Breakout 20 — Community Re-Engagement — Re-Entering Community Life

One sentence for the board: This group practices coming back into community life — relationships, supports, and ordinary belonging — one step, one person, one room at a time.

Purpose	Teach community re-engagement as recovery work: re-entering community life, rebuilding relationships and supports, and taking a place in ordinary belonging again. This is re-entry, not the service and volunteering of Giving Back and not the avoidance of high-risk situations from Relapse Prevention — it is the work of belonging again.
Who chooses this group	Curriculum groups meet separately for men and for women. Breakout groups are coed unless otherwise specified. Placement for participants who do not fit a men/women split follows the participant's stated preference, confirmed with staff for safety and privacy. Nothing about a participant's placement is disclosed to the group. Any participant ready to take a step back into community life — a relationship, a group, a support, a room. No participant is asked to name anyone they have harmed or been harmed by, or to describe any relationship in detail. The stated preference stands unless a stated safety reason requires a private conversation. Safety and privacy are the only criteria.
Length	60 minutes
Materials	Paper and pens for every client, whiteboard or flip chart and markers, and the topic resources named in this outline

Time	Segment	What happens
0–5 min	Welcome	Ground rules, confidentiality limits, right to pass. State plainly at the start: no one is asked to name anyone in their life.
5–30 min	Teaching	The teaching points below, in order, on the board: community as recovery, one safe connection, trust by conduct, the network, ordinary belonging, and boundaries.
30–45 min	Discussion	Prompts below. General answers are always complete answers — no one is asked to name anyone in their life or describe any relationship.
45–55 min	Practice — my community map	Clients map the supports they have, name one safe connection and one ordinary place, and one protecting boundary. Writing stays with the client.
55–60 min	Close	Takeaways, the staff path for any unsafe relationship restated, and one community step each client will actually do this week.

Teaching points

- **Recovery happens in community, not alone.** Addiction isolates: people, rooms, and ordinary life all narrow down to one thing. Recovery widens them again — one person, one room, one ordinary day at a time. Belonging is not a reward for later; it is part of the work now.
- **Start with one safe connection.** Re-entry does not begin with a crowd. It begins with one safe connection — a support person, a peer, a family member where that is safe, a group that welcomes newcomers — and one concrete next step toward them.
- **Relationships are rebuilt by conduct.** Trust is not rebuilt by explanation or apology alone; it is rebuilt by sustained, changed conduct — showing up when promised, telling the truth plainly, keeping small commitments. This group teaches the conduct; it does not rehearse conversations with real people.

- **Supports are a network, not a single person.** One person cannot carry a whole recovery. A network — peers, support people, staff, community groups, and, where it fits, family — spreads the load so no single relationship breaks under it. Clients map the network they have and the one gap they will fill next.
- **Ordinary belonging counts.** A shared meal, a regular group, a morning greeting, a place where your name is known — ordinary belonging is recovery work, not a break from it. Clients name one ordinary place or group they will enter or re-enter this week.
- **Boundaries protect re-entry.** Re-entering community life does not mean re-entering every old room. Some people, places, and situations stay closed — Relapse Prevention teaches which ones and why. Boundaries are what make re-entry safe enough to keep.

Discussion prompts

- "What is one safe connection you already have — and what makes it safe?"
- "What is one ordinary place or group where you would like to belong again — or belong for the first time?"
- "What is the one gap in your network right now — and who could fill it, even partly?"
- "What conduct rebuilds trust fastest, in your experience — showing up, telling the truth, or keeping small promises?"

Practice — my community map (10 minutes, your page stays with you)

1. List the supports you have now: people, groups, staff, and community connections — one line each.
2. Circle the one safe connection you will lean on most this week, and write the next step toward them, with a day.
3. Name one ordinary place or group you will enter or re-enter this week, and the day you will go.
4. Name one boundary that protects your re-entry — a person, place, or situation that stays closed — and write it as a plain sentence.
5. Keep your page. It is yours. Nothing written in this practice is collected, copied, or kept by the facilitator or the program.

Facilitator boundaries — Community Re-Engagement

- **No rehearsing real relationships.** Facilitators do not role-play conversations with real people, do not advise on any specific relationship, and do not contact any family member or support person for a client. Questions about a specific relationship go to program staff and the client's own counselor.
- **Safety first in every reconnection.** A client who names a relationship that may be unsafe is connected to staff the same day. No reconnection is ever presented as required, and no one is pressed to reconcile with anyone.

- **No one shares relationship detail.** No participant is asked to name anyone, describe a relationship, or tell a story about a person in their life. General answers are complete answers.
- **Warrior close:** Close with the step taken: “Belonging is not a reward for later — it is the work now. One safe connection, one ordinary room, one kept promise at a time. That is how warriors hold ground: by standing it together.”

Sources & Evidence

Clinical evidence: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA's working definition of recovery and its four major dimensions — health, home, purpose, and community — which frame community as a condition that sustains recovery. This outline applies that framework as group education; it makes no outcome claim.

Recovery-support evidence: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration — peer recovery support and recovery-community frameworks, in which helping others and community participation are core dimensions of recovery support. This outline applies that framework as group education; it makes no outcome claim. No outcome is promised for this group.

Note: No outcome is promised for any group in this packet.