

**The Alcoholic Family in Recovery: A Developmental Model Overview**

	<b>Substance Usage</b>	<b>Substance Usage</b> [-----Transition Period-----]	<b>Abstinence</b>	<b>Early Recovery</b> <b>(3-5 Years)</b>	<b>Ongoing Recovery</b> <b>(5+ Years)</b>
<b>Home Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety, tension, chaos</li> <li>• Emphasis on control in a system that is out of control</li> <li>• Unpredictable</li> <li>• Hostility, anger, shame, guilt</li> <li>• Chronic, acute trauma</li> </ul> <p>Unsafe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensification and escalation of problem.</li> <li>• Out of control behavior</li> <li>• Denial, rationalization, confusion</li> </ul> <p>Unsafe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of “trauma of recovery”</li> <li>• Identity confusion, chaos, crisis</li> <li>• Fear of addict “on the wagon”</li> <li>• Things get even worse</li> </ul> <p>Unsafe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving toward stability</li> <li>• May still be chaotic</li> <li>• Hope mixed with tension, anxiety</li> <li>• Continuing “trauma of recovery”</li> </ul> <p>Moving from unsafe to safe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable, predictable, consistent</li> <li>• Not organized and dominated by crisis or trauma</li> <li>• Supports abstinence</li> <li>• Comfortable, secure</li> </ul> <p>Safe</p>
<b>Independent Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life based on maintaining pathological belief, behavior and affect necessary to maintain substance dependence</li> <li>• Sacrifice of individual development to preserve usage</li> <li>• “False self”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development sacrificed to preserve usage patterns</li> <li>• Dominated by defenses against surrender/ acceptance of problem</li> <li>• Cracks in denial</li> <li>• Despair, defeat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift to individual focus, which has priority over family system</li> <li>• Shift to external help</li> <li>• Attachment to recovery</li> <li>• Time of intense dependency</li> <li>• Feelings of depression, anxiety, abandonment, confusion, fear</li> <li>• Dominance of impulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus shifts from the system to the individual “I am”</li> <li>• Recovery, new identity, intense education</li> <li>• Less dominated by impulse</li> <li>• Still confusion, perhaps depression, anxiety</li> <li>• Intense self-examination, self-development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable individual recovery</li> <li>• Behavior, identity secure</li> <li>• Interpersonal focus: combine “I” and “we”</li> <li>• Spiritual development</li> <li>• Shift from external control to internal (Higher Power)</li> <li>• Intense self-examination</li> <li>• Development through 12-step program, therapy or religion</li> </ul>
<b>Family Condition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substance usage is the central organizing principle governing family system</li> <li>• Tight rigid boundaries, polarized and tense relations</li> <li>• Normal family developmental tasks arrested</li> <li>• Emphasis on short-term stability where usage is normalized</li> <li>• Double-bind: “We don’t have a problem” + “Usage is necessary because ...”</li> <li>• The alcoholic is the “parent” and the others the “children”</li> </ul> <p>Unhealthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In state of collapse, “hitting bottom”</li> <li>• Reactive</li> <li>• Rigidity, confusion</li> <li>• Things become threatened, fall apart</li> </ul> <p>Unhealthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collapse of system</li> <li>• Vacuum</li> <li>• “Trauma of recovery”</li> <li>• Shift to external focus and support.</li> <li>• Children often left unattended, neglected.</li> </ul> <p><i>We want the system to totally collapse in order for the family to look outside the system for support (therapy, AA, religion etc.)</i></p> <p>Unhealthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals enter recovery</li> <li>• Continued individual work via psychotherapy, 12-step programs, religion</li> </ul> <p>Healthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable, predictable, can deal with crises</li> <li>• Less tension and major illness</li> <li>• Can deal with reality</li> <li>• All individuals continue to grow and bring much more to the family</li> </ul> <p>Healthy</p>
				No follow-up after initial intervention →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family is “dry”: while chaos is gone, prior conditions remain</li> <li>• Defensive, rigid, lacking joy and spontaneity</li> <li>• Outside influences avoided</li> <li>• Little intimacy</li> </ul> <p>Unhealthy</p>