

What You Have to Work With

An inventory of what you have. Then one thing to build.

This session is an inventory. Each person counts what he has across four areas: the practical things, the people, himself, the place he lives. Recovery capital is the research term. Say it once, then drop it. The failure mode is simple. A man leaves with nothing built and lands back in the same cage. Structure put him there. Structure keeps him out. Do not mistake a structural problem for a motivation problem.

The Hour

TIME	SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00–0:10	Open	State the point in one minute. Everyone already has something built. Name the four areas: practical, people, self, place. Go-round: one thing more stable than six months ago. Play the video here on the slides.
0:10–0:40	Main work	Each person works the handout alone, area by area. Mark each line Solid, Some, or Thin. Then look at the whole picture. Keep the room quiet. Move through it. A thin area is common. It is not a verdict.
0:40–0:55	Talk	Open discussion. No one reads his sheet out loud unless he wants to. Use the questions below. Keep it concrete. Real people. Real things.
0:55–1:00	Close	Each person names one thing to build and the first step this week. Small and specific. "Call the DMV," not "get my life together."

MATERIALS

- Printed handouts. One per person.
- Pens. Enough that no one has to share.
- Optional: screen and projector for the slides, with sound for the video.
- Optional: a local resource sheet — numbers for ID, housing, benefits, transportation — so a first step becomes a real call.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

1. What are you building so you do not end up back in the same cage?

Why ask: This is the spine of the session. Push for a structural answer. Housing, money, people, time — not a mood.

2. Which area is thinnest, and what does it cost you?

Why ask: Name the concrete cost. A thin practical area is a suspended license and missed work, not a bad attitude.

3. Which area is strongest? You built it. How?

Why ask: He built that. What built one area builds the next. Keep it specific.

4. Who is one person who shows up when there is nothing in it for him?

Why ask: A real name, not a category. If there is no name, that is the finding.

5. What can you build this month, and what takes a year?

Why ask: Separate the quick fix from the long one. Honest. Not hopeless.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Granfield, R. & Cloud, W. (1999). Coming Clean: Overcoming Addiction Without Treatment — origin of "recovery capital." nyupress.org/9780814716038

White, W. & Cloud, W. (2008). Recovery capital: A primer for addictions professionals. Counselor 9(5). naadac.org/assets/2416

Cloud, W. & Granfield, R. (2008). Conceptualizing recovery capital. Subst. Use & Misuse 43. researchgate.net/publication/23480425

Groshkova, T., Best, D. & White, W. (2013). The Assessment of Recovery Capital (ARC). Drug & Alcohol Review 32. See nfartec.org (Groshkova 2013).

Vilsaint, C. et al. (2017). Brief Assessment of Recovery Capital (BARC-10). Drug & Alcohol Depend. 177. pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28578224

Best, D. et al. (2020). Strengths and Barriers Recovery Scale (SABRS). Subst. Abuse Treat. Prev. Policy 15. doi:10.1186/s13011-020-00281-7

Putnam, R. (2000). Bowling Alone — bonding, bridging & linking social capital. socialcapitalresearch.com

Taking the Escalator — free recovery worksheets. takingtheescalator.com/worksheets

Video — "The Road Home," StoryCorps. youtube.com/watch?v=I5tAU5U_S8s

What You Have to Work With

No one starts from nothing. You have things built already. Some you see. Some you forget you have. This is an inventory of four areas: the practical things, the people, you, and the place you live. Go line by line. Mark the honest answer. There is no score. No one grades this. You are answering one question: what are you building so you do not end up back in the same cage?

For each line, mark one: **SOLID** — you have it. **SOME** — partway. **THIN** — not yet.

Area 1 — The Practical Things

Housing, money, transportation, paperwork, the law. The ground under you. Take it away and nothing else holds.

	SOLID	SOME	THIN
A safe place to sleep that is yours for a while			☐ ☐ ☐
Enough money to cover the basics this month			☐ ☐ ☐
A way to get where you have to go — car, bus, someone who drives			☐ ☐ ☐
Your ID and your papers — birth certificate, Social Security card, insurance			☐ ☐ ☐
Legal matters handled, or in motion — nothing waiting to drop on you			☐ ☐ ☐
A phone, and a way to keep it on			☐ ☐ ☐
One thing here worth building:			☐ ☐ ☐

Area 2 — Your People

Who is in your corner. Who picks up. Who shows up when there is nothing in it for them.

	SOLID	SOME	THIN
One person you can call at 2 a.m. who will pick up			☐ ☐ ☐
People who are glad you are not using, and act like it			☐ ☐ ☐
Family that is steady, or getting there			☐ ☐ ☐
Someone who has been where you are and does not need it explained			☐ ☐ ☐
A way to meet people who are not tied to the old life			☐ ☐ ☐
Someone who will help you fill out a form or make a call			☐ ☐ ☐
One thing here worth building:			☐ ☐ ☐

SOLID · SOME · THIN — continue on the next page.

Area 3 — You

Your health. Your skills. Whether you believe you can do this. What you get up for.

	SOLID	SOME	THIN
Your body is holding up — sleep, food, movement			☐ ☐ ☐
Your head is steady most days			☐ ☐ ☐
You have skills — for work, or for running your own life			☐ ☐ ☐
You believe you can do this. Not certain. Willing.			☐ ☐ ☐
Something you get up for			☐ ☐ ☐
A way through a bad day that does not cost you everything			☐ ☐ ☐
One thing here worth building:			☐ ☐ ☐

Area 4 — Where You Live

Where you belong. Your roots. Whether the doors in this town open for someone like you.

	SOLID	SOME	THIN
A place you belong — a group, a crew, a meeting, a congregation			☐ ☐ ☐
Faith, roots, or traditions that hold — if that is yours			☐ ☐ ☐
You can actually reach the help you need — close enough, open when you are free, takes your insurance			☐ ☐ ☐
You have seen people like you make it here			☐ ☐ ☐
You are treated like a person where you live, not a case			☐ ☐ ☐
Doors that were shut are opening — a place that will hire you, a landlord who will rent to you			☐ ☐ ☐
One thing here worth building:			☐ ☐ ☐

Step Back And Look

Do not add anything up. Look at each area and mark where it stands.

The Practical Things	Your People	You	Where You Live
Thin	Thin	Thin	Thin
Middling	Middling	Middling	Middling
Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid

This is not a score. It is a map. Where are you stocked. Where are you bare. No one is solid on all four. A thin area is not a mark against you. It is the next thing to build.

One Thing

Not everything. One thing. Look at the four areas and the lines you wrote. Pick the one that changes the most, or the one closest to done. Both are good reasons. Make the first step small enough that you will actually do it this week.

The one thing I will build:

Why this one:

The first step, this week:

One person who can help, and how I will ask:

When I start:

You built the areas that are solid. That took work. The same work builds the next one. Keep this page. Bring it back. See what moved.