Session 49: When Someone You Help Is Slipping: Notice, Ask, Connect

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

Materials: Workbooks and pens; the Session 8 handout (My Personal Crisis & Safety Plan), one per participant

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

- Recognize the early signs that a person you help is slipping, using the five-stage chain.
- State the no-secrets rule and the one-direct-question-then-staff sequence: ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day.
- Rehearse a warm handover to staff, naming 988 and 911, and return to your own program.

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 5 — Giving Back. The one idea today is that when someone you help is slipping, there are no secrets — ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. It will happen: the person you have been walking with starts going quiet, skipping, shining you on. Your job in that moment is not detective, judge, or rescuer. It is three verbs — notice, ask, connect — done early and done kindly. There are no secrets in this room: if someone is slipping, you ask one direct question, then you hand to staff the same day. Staff carry assessment, reporting, and consequences. You carry presence.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: "Who noticed your slide, back when? What did they say — and what do you wish they had said sooner?" 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)

When a person you help is slipping, the rule is no secrets: you never promise secrecy, never assess, never investigate, never search, and never hold or read another person's plan. Ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day. The facilitator models the questions once: 'Are you thinking about using? Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' Staff carry assessment, reporting, and consequences. You carry presence. The five stages are: Drift; Setup / denial; High-risk situation; Craving / decision point; Use.

- **Ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day: listen to the answer, do not assess the answer yourself, and do not wait for a second conversation.**
- **Handover steps: stay with the person; tell staff what you noticed and what was said; name 988 (call or text) and 911 for an emergency; let staff carry assessment, reporting, and consequences; return to your own program and your own plan.**
- **Never hold or read another person's plan, never promise secrecy, and never investigate or search. Direct asking is one direct question, then staff the same day —**

never a second round of questions, and never a private agreement to keep it between the two of you.

- Find your own plan (2 minutes): Each person finds their own crisis plan — the Session 8 handout / Appendix A working copy — and points to the first person they would call. No one reads their plan aloud. The facilitator confirms the counselor plan is in place, without reading clinical detail.

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

When a person a participant helps is slipping, the response taught in this session is a warm handover to staff: ask once, then staff now, with 988 and 911 named (Stanley & Brown, 2012; SAMHSA, 2022). Peers never assess, investigate, search, or hold or read another person's plan. Key sources for this session: Stanley & Brown (2012); SAMHSA (2022), 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Evidence strength: Moderate to strong. 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. Pause time is 2 minutes shorter in this session: the Session 8 handout step above takes those 2 minutes.

Discussion questions (10 minutes)

1. What signs would you see first in the person you help — and which sign would you be tempted to explain away?
2. Rehearse the sentence: how do you say what you noticed without it sounding like an accusation?
3. What will you do with the worry afterward — who holds it with you?

Skill practice (12 minutes)

In trios, rehearse a handover: one person notices, one asks one direct question, one plays staff receiving the handover. An observer role and a pass are available for anyone who prefers not to role-play; observers name what they saw done well. No one role-plays assessing, investigating, or reading another person's plan.

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Homework: Write the handover words you would use — what you noticed, the one question you asked, and the staff person you would hand to — and rehearse them once with a partner or aloud alone. Report it honestly — done, partly done, or not done with the obstacle named.

Facilitator notes and cautions

If the person discloses intent, a plan, or means — for use that endangers them or for self-harm — the crisis protocol governs immediately; peer skills never slow it down. The facilitator closes this session by re-reading the escalation steps aloud. No named peer supervisor role is created in this guide; handover is to staff under the crisis protocol.

Closing (2 minutes)

Notice early, ask plain, connect the same day. That is the whole job, and it saves people exactly because it is small. Next session: hard conversations — feedback that helps instead of shames.

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 ☐