Session 59: Sustaining Freedom: The Long Middle of Recovery

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

Materials: Appendix C (Warning-Sign Chain) for every participant; workbooks and pens

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

- Describe the long-middle risks: drift, boredom, anniversary seasons, and success itself
- Refresh their warning-sign chain (Appendix C) for year-two realities
- Set a quarterly self-review rhythm and name who sits in it with them

Opening (3 minutes)

Newcomer bridge (60 seconds): This is Phase 5 — Giving Back. The one idea today is that recovery is sustained in the long, ordinary middle, by monitoring, structure, and community. You are welcome here without earlier sessions; everything you need for today is in this session. Nobody relapses at the celebration. They relapse in the long, ordinary middle — the months when recovery is no longer a rescue and has not yet become simply a life. Today we build for the middle, because the middle is where the years are.

Check-in prompt (8 minutes)

Name, craving 0–10, one word for your week — then: "What part of your recovery feels most ordinary now — and what part of ordinary scares you a little?" 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)

Early recovery runs on urgency; sustained recovery runs on rhythm. The risks change costume: drift instead of crisis, boredom instead of craving, old anniversaries arriving on schedule, and success itself — the raise, the apartment, the regained trust — quietly arguing that the disciplines can be retired. They cannot. What changes is the review rhythm: the chain (Appendix C) re-read against current life, the plan renewed on a calendar instead of in an emergency, and people who keep asking the real questions after the crisis audience has gone home.

- **Drift is the chain in slow motion** Stage one of the warning-sign chain (Session 28) at year scale: a skipped meeting becomes a skipped month; a postponed call becomes a lost number. The long middle is lost at stage one, exactly like the first ninety days — only slower, and quieter.
- **Boredom is information, not emergency** A flat season usually means a dimension is underfed — Purpose gone stale, Community thinned, Health neglected (Sessions 1–36 built all four). Feed the dimension; do not feed the craving. New service, new capability (Session 57), new people to help (Block 2) are the curriculum's standing answers.

- **Success needs a plan too** Write if–then plans for good news: the raise, the promotion, the restored license, the family reconciliation. Celebration was an old trigger for most of this room; the plan for winning is written in the same ink as the plan for losing.

Sources & Evidence — Facilitator background — do not teach

Relapse prevention and continuing-care literature treat recovery as a long-term process maintained by monitoring, structure, and community connection rather than a completed event (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985; Gorski & Miller, 1986; White, 2008). Key sources for this session: Marlatt & Gordon (1985); Gorski & Miller (1986); White (2008); SAMHSA (2012). Evidence strength: Moderate. Spiritual practice: Daily examen / evening inventory — correlates with ongoing self-examination as a long-term maintenance practice; evidence: Moderate (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). 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. Which long-middle risk is already visible in your life: drift, boredom, an anniversary, or success?
2. Read your refreshed chain aloud: what is different from the chain you wrote in Session 28?
3. Who sits in your quarterly review — by name — and what are the three questions they must always ask?

Skill practice (12 minutes)

Chain refresh and calendar (solo, then pairs): using Appendix C, each person rewrites their warning-sign chain for their current life — today's actual triggers, people, and seasons — and marks stage one in red. Below it, they write the quarterly review: four dates a year, the named person, and the three standing questions. Partners check that every date is real and every name is a person who has agreed to be asked.

Personal application — homework (5 minutes)

Put the four review dates where your life will see them — phone, plan, workbook — and tell your named person their assignment and first date this week. Participants write it in their workbook before leaving. Facilitator: name the homework again at the door as people leave.

Facilitator notes and cautions

Do not let sustained-recovery talk become a victory lap that shames participants earlier in the process; the room holds every stage at once, and facilitators name that plainly. A

refreshed chain that reveals current, active risk is handled under Session 49's doctrine: connect the same day, kindly, without ceremony.

Closing (2 minutes)

Freedom is not a finish line you cross once; it is a road you maintain. Refresh the chain, keep the rhythm, feed the dimensions. Next session: the last one — the full review, the renewed plan, and being sent again.

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 ☐