Session 58: Setbacks at Work: Losing, Leaving, and Starting Again

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

Materials: Whiteboard; workbooks and pens; the Session 58 handout (My 48-Hour Protocol Card)

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

- Run the 48-hour protocol for a job setback: tell, stabilize, plan
- Separate the event (a job ended) from the verdict (I am finished) using Session 10's thought work
- Draft a restart plan with the first three steps and their dates

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 5 — Giving Back. The one idea today is that a bad work day is decided in advance, in writing — the first forty-eight hours. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. Somewhere ahead of almost everyone in this room is a bad work day with consequences: the layoff, the firing, the shift that disappears, the boss who says do not come back. Today we decide, in advance and in writing, what the first forty-eight hours after that day will look like — because those hours decide whether a setback stays a setback.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: "What did losing a job used to start in you — the first thought, the first call, the first day? Walk it honestly." 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)

A lost job in recovery is a problem to solve with the care team within forty-eight hours; the danger is the silent spiral after it — shame doing arithmetic at 2 a.m., structure collapsing by the weekend, the old phone numbers starting to look like a plan. The protocol is deliberately boring: tell your people the same day, stabilize the week (meetings, sleep, the house routine), and write the restart — three steps, dated, starting with the references and evidence you built in Sessions 55 and 56, which a lost job does not erase.

- **An event is not a verdict** Put the thought on trial (Sessions 10–11): 'I lost a job' is a fact. 'No one will ever hire me' is a prediction wearing a fact's clothes. The record of kept shifts, kept commitments, and this program is evidence, and evidence outranks 2 a.m.
- **Tell before you spiral** The call list is pre-written: accountability partner, sponsor or mentor, Program Director or care contact, one reference who will hear it as news and not as doom. Silence is the spiral's favorite room; the calls break it up within a day.

- **Restart small, restart dated** Three steps inside seven days: file what must be filed, contact two names from the first-target list (Session 54), take one interim shift, post, or service day to keep the week's structure standing while the search runs.

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

Cognitive therapy of substance abuse treats catastrophic thoughts as testable claims, and relapse prevention treats high-risk situations — including unemployment and loss of structure — as plannable events with pre-decided responses (Beck et al., 1993; Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). Key sources for this session: Beck, Wright, Newman, & Liese (1993); Marlatt & Gordon (1985); Gorski & Miller (1986). Evidence strength: Moderate to strong for CBT-based interventions generally. Spiritual practice: Lament — correlates with honest grief over loss without surrendering to it; 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.

'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. Read your 2 a.m. thought aloud. What is the evidence against it, item by item?
2. Who are your four calls, by name? Which one would you most want to skip — and why is that one mandatory?
3. What interim structure — service post, house duty, day labor, training — would you take in week one? Name it now, while you do not need it.

Skill practice (12 minutes)

The 48-hour drill (solo writing, then pairs): each person writes their personal protocol card — the four calls in order, the stabilize list (meetings, sleep, house routine), and three restart steps with blank dates to be filled the day they are needed. Partners review for realism: are the names real, the steps dated inside seven days, the interim structure named? Revise until the partner would trust the card at 2 a.m.

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Give a copy of your protocol card to your accountability partner this week and tell them what it is for: 'If I lose work, this is my first forty-eight hours. Ask me about step one.' File the original in your workbook. Participants write it in their workbook before leaving. Facilitator: name the homework again at the door as people leave.

Facilitator notes and cautions

A participant currently in a job crisis is not processed in the room. The facilitator acknowledges, applies the protocol with them privately after session, and connects them to the Program Director the same day. This session prepares; it does not case-manage.

Closing (2 minutes)

A setback is a chapter, and you have already survived the worst chapter of the book. Tell fast, stabilize the week, restart in writing. Next session: the long middle — sustaining freedom when recovery stops being new.

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 ☐