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

Phase 5 — Giving Back: Service, Leadership & Purpose · Block 2 — Mentoring & Leadership

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

Materials: Session 8 handout (My Personal Crisis & Safety Plan) (one per participant).

What we're learning

Peers see the chain first: the missed check-ins, the old friend's name back in the conversation, the story that changes between tellings (Session 28). A peer's response follows the crisis protocol's doctrine at peer scale: say plainly what you have noticed, then ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day. The peer never investigates, never searches rooms or phones, and never carries the secret past the day it was shared. The peer never holds or reads another person's plan. If there is immediate danger, or thoughts of harming, stay with the person, call or text 988 or call 911, and get staff the same day. The five stages are: Drift; Setup / denial; High-risk situation; Craving / decision point; Use.

- Notice out loud, early Small and early beats certain and late: 'You have missed two check-ins, and you stopped eating with us. I am asking because I am your person here.' Specific observations open doors; accusations close them.
- Ask the real question If safety is in question, ask it plainly, the way the protocol taught you: 'Are you thinking about using? Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' A direct question does not plant the idea; it opens the exit. Ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day.
- Connect, then step back Walk them to staff, stay while they tell it if they want you there, and then go back to your own program and your own plan. Carrying the outcome home with you helps no one.
- Find your own plan (2 minutes): Each person finds their own crisis plan — 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.

Goals for this session

☐ I can recognize the warning-sign chain (Session 28) in someone I am helping

☐ I can use the notice–ask–connect sequence without accusing or investigating

☐ I can complete a warm handoff to staff, and state what the peer does afterward: return to my own program

Check-in

Who noticed your slide, back when? What did they say — and what do you wish they had said sooner?

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 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?

4. After you connect someone to staff, what do you do next in your own program — and who holds the worry with you?

Session 49 — Skill Practice

Notice–ask–connect rehearsal (in trios): one person notices, one asks one direct question, and one plays staff receiving the handover — hand to staff now. An observer role and a pass are available for anyone who prefers not to role-play; observers name what they saw done well. Rotate roles until each person has had a turn in a role they choose; observing and scoring counts fully. Ask one direct question, then hand to staff the same day — do not keep asking, and do not assess.

The two observations I would name, and the exact words of my ask:

The staff handoff — who, when, and what I do afterward in my own program:

My takeaway

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

Homework — this week's application

☐ Write your notice–ask–connect sentences in your workbook: the two observations you would name, the exact words of your ask, and the staff person you would hand to. Rehearse them once with a partner or aloud alone.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

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