Recovery Identity beyond Labels - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about recovery identity beyond labels while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Jordan wants to be seen as a parent and musician as well as a person in recovery.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore recovery identity beyond labels using an ordinary or fictional example? We can adapt it, observe, or stop." Ask what the person wants from the conversation.

Elicit before teaching

Ask: "How does this show up, if at all, in your own words?" Offer this idea tentatively: A person is more than substance-use history or a treatment label. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Create an identity map that includes roles, strengths, culture, interests, and desired relationships. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Jordan wants to be seen as a parent and musician as well as a person in recovery.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: Which part of you needs more room in your current plan? Avoid assigning motives or interpreting silence as agreement.

Respond to a mismatch

If the person rejects the frame, say: "Thank you for correcting it. What would be more useful?" Return to their language or choose a different approach.

Close with agency

Ask which observation, question, or support request the person wants to keep. Confirm a manageable ending and appropriate follow-up; do not turn a tentative possibility into a homework obligation.

Reflection

What would tell me to adapt, stop, or seek supervision?

Scope and adaptation

Adapt to individualized assessment and the person's chosen recovery goals. Worksheets do not manage intoxication, overdose, or withdrawal. Abrupt cessation of alcohol or benzodiazepines can be dangerous: seek medical guidance rather than using a worksheet to stop or taper. Follow existing emergency and overdose-prevention plans; medication choices belong with qualified prescribers.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: Substance Use Disorders. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/recovery/resources/SUR-A17-3