Session 12: Lies I Believe: About Myself, About Support, About Recovery

Duration: 60 minutes • Recovery education group. Ensure all participants are seated and ready

Materials: Whiteboard; index cards; the Session 12 handout (The Lie, the Cost, and the Truth)

Learning objectives — by the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Sort common recovery lies into three families — myself, support, recovery
- Trace one personal lie to its origin and its current cost
- Write a truth statement, supported by evidence from their own life, for their most costly lie

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 2 — Healing. The one idea today is that load-bearing lies cluster in three families — about myself, about support, about recovery — and can be answered with evidence. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. Some automatic thoughts are weather; others are load-bearing — beliefs installed years ago and treated as identity. Today we sort the common recovery lies, trace one of yours to where it was learned and what it costs now, and answer it with a truth statement built on evidence from your own life.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: “Finish the sentence your addiction most wants you to believe: 'Someone like me can never _____.'” Log every craving score on the roster.

Passing is honored — you may pass any question, prompt, or practice without explanation, step out and rejoin, and choose a partner-only option where one is offered.

Teaching (20 minutes)

Some automatic thoughts are random weather; others are load-bearing lies — beliefs installed by trauma, family messages, failures, or the addiction itself, and then treated as identity. They cluster in three families. Lies about myself: I am my worst act; I am too far gone; needing help means I am weak. Lies about the people and supports around me: everyone has given up on me; asking for help only burdens people; no one can be trusted with the truth. Lies about recovery: people like me do not make it; needing medication means I am not really in recovery; one slip erases everything. We work on these the respectful way: trace where the lie was learned (which often deserves grief, not argument), count what it costs now, and answer it with a specific truth — a piece of lived evidence and the testimony of people further along — written where the lie usually speaks. If someone asks a medical question ('is my medication doing this?'), the answer is always: 'That is a question for your prescriber — let's help you get it asked this week.'

- **Name it to tame its authority** A lie operating as background 'common sense' rules us. The same lie written on paper, labeled a lie, loses its disguise.
- **Origin brings compassion** Many lies were a child's or a desperate person's best explanation at the time. We can honor why it formed and still retire it.

- **Captivity is a practice** The lie will visit again. The question is whether it finds a written answer, a person to call, and a mind that recognizes it at the door.

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

Cognitive therapy of substance abuse treats thoughts as testable claims and builds the skill of examining evidence for and against them in writing (Beck et al., 1993). Key sources for this session: Beck, Wright, Newman, & Liese (1993); Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (2006), TIP 47. Evidence strength: Strong for CBT-based substance use interventions. Spiritual practice: Scripture meditation — correlates with cognitive restructuring of core beliefs; evidence: Moderate (Beck et al., 1993). Full citations: Appendix H. The session's Scripture material is in its optional handout (Appendix I), as theological foundation, quoted from the King James Version. TIP 47 addresses intensive outpatient treatment, above this education setting; it is background for the CBT skills taught here, not the setting delivered.

'Evidence strength' grades the correlated mechanism, not the spiritual practice itself

Pause midway through teaching: ask, "What part of that sounds most like your life right now?" Take two or three answers, connect them to the teaching, and continue. Teach in your own words — the bullets are your map, not a script to read aloud.

Discussion questions (10 minutes)

1. Which family — myself, support, or recovery — holds your most expensive lie?
2. Where did you first learn it, and who benefited from you believing it?
3. What has believing it cost you in the last year, concretely?

Skill practice (12 minutes)

Counsel-room exercise in pairs: each person states their lie, its origin in two sentences, its cost in one, and reads their written truth statement aloud twice — once to their partner, once as if to themselves in the mirror. Partners respond only: 'I believe that truth about you because _____,' with a specific observation.

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Carry your truth statement where the lie usually speaks (workbook cover, phone note). Each time you catch the lie this week, read the statement aloud and log it: date, lie, truth read, belief rating before and after. Participants write it in their workbook before leaving. Facilitator: name the homework again at the door as people leave.

Facilitator notes and cautions

Handle church-hurt content with particular care: validate real wounds caused by real people without letting the session become an indictment of faith itself or of any congregation. If a lie's origin is abuse, the tracing stays at headline level in group ('I learned it at home') — details belong with a counselor, and the facilitator makes that referral warmly and the same day.

Closing (2 minutes)

A lie written on paper, labeled a lie, loses its disguise. Carry your truth statement where the lie usually speaks, and log what happens when you read it. Next week: guilt and shame — and the difference that changes everything.

Fidelity check for this session: objectives named at the start ☐ craving scores logged ☐ skill practice completed in full ☐ homework written down by participants ☐ session note filed today ☐