

Co-Occurring Disorders Step One Worksheet

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

1. Write out a list of problems in your life that have come about because of drinking/using.
2. Write out examples of times when where you have consumed more alcohol or other mood altering drugs than you intended to.
3. Write out examples of when you have drank or used other drugs when you did not intend to, or in circumstances where you intended to not drink or use.
4. Give other examples of how your drinking/using has been out of control at times.
5. List negative consequences that have occurred because of drinking/using.
6. List 3 symptoms that have convinced you that you have _____ (mental health problem/disorder).
7. Write out examples of how your mental health problems/symptoms and/or your drinking/drugging has negatively affected these areas of your life:
 - a. intellectual
 - b. social (friends, neighbors, etc.)
 - c. job/career
 - d. romantic relationships (boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife)
 - e. family of origin relationships (parents, siblings, aunts/uncles, etc.)
 - f. relationships with your children
 - g. education
 - h. financial situation/goals
 - i. emotional life
8. Give examples of how your drug/alcohol use may have made your mental health problems worse.
9. Give examples of your mental health problems may have made your alcohol/drug problems worse.
10. List negative any negative consequences that you may be concerned about happening if you continue to drink/use. How could drinking/using interfere with the treatment of your mental health problems?
11. List any negative consequences that you may be concerned about happening if you do not appropriately treat your mental health problems (e.g. take medication as directed, get adequate rest/sleep, etc.)? How would failing to treat your mental health problems make your drug/alcohol use more unmanageable?

12. Briefly give two examples of ways that you tried to regain control over your alcohol/drug use that have not worked.
13. Describe how inadequate or inappropriate treatment of your mental health problems may have contributed to not appropriately treating your alcohol/drug problems.
14. List any examples of ways that you tried unsuccessfully to manage your mental health problems without professional help.
15. Why are staying clean and sober and treating your mental health problems at the same time so important?
16. How could failing to treat one side of the problem (alcohol/drugs or mental health issues) sabotage your recovery efforts on the other side of the problem? Example: How could continuing to use alcohol/other drugs sabotage your recovery from mental illness?
17. Identify any of the following cognitive distortions or defense mechanisms that you have used in order to continue to drink/drug or to avoid treating your mental health problems appropriately:
 - a. making excuses
 - b. blaming
 - c. lying
 - d. justification/rationalization/intellectualization
 - e. aggression/agitation/keeping others away/hostility
 - f. making false assumptions about treatment or other people
 - g. minimizing
 - h. outright denial
 - i. grandiosity/attitude of superiority
 - j. exaggerating
 - k. refusing to discuss the problem
18. Identify how any of the above defenses/cognitive distortions may have kept you from identifying, accepting, and treating your mental health and substance abuse issues.
19. Identify how drinking/using may have intensified your mental health symptoms (i.e., more depressed, more manic, more out of control, etc.).
20. Give examples of how your life has improved since you stopped drinking/using.
21. Give examples of how your life has improved since appropriately treating your mental health problems.
22. Give examples of how your life has improved by treating both together.

23. Describe a realistic positive picture of your life in the future as you grow in your dual recovery.

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