Session 27: Rebuilding Trust in Small, Verifiable Steps

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

Materials: Trust Ledger worksheet; the Session 27 handout (Trust Ledger)

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

- Explain trust as a prediction other people make from evidence, rebuilt by kept micro-commitments
- Build a Trust Ledger: one relationship, three small commitments, dates, evidence
- Set expectations honestly — trust returns at the injured party's pace, not ours

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 3 — Rebuilding. The one idea today is that trust is a prediction rebuilt by small, verifiable, kept commitments. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. Trust is not a mood that returns when enough time passes. Trust is a prediction other people make from evidence — and we control exactly one variable: the evidence. Today we build a Trust Ledger: one relationship, three small commitments, dates, and a miss protocol written before the first miss.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: “What is the smallest promise you have broken so often that people stopped believing even your small promises?” 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)

Participants regularly ask the wrong question about trust: 'When will they trust me again?' — as if trust were a mood that returns when enough time passes or enough tears fall. Trust is a prediction. The people we harmed are forecasting, from evidence, whether believing us is safe yet. We do not control their forecast, their timeline, or their right to keep distance while they watch. We control exactly one variable: the evidence. So the work is deliberately small — commitments little enough to keep on a bad day, stated plainly, kept visibly, logged honestly, including the misses and the fast, unprompted admission when we miss. Grand gestures actually set trust back: they ask the injured person to bet big on an unproven record. Ninety days of this (the living amends of Session 24 supply the pattern) is how forecasts change.

- **Small is not insulting — it is calibrated** A person rebuilding from zero credibility who promises the moon teaches people to discount everything. A person who promises the 6 p.m. call and makes it thirty days running teaches arithmetic they can trust.
- **Admit misses before they are discovered** A self-reported miss, with the repair, builds more trust than a perfect streak later exposed as edited. Honesty speed is itself evidence.

- **Their pace is not our punishment** Some relationships will heal slowly, some partially, some not at all — and our recovery cannot be held hostage to any single verdict (Session 15's hope anchor applies here in full).

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

Purpose — meaningful daily activity, work, and service — is one of SAMHSA's four dimensions of recovery, and recovery capital research links work, relationships, and community resources to sustained recovery (SAMHSA, 2012; Granfield & Cloud, 1999). Key sources for this session: SAMHSA (2012); Granfield & Cloud (1999); Bandura (1977); Riessman (1965). Evidence strength: Moderate. Spiritual practice: Daily examen — correlates with self-monitoring and verifiable, repeated commitment; evidence: Moderate (Bandura, 1977). 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.

'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. Pick one relationship: what is the current forecast people there hold of you — and is it, honestly, earned?
2. What three micro-commitments fit that relationship (small, dated, observable)?
3. How do you usually handle a miss — hide, confess fast, or over-apologize and under-change?
4. What will you do on the days their pace feels like rejection — who is in your corner for exactly that feeling?

Skill practice (12 minutes)

Trust Ledger build: participants choose one relationship and write three micro-commitments with frequency and evidence (kept-call log, arrival times, payment receipts, workbook ticks), plus their miss-protocol sentence: 'If I miss, I will tell _____ within _____ hours, in these words: _____.' Facilitator reviews ledgers for size — every commitment should be keepable in their worst normal week, not their best.

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Run the ledger for the next 21 days (it continues into your 90-day plan). Log every kept and missed commitment daily; use the miss protocol at the first miss, not the fifth. Bring the ledger to Session 30. Participants write it in their workbook before leaving. Facilitator: name the homework again at the door as people leave. The trust ledger in this session is an entry in the one running daily log in the workbook, not a second log.

Facilitator notes and cautions

Warn explicitly against using the ledger as a scorecard to present to the injured party ('see, 21 checkmarks — trust me now'). The ledger is for the participant and their accountability person; presenting it as leverage repeats the manipulation it is meant to retire. If a relationship involves court-ordered conditions, those conditions govern — the ledger never substitutes for compliance.

Closing (2 minutes)

Small is not insulting — it is calibrated. Run the ledger daily, admit misses fast, and let the arithmetic accumulate. Next phase: relapse prevention — the chain, the plan, and the return.

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 ☐



PHASE 4 — LIVING FREE: PREVENTION AND PURPOSE

Week 6 — Relapse Prevention (continued)