“My friends and family have been really supportive in my recovery from mental illness and drug use. With their help, I have been able to make good decisions about mental health treatment and keep my commitment to stop using drugs. And I help them, too. It’s a two-way street.”

— MARY A., college student in recovery from depression and substance use disorder
The Stress-Vulnerability Model
of Mental Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders

Stress + Biological Vulnerability

Coping Skills for stress and symptoms

Social Support

Recovery Skills
• Pursuit of goals
• Knowledge of mental illness and substance use
• Healthy lifestyle
• A plan for staying well and preventing relapses

Mental Illness and relapse of symptoms

Substance Use Disorder and relapse of using alcohol or drugs

Medication
Skills for not using substances
Questions to get us started:

How do you get more people in your life?

How do you connect with people and get closer to them?

How do you find people who will support your mental health and your decision to stop using substances?

How do you hang out with people and have fun without using alcohol and other drugs?

We will cover 4 topics in this Module:

**Topic 1:**
Connecting with People and Starting Conversations

**Topic 2:**
Having Enjoyable Conversations

**Topic 3:**
Developing a Support Network

**Topic 4:**
Getting Closer to People

Reminder, set an Agenda:

Here is the format of each Enhanced IMR session:
1. Review the last session
2. Check in on
   - home practice
   - goals
   - substance use
   - symptoms
3. Learn information about a new topic
4. Summarize session and decide on home practice
Creating healthy sober relationships is an important part of the recovery process. Good conversation skills can help you build social support, and make daily life more enjoyable. They can also help you connect with new people and reconnect with people you have not seen for a while.

This session will introduce two good subjects for increasing your social support:

- Talking to people you see on a regular basis
- Reconnecting with people (old friends and family members)

Each of these subjects will be described in more detail throughout this topic. We encourage you to try them with your E-IMR practitioner, or with other group members. Practicing conversations during sessions can improve your social skills and increase your confidence for having similar conversations on your own.

Talking with people you see on a regular basis

Most of us see other people as we go about our daily lives. We may not be in the habit of talking to them. However, talking regularly with people is a good way to build your conversation skills, and it can lead to more conversations in the future.

You may find people you can talk to in any of these situations:

- At home
- As you go about your business (for example, at a store, coffee shop, or restaurant)
- In a class
- In programs or groups you attend
- At work
- While volunteering
- At your place of worship

Let’s Talk About It:

Where do you usually see other people?

Who are they?

When is the last time you talked with one of these people?
Make It Your Own

Connecting with People and Starting Conversations

Practicing makes people feel confident. It’s common to worry that you have nothing to talk about when trying to start a conversation. It can help to have some topics in mind. The following list shows common topics other people have used to start conversations. Which topics have you used before? Which would you like to try? Write your answers and ideas in the space below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Topic</th>
<th>I have used this before</th>
<th>I would like to try using this</th>
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<td>Weather</td>
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<td>Compliment (not too personal)</td>
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<td>Current activity or business</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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Let’s Talk About It

What do you think are good topics to start a conversation?

Which topics from the example list do you already use to start conversations?

Which topics give you more ideas about how to start a conversation?
Try it Out

Starting a Conversation

Practicing can make you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill

▶ Look at the person and smile.
▶ Greet the person, saying something like “Hi,” or “Hello.”
▶ Ask a simple question like “How’s it going?” Or, bring up a simple topic like sports, or the weather.
▶ Keep the exchange light and brief.

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

STEP 4
Try it out
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

KEY POINT
Before starting a conversation, it’s usually helpful to have some topics in mind.
Reconnecting with people

For many people, building social support involves reconnecting with friends and family. We'll talk about reconnecting with friends first. Then we'll talk about ways to reconnect with family members.

Reconnecting with friends

To get started, decide who you would like to contact and how you'd like to reach them. There are several ways to contact people. You could:

- Send an e-mail
- Send a message on Facebook
- Send a text
- Use Instagram or Snapchat
- Make a phone call

Next, it can help to plan a few topics you can talk about or include in your message, such as:

- Things you have in common, (like other friends, hobbies, or interests)
- Remembering activities you used to do together (like taking a class together, working at the same place, playing or watching sports, listening to music or going to concerts, celebrating holidays, playing video games, watching movies or television shows, or attending religious services)
- Telling the person what you are doing now (without getting too personal)
- Asking the person what they are doing now (without getting too personal)

When contacting a friend you want to reconnect with, it helps to identify yourself and let them know why you are getting in touch. For example, you could say something like, “Hi. This is Ben. We haven’t talked in a while, and I just wanted to catch up a little.”

Depending on how the conversation goes, suggest getting in touch again, or possibly getting together to do something casual, like getting a cup of coffee.

Let’s Talk About It

Who is an old friend you might like to contact?
What did you used to do together?
What did you have in common?
Try it Out

Re-connecting with a Friend

Practicing can make you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill
Before you reach out to the person, decide how you would like to do it, such as by e-mail, Facebook, text, or phone.

Then use the following steps:
▷ Identify yourself and give a short reason for contacting them, such as “I just wanted to catch up a bit.”

▷ Bring up an easy topic to talk about, such as one from the list in this section of the module.

▷ If the exchange goes well, suggest a way to keep the connection going, such as contacting each other again or meeting for coffee.

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration.

The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

STEP 4
Try it out
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

KEY POINT
Re-connecting with family members and old friends can be a good way to increase your social network.
Reconnecting with family members

Reconnecting with family members is like reconnecting with old friends, with a few differences. For example, you usually know family members better and have more history together. You need to be prepared to talk more about what you have been doing, and be willing to talk about gaps in time when you were not in touch.

You might not have been in contact because of something unpleasant that happened in the past. You might still be upset or embarrassed about this event, or think that your relatives are bothered by it. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to approach these types of family issues. The approach depends on the individual, the situation, and the family relationship. However, with a few simple tips, reconnecting with a family member often goes quite smoothly.

**PROBLEM SOLVING** Here are some possible ways to deal with unpleasant events in the past:

If the event was minor or has been worked out already, you may not need to discuss it in detail. You may not need to discuss it at all. You may choose to briefly acknowledge the event, and then move on to the positive things you have done recently. You may also express your desire to reconnect.

If you think the event was significant, or could make it difficult for you to talk with your relative, you may want to address it directly. For example, you may have: lost your temper (such as calling someone a name); done something embarrassing while drunk, high, or because of symptoms of your illness; or you may have frightened someone. It can be helpful to briefly acknowledge your past behavior and the upset feelings it may have caused, apologize for it, and then tell the family member about some positive changes you have been making in your life recently.

If you have known your family member for a long time, and he or she knows that you have had mental health and/or substance use problems, you may want to speak directly about this. You may want to tell your relative that you are getting treatment and have made a lot of changes in your life.

**Let’s Talk About It**

Which family members would you like to reconnect with?

Is there anything that’s held you back from contacting these family members earlier?
Try it Out
Re-connecting with Family

Practicing makes you feel more confident, and it can help you achieve your goals.

**STEP 1**
**Review the steps of the skill**
Before you reach out to the family member, decide how you would like to do it, such as by e-mail, Facebook, text, or phone. Then use the following steps:

▸ Identify yourself and give a short reason for contacting them, such as, “I haven’t been in touch for a while and I just wanted to catch up.”

▸ If necessary, apologize for unpleasant events in the past.

▸ Tell the family member that you would like to let them know what you have been doing, and to hear how things have been going for them.

▸ If the exchange goes well, suggest a way to keep the connection going, such as contacting each other again or getting together.

**STEP 2**
**Watch a demonstration of the skill**
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

**STEP 3**
**Review the demonstration**
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration.

**STEP 4**
**Try it out**
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

**STEP 5**
**Get feedback**
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

**STEP 6**
**Continue practice and feedback**
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed.

**STEP 7**
**Try it out on your own**
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.
HOME PRACTICE
Connecting with People and Starting Conversations

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:**
Start a conversation with someone you see on a regular basis.

**OPTION 2:**
Take a step to reconnect with an old friend or family member.

**Make a plan for home practice this week:**

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GOAL TRACKING

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

**To complete this step, I will use the following plan:**

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KEY POINTS • Topic 1
Connecting with People and Starting Conversations

Talking to people you see on a regular basis can help you increase your confidence and your conversation skills.

Before starting a conversation, it’s usually helpful to have some topics in mind.

Re-connecting with family members and old friends can be a good way to increase your social network.
Topic 2
Having Enjoyable Conversations

The last topic covered the basic steps for starting conversations with people. This topic provides suggestions to keep a good conversation going. This is one of the best ways to get to know a person better.

This session will introduce two good subjects for keeping a conversation going:

- Listening and asking questions
- Giving information, with a comfortable level of disclosure

Listening and asking questions

Being able to show the other person you are listening to them is an important skill for having good conversations. You can show the other person you are listening by using the following steps:

- Look at the person
- Nod your head
- Say “uh-huh” or “OK” or “I see”
- Repeat back the person’s main point, or make a comment about what the person just said

EXAMPLE When Maria told Ben about her tough day at work, Ben made eye contact with her, nodded his head, and said “I see” as she told her story. When Maria reached a natural stopping point, Ben showed Maria that he understood her point by saying, “From what you said, it sounds like your boss asked you to do a lot more than usual. That must have been stressful.”

Asking questions is another useful strategy for having rewarding conversations. This shows you are interested and want to understand the other person’s point-of-view. Here are some examples of questions that can keep a conversation going:

“You said you liked playing card games. Which ones do you like?”

“You mentioned you were feeling happy today. What happened to make you feel happy?”

“So, you’re going to start community college next semester. What classes do you want to take?”

“You said you are going to be extra busy today. What do you have to do?”
Giving information

Another way to move a conversation forward is to give the other person information about something. For example, you might add something about the topic, share your opinion, or tell the person about your experiences or feelings related to the topic. Here are some examples of sharing information:

“You were just talking about eating more healthy meals. I saw a good show about that on the Cooking Channel this week.”

“I saw the movie you just mentioned. I especially liked the action scenes in the desert.”

“I’m sorry you had a rough day. I can relate. I had a few problems myself today.”

“You weekend sounds like it was fun, especially going for a bike ride. On Saturday I went for a walk in the park and saw all the flowers that are starting to bloom.”

Sharing personal information

Deciding how much to tell someone can be difficult. If you share too much too soon, the other person may feel overwhelmed and pull away. Sharing personal information is called disclosure. If you disclose too little about yourself over time, it may be difficult to build a close relationship.

It can be helpful to think about the different types of relationships you have, and the different levels of sharing (or disclosure) in those relationships. Then you can think about whether you would like to keep the same level of disclosure, or take a step toward sharing more about yourself and getting closer.

Low level of sharing or disclosure

A low level of sharing, or disclosure, involves telling things about yourself that are not highly personal, such as your tastes or preferences for things like food, movies, television, books, websites, and games. Most people use a low level of disclosure when they first meet someone, or when they know someone on a very casual basis (like waiting at the same bus stop). They may also use a low level of disclosure when they know someone on a professional or business basis (for example, the checkout person at the grocery store).

EXAMPLE OF LOW DISCLOSURE: Justin was just getting to know someone in his class named Isaac. They talked about their homework assignments and other classes they had taken in the same subject.
Medium level of disclosure

Most people gradually increase their level of disclosure as they spend more time together. At a medium level of disclosure, people might discuss slightly more personal things about themselves. For example, they might share information about their job, where they live, what they like to do in their spare time, opinions about news events, and their likes and dislikes.

**EXAMPLE OF MEDIUM DISCLOSURE:**
When Justin got to know his classmate Isaac a little better, he told him about which teachers he liked best, some challenges he had faced in doing homework, things that made him laugh in class, and what level he had reached in his favorite video game. Justin also told Isaac a little about past problems he had in school, such as having trouble concentrating.

High level of disclosure

After people get to know each other pretty well, they often feel comfortable telling more personal information about themselves. For example, they might share information such as feelings, their hopes and dreams, difficult experiences they have gone through, or current worries or concerns. It is natural to go to a higher level of disclosure if you have spent a lot of time with someone, and they have shared personal things with you.

**EXAMPLE OF HIGH DISCLOSURE:**
After Justin got to know Isaac well, he told him about his experience with mental illness and his problems using drugs. “There was a time when I was worried about a lot of things that don’t make sense now, like thinking that everyone was against me, even when they weren’t. I was also smoking a lot of marijuana at the time, because I thought it helped me relax. But it got to be a real problem, so I don’t do that anymore. Things are a lot better for me now.”

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**
Can you think of specific people you have different levels of disclosure with? What do you talk about?

**LOW LEVEL OF DISCLOSURE:**

**MEDIUM LEVEL OF DISCLOSURE:**

**HIGH LEVEL OF DISCLOSURE:**
Having Enjoyable Conversations

Practicing makes you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill
▷ Greet the person.
▷ Ask a question, or bring up a topic you think will interest them.
▷ Listen to the person. Show that you hear them by nodding your head, or saying “uh-uh,” or “I see.”
▷ Give some information about yourself at a comfortable level of disclosure.
▷ End on a positive note by saying something like, “I’ve really enjoyed talking with you, but I have to go now.”

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think the role-play was?

STEP 4
Try it out
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

KEY POINTS
After you start a conversation, you can keep it going by listening to the other person and asking them questions. This helps you get to know them better.

It is also important to let the other person get to know you better.
Home Practice

Having Enjoyable Conversations

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:**
Practice having an enjoyable conversation with someone you don’t know very well using a low level of disclosure.

**OPTION 2:**
Practice having an enjoyable conversation with someone you feel close to already, like a friend or family member. Use a medium or high level of disclosure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make a plan for home practice this week:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I will do</td>
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Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The step I will work on</th>
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“You have to practice something to make it your own!”
After you start a conversation, you can keep it going by listening to the other person and asking them questions. This helps you get to know them better.

It is also important to let the other person get to know you better.

You can decide how much personal information to share with someone based on how well you know them already.

It’s usually best to increase your level of disclosure with someone gradually, starting off with a low level of disclosure.
Topic 3
Developing a Support Network

When you decide to make an important change in your life, it helps to get the support of people who care about you. Having people in your life who are supportive gives you someone to talk to and rely on. If you are in the process of cutting down or stopping drinking or using drugs, it can be especially helpful to have people in your life who support your decision.

This session will introduce five good subjects for increasing your network of support friends and family members:

- Identifying people who can provide support
- Finding additional people you share interests with
- Using meaningful roles in your life to meet new supportive people
- Finding fun things to do without alcohol or other drugs
- Learning strategies for responding to offers to drink or use drugs

Identifying people who can provide support

To overcome problems with alcohol or other drugs, it is helpful to spend time with people who do not use substances. They are less likely to tempt you to drink or use drugs. People who are in recovery from substance use problems, and are not currently drinking or using drugs, may be especially supportive because they often have had similar experiences and have similar goals.

KEY POINT Other supportive people can understand what you have been through and often share similar goals.

People working on sobriety say they have found support from the following people:

- Friend
- Partner or spouse
- Member of their place of worship
- Member of a local peer support group or agency
- Someone who attends the same treatment program
- Member of a self-help group for drug or alcohol problems, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Dual Recovery, or Smart Recovery
Let’s Talk About It

Who did you select as supportive people that you would like to spend more time with? Why did you select them?

### Make It Your Own

#### People I Know Who Do Not Use Alcohol or Drugs

Spending more time with people who do not drink or use drugs makes it easier to reduce or stop using substances. Use the chart below to write the names of people you know who do not use substances. After each name, mark how often you spend time with them. Think about whether you would like to spend more time with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How often do I spend time with this person? (Daily, weekly, monthly yearly, or less than yearly.)</th>
<th>I would like to spend more time with this person: Yes or No</th>
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Finding people you share interests with

You can often find people who don’t use alcohol or drugs with similar interests at local clubs, special interest groups, or places of worship. Look up your interests online. Keep your eye out for flyers and announcements posted in public places such as the library, the YMCA, or the grocery store. You can also ask friends, family members, and other people who attend treatment programs with you. Let them know your interest (for example, taking nature hikes, playing music with others, or learning a foreign language). Ask them if they know someone with similar interests, or know of any organizations or clubs that share this interest.

Using meaningful roles in your life to meet new supportive people

Your job, school, or volunteer work may give you natural opportunities to meet people. You can also join organizations, such as hiking groups or church groups that offer chances to spend time with other people in the course of their activities. Taking time to get to know people at work or school can help you make friends who don’t use alcohol or drugs. Here are some things you can do to connect with supportive people:

**Stop to talk.** Make a point of talking with people before or after groups, classes, church activities, work, or volunteering.

**Spend time with others during breaks.** Spend lunch or dinner breaks with others. Invite people to sit with you at meal times. Invite someone to go out to lunch or pick up a sandwich together.

**Share a ride.** Join a car pool, ride the bus or subway together, or walk to and from classes or work together.

**Volunteer** at your place of worship or somewhere else that is related to your interests. Many places need volunteers to help with their activities.

Let’s Talk About It

What meaningful roles do you have in your life? What people have you gotten to know this way? What did you do to get to know these people?
Finding fun things to do without alcohol or drugs

When people stop using alcohol or drugs, they sometimes have difficulty finding other interesting or fun things to do with their time. In the past, drinking and using drugs took up a lot of their time, and gave them something to do. It’s important to find new activities to do when you are not using alcohol or drugs.

Make It Your Own

Social Activities I’d Like to Try

The following list gives examples of fun activities that involve spending time with other people. Put a check by the activities that interest you or add some new activities.

- Taking an adult education class
- Attending a worship service
- Going out to eat
- Visiting a museum
- Listening to music
- Learning to play an instrument
- Taking a dance class
- Playing cards or a board game
- Running, biking, swimming
- Taking a yoga, tai-chi, martial arts or meditation class

- Making crafts, pottery, jewelry
- Stargazing
- Drawing painting or photography
- Playing outside games (like badminton, tennis, volleyball)
- Volunteering
- Knitting or crocheting
- Watching movies
- Taking a writing class
- Weight lifting, aerobic exercise
- Hiking, taking walks
- Cooking or baking
- Playing computer games
- Playing a team sport (like basketball, soccer, football, softball, or bowling)
- Doing jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles or word games (like Sudoku)
- Going to sports events
- Writing poetry, stories, journaling
- Going fishing
- Playing catch or Frisbee
- Reading, joining a book club
- Bird watching

Let’s Talk About It

Which activities did you check that you might want to try?

What other activities would you like to add to this list?
TOPIC 3  Developing a Support Network

Make It Your Own
Developing a Support Network

Make a plan for increasing your support network, by doing at least one of the following things:

- Spend more time with people you already know who don’t use alcohol or drugs
- Spend time with new people you share an interest with
- Use a meaningful role to meet new people who don’t use alcohol at your job, school, or volunteering
- Find fun activities you can enjoy that do not involve drugs or alcohol

Include these details in your plan:

What do you plan to do to increase your network of people who don’t use alcohol or drugs? Be specific.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

When and where do you plan to do it?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Would you like someone to assist you? If so, who and how?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Strategies for responding to offers to drink or use drugs

It is very helpful when you decide to stop using substances to spend more time with people who do not use substances, and to find fun things to do that do not involve alcohol or drugs. However, it’s not always possible to completely avoid contact with people who drink or use drugs. Furthermore, they may offer substances to you, or may ask you to join them in using. It’s very important to be able to confidently turn down offers to drink or use drugs.

KEY POINT
Fun activities are a great way to build your support network.
Refusing offers to drink or use drugs from strangers

For offers from drug dealers or people who aren’t your friends, it usually works to keep the interaction brief and avoid discussion or debate.

Try it Out

Refusing Offers to Drink or Use Drugs from Dealers and Strangers

Practicing makes you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill

▷ Decline in a firm voice.
▷ Avoid making excuses for saying “no.”
▷ Repeat the refusal if needed.
▷ Leave the situation as soon as possible.

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill

Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration

Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

STEP 4
Try it out

Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback

After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback

Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own

Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.
Refusing offers to drink or use drugs from friends or family

When a friend or family member offers you alcohol or drugs, you may want to say a little more when you say “no.” For example, you may want to give them a reason why you don’t want to drink or use drugs, and you may want to suggest an alternative activity.

Try it Out

Refusing Offers to Drink or Use Drugs from Friends or Family

Practicing makes you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill
▷ Decline in a firm voice.
▷ Tell them about the importance of your sobriety and ask them to respect it.
▷ Suggest an alternative activity.
▷ If they keep insisting, explain that you find the situation stressful and that you need to leave.

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration.

STEP 4
Try it out
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

KEY POINT
It can be hard to say no when people offer you drugs or alcohol. Responding to offers to use is an important skill to practice so you are prepared in social situations.
## Home Practice

### Developing a Support Network

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:**
Build your sober network by carrying out the plan you made in one of the “Make It Your Own” in this topic.

**OPTION 2:**
Practice your skills for refusing offers to drink or use drugs, either in a real situation that comes up, or by doing a role-play with a supportive person.

### Make a plan for home practice this week:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I will do</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY POINTS • Topic 3
Developing a Support Network

A sober network is an important part of recovery for many people.

Other sober people can understand what you have been through and often share similar goals.

Fun activities are a great way to build your sober network.

It can be hard to say no when people offer you drugs or alcohol. Responding to offers to use is an important skill to practice so you are prepared in social situations.
Topic 4
Getting Closer to People

Getting closer to people is an important goal for many people. For example, almost everyone wants to have good relationships with friends, family members, and romantic partners. The most rewarding relationships are the ones where each person cares about the other person’s point of view, and their health and happiness.

This session will introduce five good subjects for getting closer to people:

- Looking for good qualities in a relationship
- Expressing positive feelings and giving compliments
- Finding out what makes a person happy
- Compromising and sometimes giving in
- Helping a person in a time of need

Looking for good qualities in a relationship

We are all individual people, and everyone has their own types of people they enjoy spending time with. These are the qualities that many people tend to look for in friends and close relationships:

- Honesty
- Understanding
- Support and encouragement
- Safety
- Sharing with each other (not just one person who gives and one person who receives)
- Common interests

Although there are lots of individual differences, many people who are working on sobriety say that they look for some additional qualities in their close relationships.

People in recovery often say they are looking for someone who:

- Has stopped using alcohol or drugs themselves
- Encourages healthy habits
- Is empathic about other people’s struggles
- Supports treatment and attending recovery groups and self-help groups
Let’s Talk About It

Which of the qualities listed on the previous page are most important to you?

What do you think is important to look for in a relationship when a person is working on their sobriety?

Are there some other qualities that are important to you?

How is the above list of qualities people in recovery look for in friends the same or different from the qualities you are looking for?

Can you think of a friend, family member, or someone else you are close to that has these qualities?

Expressing positive feelings and giving compliments

When you feel comfortable with another person, and have gotten to know them pretty well, you may want to get closer to them. Letting a person know how you feel about them can help. This can include expressing and showing affection, but it is not limited to that. For example, you can tell people that you admire certain qualities they have, or that you appreciate specific things they do.

Here are some examples of compliments:

“I like your shirt. It’s a great color.”

“You have a friendly smile. I like seeing you smile.”

“Thank you for listening. It makes me feel good to talk to you.”

“Thanks for bringing me a cup of coffee. I really appreciate it.”

It is also important to accept compliments from others. That keeps the communication going both ways.

EXAMPLE If someone says, “I really like your shirt,” avoid saying things like, “This old thing? It’s nothing special.” Get in the habit of saying “thank you” for compliments. For example, you can say, “I’m glad you like this shirt. Thanks for the compliment.”

Let’s Talk About It

Who would you like to give a compliment to, or express positive feelings to?

What would you like to say to them?
Try it Out

Expressing Positive Emotions

Practicing makes you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill
▷ Pick a person to share a positive feeling.
▷ Decide on something you would like to say.
▷ Identify things to help continue the conversation.
▷ Make eye contact.
▷ End on a positive note.

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

STEP 4
Try it out
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

KEY POINT
The most rewarding relationships are usually the ones where each person cares about the other person’s point of view, and their health and happiness.
Try it Out

Giving Compliments

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill
▷ Decide on a person you would like to give a compliment.
▷ Be ready with something you like about this person. Or, look for a casual compliment to give, such as, “Those are great shoes.”
▷ If the person gives you a compliment, practice accepting the compliment well, such as by saying, “Thank you. It’s so nice of you to notice my new haircut.”

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill
Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration.

STEP 4
Try it out
Now is your chance to try out the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback on role-play
After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback
Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own
Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

KEY POINTS
If you are close to someone, it’s important to be aware when they are in need of support or assistance of some kind, and to help them in their time of need.

In getting closer to someone, it’s important to express your positive feelings to them and to say and do things that make the other person happy.
Finding out what makes a person happy

Getting to know someone better involves figuring out what makes him or her happy. Make a habit of asking questions about what other people enjoy. Find out about their likes and dislikes. When you do something together, talk about the experience and ask questions, such as:

“What did you like about the group today?”

“What was your favorite part of the movie we just watched?”

“Would you be interested in taking a walk in this park again?”

“What did you like about the place we had lunch?”

You can also ask the person about his or her opinions on a variety of subjects. Here are some examples:

“What’s your favorite show to watch?”

“Do you think our city’s baseball team has a chance of winning the series?”

“What kind of music do you like best?”

“What’s your favorite dinner?”

Make It Your Own

It is important to make time for doing things that make someone happy. Once you find out what the person enjoys, you can plan activities that you both enjoy. Below is a checklist with ideas to get you started. Place a check mark next to the ones you would like to try.

- If you both like the outdoors, plan to go on a walk together
- If you both like movies, pick out a movie you can both enjoy
- If you both like art, plan a trip to the art museum, or look at an art book together
- If you both like music, listen to a CD together, or plan to go to a concert
- If the person has a favorite dish, you can make it for dinner
- If the person enjoys listening to rock music, you can turn the radio to the rock station, or find rock music on the Internet
- If the person has a good sense of humor, you can tell them a funny story or a joke
- If the person likes plants, you can give them a potted plant or a bouquet
Compromising and sometimes giving in

In close relationships, people don’t always agree. If you have different ideas about something, try to compromise. In a compromise, both people get some of what they want, but they usually have to give up something.

The goal of compromising is to find a solution that is acceptable to both people. For example, you may both want to watch a movie, but one of you wants to see an action movie and the other wants to see a comedy. You may be able to find an action movie that also has some comedy. Or, you may decide to see an action movie one weekend and a comedy the next weekend.

Compromising

Here are some examples of things people sometimes compromise on:

- When to schedule getting together
- Where to go for lunch
- Which movie or show to watch
- Who cooks dinner and who washes the dishes

There may also be times when you give in to what the other person wants in order to make him or her happy. For example, the person you are close to may want to attend a relative’s birthday party and you don’t. You may decide to go in order to make them happy.

Giving In

Here are some examples of times it might be reasonable to give in:

- Watching a sports game because it includes someone’s favorite team
- Taking the person’s dog for a walk
- Going to a concert of someone’s favorite musical group
- Going to someone’s favorite restaurant

Not Giving In

Here are some examples of times it would not be reasonable to give in:

- Accepting a ride from someone who has been drinking or using drugs
- Doing anything that makes you feel unsafe
- Saying yes to a drink to avoid looking rude
- Going along with something that is against your values, like someone using hate speech or taunting another person
Let's Talk About It

What are some situations you can think of where it is a good idea to compromise?

What are some situations when you think it is not a good idea to compromise?

Helping a person in a time of need

Everyone needs help and support at some times in their life. Sometimes people need emotional help, like when they have lost a loved one or had a disappointment. Sometimes they need practical help, like packing when they are going to move to a new apartment. The more people help each other, the closer they usually become.

Here are some examples of helping in a time of need:

- If the person is sick, bring medicine or food
- If the person has car trouble, offer a ride or help figure out the bus schedule
- If the person has a bad day, offer to listen
- If the person has an extra busy schedule, offer to do a chore or an errand
- If the person is struggling with a problem, help figure out some possible solutions

Let's Talk About It

When have you helped someone in need? What are some examples you can think of to help someone in a time of need?
HAVING A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM has played an important role in helping me deal with my mental health and substance use issues. I was always a very shy person, even before I began to have problems with anxiety, depression, and alcohol. After I began to have these problems, anxiety about being around other people kept me from going to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings or other self-help groups—or anywhere large groups of people met. Even when I was in my 30’s, I was afraid of meeting new people, and I felt embarrassed telling anyone about my fears. I had tried before, but I never knew what to say, and would always break off conversations early—before I ever got a chance to learn about the other person.

One day, my therapist asked me if I had found a sponsor in AA. I decided to tell her the truth about my anxiety around people, and I was amazed when she said she could help me learn how to talk more comfortably with others. We practiced how to start conversations, and then I tried starting them on my own. The more we practiced and the more I tried talking with people on my own, the better I got, and the better I felt with other people. Now, I have an AA sponsor and several friends. I’m not lonely any more. I learned that it doesn’t matter how old you are, you can still learn how to talk to people at any age, and make meaningful connections. In fact, I now have a girlfriend! Being able to talk to people has changed my life.

— Isaac
Home Practice

Getting Closer to People

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

Make a plan for home practice this week:

OPTION 1:
Identify someone you would like to be closer to. If they are in need, do something to help them out. If not, do something to make them happy.

OPTION 2:
Practice giving compliments and sharing positive emotions with someone in your life.

Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

The step I will work on

With whom

“You have to practice something to make it your own!”
KEY POINTS • Topic 4
Getting Closer to People

The most rewarding relationships are usually the ones where each person cares about the other person’s point of view, and their health and happiness.

In getting closer to someone, it’s important to express your positive feelings to them and to say and do things that make the other person happy.

In a close relationship, if you have different ideas about something, it’s helpful to try compromising so each person gets something of what they want.

If you are close to someone, it’s important to be aware when they are in need of support or assistance of some kind, and to help them in their time of need.