



Using Guides in Treatment

A free recovery resource from Stepwise Recovery

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STEPWISE RECOVERY

Using the Guides in Treatment Settings

Embed Stepwise Recovery guides into structured treatment for immediate, practical integration

When you're running keywork sessions, group work, or family therapy, the Stepwise guides do the heavy lifting on content and framework—freeing you to focus on relationship, assessment, and responsive support. This guide shows you how to match editions to clients, structure sessions around chapters, and use the Six-Lens Framework to sharpen your practice.

Matching Editions to Your Clients

Each Stepwise edition has a specific place in the treatment journey. Choose the edition that fits your client's moment, not an assumed endpoint.

Foundations: For early engagement and ambivalence

Start here with anyone in early engagement or when substance misuse isn't yet the main conversation. Foundations introduces the Six-Lens Framework without assuming recovery is the stated goal. Use it in the first few weeks when denial is thick, with family members trying to understand, in settings where substance use is secondary to mental health or housing, and with any client who needs permission to not be 'ready' yet.

Substance-Specific Editions: When the substance matters

The Cocaine and Ketamine Editions each address the lived reality of that substance. Use when a client is motivated to learn about their specific substance, when session material needs to feel personal rather than generic, with mixed-substance clients (start with their primary), or in mixed-substance groups where individuals work in parallel on their own edition.

Family Edition and Children's Companion

Use the Family Edition in family keywork, multi-family groups, or when a partner, parent, or adult child is in the room. It covers how loved ones get pulled into the cycle, practical boundaries, showing up without managing, and what family members actually need. Use the Children's Companion when parents are in treatment or family work is happening—it helps adults have age-appropriate conversations and explain what recovery looks like without crisis-framing or shame.

Building Guides into Your Sessions

The chapter structure is designed to map directly onto session material. Most chapters run 15–20 minutes read or discussion.

Structure chapters as single sessions

Give the chapter as between-session reading and spend 20 minutes discussing what landed, read it together in the session (5 minutes) then explore the response, or use chapter headings as talking points without reading aloud. The structure is flexible.

Use chapters sequentially or thematically

You don't have to start at the beginning. If a client has just had a crisis, jump to Powerlessness or Turning Point. If a family member asks why they won't just stop, use the Identification and Denial chapter. Create a 'session pack' for keyworker series (list which chapters go in which weeks); share it early to signal structure and give agency.

Ask clients to mark up their copy

Most chapters include reflection questions, patterns to notice, and space to write. Encourage annotation. This isn't assessment—it's their thinking becoming visible and portable between sessions.

The Six-Lens Framework in One-to-Ones

The Six Lenses are the architecture of every Stepwise guide. Using them intentionally sharpens your keywork and gives you language to name where clients are in their process.

Map client stories against the lenses

When a client describes their use, crisis, or reasons they're 'not like other addicts,' listen for which lens is active. Identification and Denial ('I'm not like other addicts'). Powerlessness ('I've tried everything; nothing works'). Turning Point ('I can't do this alone'). Spiritual Experience (moments of connection or meaning beyond themselves). Spiritual Resistance and Ego Defence (fear of losing identity or control). Passing It On (wanting to help others or make amends).

Use lenses to normalise movement and ask lens-specific questions

Clients feel stuck because they're in a hard lens (usually Powerlessness or Resistance). Naming it—'you're in that place where it all feels impossible, which is real, and also where change becomes possible'—reframes struggle as part of the process. Ask lens-specific questions instead of generic reflections: 'What would it look like if you stopped explaining your use away?' 'What would have to be true for you to believe you can't manage this alone?' 'Who could you help with what you're learning now?'

Group and Family Settings

Using guides in group work and family sessions

A chapter becomes the 'starter' for group discussion without dominating it. Read the opening paragraph aloud (2 minutes), ask what resonates, then let the conversation flow. The guide is permission to talk, not a script. For substance-specific groups, give each person their substance edition. For mixed-substance groups, use Foundations. In family sessions, the Family Edition is

explicit: recovery isn't a family project. Read sections aloud ('Boundaries', 'What Family Members Need') and use them as a mirror for what's happening in the room. In multi-family groups, having families work through the edition together lets them see patterns without advice-giving from you.

Measuring What's Working

You don't need a formal outcome measure. Watch for these signals: Engagement (is your client reading, marking things up, asking questions?). Language shift (are they using language from the guides to describe their own experience? That's internalisation). Session focus (movement from 'do I have a problem?' to 'how do I stay connected?' shows progress through the lenses). Family involvement (are family members reading, less defensive?). Between-session stability (if the client comes back with 'I read it, and here's what I noticed,' that's protective behaviour).

At review, ask: 'Has using the guides changed how you think about your recovery?' The answer tells you whether the resource is fitted to that person.

Bulk Ordering and Service Pricing

Stepwise offers institutional pricing for treatment services. Bulk copies scale by order size. Service agreements license Stepwise as core curriculum material with tailored pricing. Combination packs match editions to your client profile. Team training sessions introduce Stepwise service-wide. Contact us for a quote fitted to your service size and structure.

Stepwise guides are developed with professional input and clear safeguarding signposting. Using the guides in structured treatment sits within evidence-informed practice frameworks and supports the holistic, person-centred work you're already doing.

Getting Started

Choose one client or group this week. Pick the edition that fits. Read a chapter together in session or set it as reading. Notice what shifts. You'll quickly see where the guides add weight to your keywork and where they don't fit that person. That's the data. Build from there. For bulk ordering, service agreements, or team training, contact us.

Keep going — you're not alone

This resource is one of a full library of free tools, worksheets and reading at stepwiserecovery.com/resources — take what helps and leave the rest. These tools are designed to sit alongside fellowship programmes, meetings and sponsorship — never to replace them.

The Stepwise Recovery Guides

Substance-specific recovery guides written by people who've recovered — for cocaine, ketamine, families, young people, and children. Free preview chapters, no email required, at stepwiserecovery.com/guides

Our 1-in-10 Pledge

For every ten guides sold, we donate one to someone who can't afford it — through treatment centres and prison recovery programmes.

Need help right now?

Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours) · FRANK: 0300 123 6600

Narcotics Anonymous UK: 0300 999 1212 · SHOUT: text 85258

Childline (under 19s): 0800 1111 · Nacod: 0800 358 3456