Session 55: The Honest Application: Records, Gaps, and References

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

Materials: Whiteboard; workbooks and pens; a sample job application form if available; the Session 55 handout (The Honest Application)

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

- Draft truthful, brief answers for the three hard questions: record, gap, and why-should-we-hire-you
- Assemble a reference list of people who have agreed to be asked
- State what they will never do in a job search: lie on a form, borrow a history, hide what a background check will find anyway

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 5 — Giving Back. The one idea today is that the application is an honesty exam with boxes — brief, factual, unashamed. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. The application form is an honesty exam with boxes. Today we fill it like people who have decided the truth is a strategy: brief, factual, unashamed — and never more of the story than the question asks for.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: "What is the line on an application — or the moment in an interview — that you dread most? Name it exactly." 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)

Employers do not need your memoir; they need to know whether you will show up, do the work, and be straight with them. A record answered plainly and briefly, with evidence of change since, reads as exactly what it is: a person whose worst chapter is behind a verifiable record of kept days. The two failure modes are lying, which a background check will find, and confessing, which hands a stranger a story they never asked for and cannot use.

- **Brief, factual, forward** The pattern for any record answer: what it was, in one clause; when, in one date; what has changed, in evidence — this program, this many kept months, these references. Then stop. Over-explaining reads as either hiding or pleading; the pattern reads as done.
- **Gaps are explained by what filled them** A gap filled by treatment, this program, caregiving, or work search is an answer, not an apology: 'I was in a recovery program; I completed it on this date.' Fill in your own program type in your own words, with staff help if needed. Dates and completions are the currency.

- **References are asked, never assumed** Every reference is a person who said yes, knows what job you are seeking, and can speak to recent, specific evidence (Session 27). Staff, mentors, service supervisors (Session 38's confirming names) — people who watched you keep things.

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

Recovery capital and self-efficacy research link documented, verifiable steps and mastery experiences to confidence and sustained change; trust research in this curriculum treats small, verifiable evidence as the mechanism by which reputations are rebuilt (Granfield & Cloud, 1999; Bandura, 1977). Key sources for this session: Granfield & Cloud (1999); Bandura (1977); SAMHSA (2012). Evidence strength: Moderate — observational and theoretical literature. Spiritual practice: Confession — correlates with honest self-presentation and verifiable evidence of change; 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. Show your record answer to your partner, or read it aloud if you choose. Your partner checks only the pattern: one clause, one date, evidence, stop. You may pass and work with the facilitator instead. Where does it plead, hide, or ramble?
2. Who are your three references, and what specific evidence can each one honestly give?
3. What question do you hope they never ask — and what is your truthful one-sentence answer to it?

Skill practice (12 minutes)

Application lab (solo drafting, pairs polish): each person drafts ONE hard answer in the room — the dreaded one from check-in — on the sample form or in the workbook. Partners review against the pattern: one clause, one date, evidence of change, stop. Then one two-minute mock: the partner asks the dreaded question from check-in, and the answer must stay inside thirty seconds and end facing forward. The other two hard answers are written homework, with the same pattern printed at the top of the Workbook page.

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Write the other two hard answers in your workbook, using the same pattern. Ask your three references this week — actually ask, and record the yes in your workbook with the date. If someone declines, thank them and replace the name before the next session.

Participants write it in their workbook before leaving. Facilitator: name the homework again at the door as people leave.

Facilitator notes and cautions

Facilitators give pattern and practice, not legal advice: questions about expungement, licensing, or what a specific employer may ask go to the Program Director and the program's current guidance. Never pressure a participant to disclose details of their record aloud in the room; the lab works from drafts, not confessions.

Closing (2 minutes)

Tell the truth in thirty seconds and face forward. The form is not your judge; it is your first kept appointment with the working world. Next session: you got the job — now the harder half, keeping it.

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 ☐