

Part 3: Termination

The termination session, like the introductory session, has its own unique format. The review part of this last session should be brief, to allow for adequate time for the therapist and patient together to process the patient's experience with the 12-Step facilitation program.

Final Core Session: Termination

Review Briefly

- Meetings
- Sober Days
- Urges
- Slips
- Readings

New Material: Termination

The 12th and final session should focus on helping the patient honestly evaluate the treatment experience and establish goals for the future. The following questions can be used as guides in this process:

- What were the patients' views of alcoholism prior to treatment, and what are they now?
 - Do they view alcoholism as a character defect or an illness? What kind of illness is alcoholism?
 - Do they now believe that alcoholics can control their use or are they out of control of use?
 - How would the patients describe the alcoholic part of their personality? How does it work to defeat the recovering part of the personality?
 - Do patients understand that one way to look at denial is as the natural human tendency to resist accepting personal limitation, in this case the limitation of not being able to control drinking?
 - Do patients understand that alcoholism is an illness of the mind characterized by being obsessed with drinking?
- What were the patients' views of Alcoholics Anonymous prior to treatment, and what are they now?
 - What has been their experience with—

- Going to meetings?
 - Getting a sponsor?
 - Getting active?
 - Calling AA friends?
- What were the patients' views of their own alcohol use prior to treatment, and what are they now?
 - Do the patients regard themselves as alcoholics?
 - What were the most useful parts of this treatment program to the patient?
 - What were the least useful parts of this program to the patient?
 - What information was most useful to the patient, and why?
 - Would the patient recommend this treatment program to someone else who wanted help with an alcohol problem? If so, why? If not, why not?
 - What are the patient's plans regarding AA for the 90 days after the treatment program?
 - How many meetings will the patient make a commitment to attend in those 90 days?
 - Is the patient willing to continue keeping a journal?

The Twelve Steps

Though this facilitation program focuses at most on the first 5 Steps of the AA program (and even then on limited aspects of them), the full AA program includes 12 Steps. Truly working a recovery program means working all 12 Steps, with the help of a sponsor and AA friends. Patients who have begun this work should be commended and at the same time advised that their work so far represents only the start of recovery. There is no room for complacency in recovery.

It might be appropriate to end this facilitation program with a quote from the "Big Book":

If you still think you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails, if you go about it with one half of the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you were getting another drink. (p. 181)

Troubleshooting In helping patients evaluate their experience in this facilitation program, the therapist needs to encourage honesty. Most likely, different patients will have found different parts of the program more or less helpful. Encouraging honesty in terms of feedback will help to facilitate honesty in making meaningful commitments for how many meetings the patient will attend afterward. Therapists may find it helpful to take notes regarding patient feedback for use in consultation with a supervisor.

Regardless of the patient's degree of objective success in the program (sober days versus slips), treatment should end on a respectful note. Keep in mind that even patients with many slips and those who are intensely in denial may someday "see the light." Perhaps it will come after the next negative consequence or maybe not until many consequences have taken their toll. The information provided to them through the treatment program could be what they need at some point down the road, when they are ready to absorb and act on it.

End the final session with a handshake and a reminder that the AA Hotline is listed in every phone book under Alcoholics Anonymous, and that AA is there 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.