Session 17: Honest Expression: Four Movements

Phase 2 — Healing: Mind, Heart, and Past (Weeks 2–4) · Week 4 — Pain, Trauma, and Lament

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 17 handout (Honest Expression: Four Movements) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

There is a structured way to put honest pain into words without cleaning it up first. The word lament, as used here, means structured, honest expression of pain — saying what is wrong, asking for what you need, and naming what you will hold onto and do next. It is not complaining and quitting, and it is not pretending to be fine. It is bringing pain to the page, and to safe people, instead of to the substance. In this session we practice the form and write our own short piece with four movements: turn toward support; name it plainly; ask for what you need; choose your anchor.

- Honest complaint is not quitting Naming what is wrong, out loud and in writing, is part of facing it. The alternative most of us practiced was silence — and honesty only with the dealer, the bottle, or the void.
- Feelings are data 'How long can this go on?' is a feeling turned into a sentence. Naming pain precisely is what keeps it from leaking out as rage, relapse, or shutdown.
- The anchor is a decision rehearsed The anchor — “here is what I am choosing to stand on” — is not the pain disappearing; it is choosing your anchor while it still hurts. We practice the turn so it is there at 3 a.m.
- Honest expression makes room for other people's pain A person who can name pain honestly does not have to fix, flee, or judge someone else's grief — a skill Session 18 and every family relationship ahead will need.

Headline level only in this room: name the topic in a few words, not the details. Details belong with a counselor. You may pass at any time without explaining yourself. If anything in this session needs a counselor, your facilitator will connect you warmly the same day — asking is a success, not a failure.

Goals for this session

☐ I can define structured, honest expression of pain as a skill that moves from naming the pain to a chosen next step, without skipping either

☐ I can identify the four movements used in this session — turn toward support, name it plainly, ask for what you need, choose your anchor

☐ I can write a short personal piece using the four movements

Check-in

What have you been taught — by family, by experience, or by the street — about whether it is acceptable to say out loud that you are angry, hurt, or feel forgotten?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. What complaint have you never said out loud? (Share only if you choose — writing it counts fully today.)

2. Which movement is easiest for you, and which do you skip?

3. When has putting pain into words — yours, or a song or piece of writing you heard — carried you through a night?

4. How is this honest expression different from both venting and 'staying positive'?

My Honest Expression

Use the four movements. Write it in your own words. You may read it to a partner if you choose; passing is honored without comment.

I am turning toward my supports with this:

Here is what is wrong:

Here is what I am asking for:

Here is what I am choosing to stand on:

Session 17 — Skill Practice

Guided writing (10 minutes, quiet): participants write their own short piece on the workbook page using the four headings — I am turning toward my supports with this; here is what is wrong; here is what I am asking for; here is what I am choosing to stand on. Facilitator writes alongside the group. Writing 10 minutes, quiet. No whole-room readings in this session; volunteers may read to a partner in the last 2 minutes, or save readings for the Saturday recap. Passing is honored without comment.

Write yours under the session headings below. There is a full writing page after the discussion questions.

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ This week, read your written piece once a day — out loud if you can. Do not edit it as feelings change; add a dated line instead, and watch whether the anchor movement — what you are choosing to stand on — gets stronger.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.