good News Translation)"

KEY POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- THE KEY WORD IS: GIVE (Serving others)
- It is NOT about money, but about SERVING
- When someone puts the 6 principles above into practice and empowers their recovery, the next step is to SERVE
- When you SERVE OTHERS, God REDEEMS your pain
- STORY OF LOSSES: The things Samantha lost ◦ Time (a year without a diagnosis) ◦ Money (many unnecessary tests) ◦ Business (she couldn't run it) ◦ Reputation ◦ A baby (lost during all of this)
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- **THE RESULT:** ◦ Principle 7 is what has truly redeemed her ◦ Past pain is bearing fruit in the lives of others

SESSION 14 - PART 2: PRINCIPLE VII "GIVING" (CLOSING)

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "Welcome to our final session of this cycle. We continue with Principle VII: Giving. Today we reflect on how our pain is redeemed through service."

[Prayer]

Lord, may we close this cycle with gratitude. May our journey continue, and may we always remember that we are not alone. Amen.

CHECK-IN AND GUIDELINES (10 minutes)

Facilitator: "Final check-in for this cycle: name and how you're feeling after these 14 meetings."

[After]

"Let's review our Guidelines one last time."

READING OF PRINCIPLE VII (5 minutes)

Facilitator: "I'm going to read Principle VII, our final principle."

PRINCIPLE VII

For people with mental health challenges: "At times, my mental health challenge has caused me to focus only on myself and my needs, leading me to believe the lie that I don't have much to offer to others. Therefore, because focusing on others will help me grow, I choose to give back, sharing my story with others, that my past pain might provide insights for someone else's journey to living well.

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'(The Lord) helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.' — 2 Corinthians 1:4 (Good News Translation)"

"Let's reinforce these truths: When we give, we also receive. Our story matters."

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER (SHORT RECAP):

- REMINDER: The key word is GIVE (Serve)
- When you serve others, God REDEEMS your pain
- Losses are transformed into blessings for others
- Serving heals you as you help others
- Don't wait until you're "fully recovered"
- Your story, just as it is, has the power to help someone

SECTION A: FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For those living with a diagnosis: let's continue reflecting on your purpose in service."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Samantha lists the losses associated with her diagnosis. What have YOUR losses been?"
2. "Do they feel 'redeemed' in any way? Or do they still hurt?"
3. "Is there something someone asked you to do that you felt you couldn't?"
4. "Who could you help from where you are NOW, not from where you hope to be?"

[Facilitator: Help identify personal purpose. Celebrate everything they have learned.]

SECTION B: FOR LOVED ONES (17 minutes)

Facilitator: "For you: the service and healing that come from sharing your story as a loved one."

QUESTIONS:

1. "Your loved one has experienced loss. What about YOU? What have been YOUR losses?"
2. "Is there a difference between 'losses that are redeemed' and 'losses that simply hurt'?"
3. "Is there something someone asked you to do—or that you could do—in the context of this reality of mental health?"
4. "Who could you help from where you are NOW as a loved one?"

[Facilitator: Honor the journey of loved ones. Validate their contribution to others' recovery.]

SPECIAL CLOSING ACTIVITY (5-6 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's wrap up with a special reflection. If anyone would like to share ONE thing they learned during these 14 sessions, now is the time. Or you can just say your name and thank you for being here."

[Sacred space for sharing and celebration]

CLOSING PRAYER AND FAREWELL (3 minutes)

Facilitator: "Let's close with a farewell prayer."

Father, thank you for this journey through the 7 principles. Thank you for every person here. May they continue to grow. May they never forget that they are not alone. May their story continue to have purpose. May they find fresh hope every day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

"Brothers and sisters, we invite you to continue attending the groups. Recovery is a journey, not a destination. Let's walk the path together.

You are always welcome here at Fresh Hope."

[Facilitator: Allow time for personal connections, information about upcoming sessions, and support resources.]

END OF SESSION GUIDES - COMPLETE CYCLE OF 7 PRINCIPLES (14 SESSIONS)

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. "I Choose Hope" Curriculum, Session 14.

PRINCIPLE 7: GIVING

My Plan for Service and Redemption

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an optional activity for you. Write down how you plan to serve others and how your past pain can become a blessing for someone else.

WHAT IS GIVING AND SERVING?

It is sharing your story, your experience, and your hope with others who are on the path to recovery. When you serve, God REDEEMS your pain. Your losses become gains for others.

FORMAT:

"My story includes _____ [what you have been through]

I want to serve _____ [who or in what way]

So that _____ [the impact you hope to have]."

MY PLAN FOR SERVICE AND REDEMPTION

(Write in the space below)

My story includes _____

I want to serve _____

So that _____

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- You don't need to be "fully recovered" to serve.
- Your story, just as it is, has power.
- Serving others heals you as you help them.
- You can serve in many ways: by listening, sharing, walking alongside, and encouraging.
- When you give, God restores what you've lost—BETTER than before.
- You don't have to do it alone: seek community in your service.

WAYS TO SERVE: Consider these ways to serve others:

Listen:

- Be a compassionate ear for someone who is struggling
- Validate others' experiences without judging

Share your story:

- Testimony in support groups
- One-on-one conversations
- Social media (if you feel comfortable)

Be there for others:

- Be there for others during difficult times
- Accompanying someone to medical appointments
- Staying in regular contact

Encourage:

- Remind others that recovery is possible
- Celebrate others' small achievements
- Offer hope during difficult times

Get involved:

- In Fresh Hope or other support groups
- In volunteer activities
- In your faith community

- As a Hope Agent
- As a Support Group Facilitator

YOUR LOSSES CAN BE REDEEMED IN:

Think about what you have lost and how it can become a blessing:

The loss of _____ can become sensitivity toward _____

The loss of _____ can become compassion for _____

The loss of _____ can become strength for _____

IF YOU WISH TO SHARE:

If you want to share your service plan with the group, raise your hand. The facilitator will celebrate your generosity and validate your vision of redemption.

THE PROMISE:

When you serve others, God:

- Restores what you have lost
- Heals you as you help others
- Reaffirms your own hope
- Turns your pain into purpose
- Connects you to community
- Shows that your life has meaning

REMEMBER:

Your pain was not in vain. Your story can transform lives. When you give, you receive many times over.

"He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are going through hard times, we can offer them the same comfort that God has given us." — 2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)

FRESH HOPE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

CLOSING CEREMONY

The Bracelets of Hope

WHAT DOES THIS BRACELET MEAN?

This silicone bracelet with the words "**I CHOOSE HOPE**" is your physical reminder of your commitment to recovery.

It's not a magic charm. It's a symbol of a decision you'll make every day.

EVERY TIME YOU SEE IT, REMEMBER:

I **am not** my diagnosis. I **am** a child of God in recovery.

My **mood** may change. My **hope in Christ** is constant.

I have **accepted** my diagnosis. I have **chosen** to seek help.

I have **limitations**. I have **a purpose**.

My **pain** can be redeemed. My **story** has value.

THE BRACELET MEANS:

- ◆ Every morning: I choose hope over fear
- ◆ On difficult days: My hope does not depend on my feelings
- ◆ When it hurts: I remember that I am not alone
- ◆ In recovery: I choose to move forward
- ◆ Always: I choose to believe in God, in myself, in healing
- ◆ The most important thing- every time I read "I choose Hope", it will remind me that in reality, Hope Chose Me.

CLOSING PRAYER

(Everyone stand, hand on heart)

Heavenly Father,

Today we conclude this stage of the 7 Principles of Recovery.

We have acknowledged our struggles. We have chosen hope. We have seen that we are not alone.

As we put on these bracelets, we remind ourselves that recovery is possible.

May our faith be strengthened every time we see them.

May they help us choose hope on difficult days.

May they unite us as a community that loves and cares for one another.

Thank you for loving us unconditionally. Thank you for your sacrifice on the cross. Thank you for the promise of restoration.

In Jesus, we have eternal hope.

AMEN.

(Everyone puts on the bracelet at the same time)

OUR REMINDER:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

TO CELEBRATE

Post a photo of your hand wearing the bracelet on your social media and use the hashtags #ichoosehope #freshhope and #hopechooseme or #esperanzafresca

