

# MIA



## **MIA Part One**

### Who We Are

Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA) is a fellowship of people who suffer from mental illness and other abusive behaviors (substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse).

Please remember, even though we abuse ourselves with abusive behaviors, our abuse also hurts other people.

The tragedy of mental illness mixed with other abusive behaviors is:

Many of us don't understand how bad our condition is. We can also strike out harder against many people who want to help us or love us. Abusive behaviors help numb the body and mind. We can no longer hurt ourselves or hurt others.

In abusing ourselves, we forget that we are hurting other people. We are only trying to stop our internal pain. That pain is real. That pain can come from mental illness. Abusive behaviors seem to mask the pain. From abusive behaviors, we only get hurt more. People around us only get hurt more. We can no longer hurt ourselves or hurt others.

Mental illness is a not fault condition. Some people become mentally ill and some don't. There can also be environmental factors at play in bringing about and keeping people mental ill.

However, once a person becomes mentally ill, the physical brain activity seems to have changes. Then, the task of learning how to live with mental illness seems to be the challenge in our lives.

Most of us with mental illness were never taught about our psychiatric condition. What is mental illness? Most of us have never been taught how to live with mental illness. We also have never been taught what is abuse and how to get out from the repetitive cycles of abusive behavior.

We can change our lives. We can free ourselves from abuse. We can live and navigate through life with mental illness.

Living with mental illness can be difficult. When we think that we are at our best, we can be at our worst. Many of us with mental illness were lost and homeless. We just thought that we were unique and free spirits. We didn't understand how conflicts and abusive behavior helped us become outcasts.

We can be disoriented and in constant conflict. The pain that we feel is real and powerful. Medications, programs that we attend, hospitals that we are in--are only temporary relief. Mental illness can always be looming to sweep us away. We are not always psychotic with mental illness. We can have moments of clarity and stability.

*Then, what is day to day mental illness?*

*Hurt, Confusion and Tiredness.*

We become irritable and angry. We can experience ongoing levels of disillusionment and discouragement. We can live with daily and on going high levels of disillusionment and discouragement. We can also live with ongoing levels of irritability and anger. We can not take our anger, disillusionment, discouragement, and irritability out on people.

Disillusionment, discouragement, irritability and anger are the day to day realities of mental illness. Mental illness is like having a brain fever. We are attracted to drugs and drink in hope that we will lose the pain of mental illness. The pain only gets worse or more erratic with drugs and drink.

There is hope. We can make peace with ourselves. We can make peace with others. There can be forgiveness and relief.

But, there has to be ongoing attendance at meetings that promote self maintenance and self monitoring. We can never let down our guard. Mental illness can sweep us away. If we are not careful and vigilant, we can reach out for that hit of booze or dope. We can use other people as a verbal punching bag.

We can no longer use substance abuse, physical abuse, or verbal abuse in our lives.

We have to work for sanity, stability, safety, and sobriety.

We can be good to each other and ourselves. We need to learn patience and pacing.

We treat other people with way that we want to be treated. Having a mental illness which leaves us drifting into abusive behaviors, requires a lot of effort to live with.

We have to learn to prepare ourselves to live with mental illness. Because of anger, we have made many mistakes. Because of our discouragement, we have let down many people. Because of our substance abuse, we have fallen down and dropped the ball many times.

We can change. We can reach stability.

We can also learn to drop judgmentalism and perfectionism with others. Our redemption can come through forgiveness. And, not just people forgiving us - We can learn to forgive others.

We can see that people are trying to become better. We can see that people are trying to change. We can give people the benefit of our doubts. However, we don't forgive every person and every action.

We do forgive other people who are striving for relief from mental illness and abusive behaviors. We forgive people who are struggling and want to change. However, we don't turn around and let people abuse us as a form of penance for our past abusive behavior. We don't move from being the victimizer to the victim.

We also don't punish those who are moving slower or are having more difficulty.

We need to learn to be inspirational and practical. We need to be honest. We need to learn how to share our experiences as a light of hope to those who are still struggling. We don't put people down because they aren't moving as fast in their recovery.

We work side by side with people. There is no superiority. We are all struggling and learning.

We help those who want help. Then, we can always encourage those who got help to go out and help others. We need to learn how to build bridges and links with other people in recovery.

We can go out and set up another MIA support meeting for people. We take the message of hope to those who are still suffering. We are of service to others. We are trying to stay close to our own learning - what is mental illness - what is abusive behavior.

We are learning. And, we can change. We can get to levels of recovery which demonstrate to our selves and others that we are sane. Stable, safe and sober.

Who are we? We are people in recovery from mental illness and abusive behaviors. We are part of a fellowship of people who are also struggling.

We are part of Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA).

## **MIA Part Two**

### **What We Do**

Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA) works with each person through education and knowledge. We learn from each other. We also learn from professionals. We also learn from respected and recognized educational materials about mental illness and/or abuse. There is a great deal of information that being written about mental illness and abusive behavior. We no longer have to live in ignorance.

What is more important is that we no longer have to act out ignorantly. We can be mentally ill, but we don't have to act crazy. We can live with our mental illness without drinking or taking drugs. We can get free from the anger which drifts toward conflict. Anger and conflict can plague us.

Again, we can be mentally ill but we don't have to act crazy.

Our lives will probably need constant self monitoring and self maintenance. We can learn to keep ourselves stable. Medication can work. There is nothing wrong with taking medication. Finding the right medication and the right medication level can be difficult. Medication can help bring about a night of restful sleep.

Many times just living with the mental illness leaves us running with high anxiety. We cannot sleep.

We can learn to get sleep. We also need to learn how to get extra rest. We cannot afford to get too tired. Many times we are drawn to drugs because we are tired. We wanted to either cool out or get a boost from the dope or booze to keep going.

We have to learn to live without the erratic side effects of alcohol and street drugs.

We can learn to live with a consistent and measured amount of medication. We can negotiate a medication level with a mental health professional. We can learn from other people who have succeeded with their medication. We can learn what medication works and how much medication will be needed. We can be part of the mental health system.

We do not have to live out our abusive behavior. We don't have to fight other people. We don't have to be angry. We can get help.

We need to learn about mental illness and abusive behavior. We can also work to teach other people what we have learned.

Each one, Reach one, Teach one is our motto.

Mental illness is real. Substance abuse is also a disease. Anger and abusive behavior can be an addiction. We will probably never be free from mental illness and abusive behaviors.

We can live with these conditions. We don't have to act out our abusive behaviors.

There is no shame in where we came from. We have been disoriented and destroyed from mental illness and abusive behaviors. We can have a new day. We can live without the disruptions caused by the pain of mental illness and abusive behaviors.

We are part of the fellowship of Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA). We come together to learn and commit ourselves to a new life of hope. We can learn to live. We can learn to love. We can learn to have relationships, again. We can feel a part of the world around us. Our internal pain might never go away. We can still live with mental illness.

We can learn to be happy. Every person can have peace of mind. Through prayer and meditation, we can learn to cool out. Though the fellowship of Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA), we can learn and teach.

We can change. We can gain happiness. We can have peace of mind. We can free ourselves from all abuse. We can learn to live with Mental Illness. We are part of Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA).

### **MIA Part Three**

The Way Out of the Mess

Gentleness

Where did mental illness and abusive behavior come from? Many of us have struggled for that understanding. What do we have? How we can live with these conditions?

Our life has not been easy. On one hand, we have needed a level of tension between activity and rest so that we can keep going. We need to learn how to work and rest at the same time. We need to learn how to better balance our lives. If we try to overwork, the only way we have kept going is taking dope or getting drunk.

Yet, if we don't do enough activity, we can become depressed.

We cannot get away from depression, anxiety, and exhaustion through substance abuse. We need to keep a healthy level of activity and rest. We need to learn gentleness. We need to be honest but not hard on ourselves.

We have probably tried to maintain the honest level of understanding so that we know who we are. This struggle for identity can also bring us conflict.

We are sometimes too independent for our own good. We are trying to learn who we are so that we can fit with society around us. We are not trying to become independent because we don't want to be around other people. We are trying to learn independence so we can learn to take better care of ourselves. We can learn self maintenance and self care. We still need people. People will also need us. We will need help at times in our lives. We will be called on to help other people.

We are trying to become better integrated member of society. We are trying to learn how to fit better with people around us. We are trying to learn how to have a gentle social fit and reduce conflict.

Conflict is the beginning of abuse and psychosis. Life is not free from differences of opinion. We can have separate lives. Each of us can be very different from other people.

We can also have a different sense of time. Not everyone accomplishes what needs to be done in the same amount of time. Some people are still thinking while others want action. We can have different opinions and not have conflict.

Conflict comes when we aren't happy with others around us. When they move too slow or don't share the same principles that we do. We become irritated. We start to see what is wrong with them. We become involved in their lives.

They don't do what we ask. They might not even remember what we asked. We know how to straighten them out and get things right. We can tell them off. Have some conflict.



When things don't go right between us and other people, we can get angrier. Those resentments can lead to justifications to get drunk or high or angry.

We might be thinking. These are miserable people. This is a miserable time. This is the time to get loaded or get angry. Nobody understands us. Why not get high? Why not tell some people off. **NO!!!!**

Abuse is next step after conflict.

Conflict can also lead us to psychosis with or without drugs or alcohol.

There is a way out. Gentleness. We can be gentle with ourselves. Abuse hurts us and hurts other people. Anger can make people scared for weeks. So much mistrust can be generated from anger that people may never get back together with us.

For instance, people have said that substance abuse only hurts them.

This isn't true.

Take this example:

For many years, myself and my friends got high. We had a great time. We never hurt a soul. We would just be happy people who were loaded all the time. Just a bunch of good time Charlies and James. We didn't hurt anyone else.

Wrong.

Many people were affected by our behavior. Drugs and alcohol caused gigantic mood swings. Many people close to us experienced the wrath of us coming down off drugs and alcohol. We might remember ourselves as good time Charlies and James - the people around us, our mothers, our fathers, and rest of our family and community have a different memory.

Gentleness - to the point of being of service to other - is the path out of this emotional turmoil. Power and position don't bring us stability. Being of service to another human being - is an honor and not a drudgery.

Being of service and caring for other people is our ticket to peace of mind and serenity. We are learning who we are - by questions of other people - not by telling them off.

We can learn to work together. We can learn to be together.

Gentleness can be learned.

Instead of always asking for what we want, we can learn to give. Giving to other people is a quality that we need to learn. Giving to people is a practice of gentleness. Abusive behavior is telling people who they are. Becoming gentle with others demonstrates our patience and increases our capacity to learn. We learn gentleness so that we are more at ease with people.

Gentleness is the opposite of conflict.

Many of the first signs of conflict come from that we are unhappy with ourselves. We might hope that people don't see how miserable we are about ourselves.

We might hope that we can forget how miserable we are. If we are tough with others, they might not see us or get to know us. We also might not have to think about us and our psychiatric condition. Being tough with others, means that we don't have to notice how long it takes to change our personality. We lose concentration in changing ourselves and get involved in criticizing others.

However, changing ourselves is long process.

Through quiet and reflection, we might have to pay attention and notice how little we really change every day. We might have to notice how much we fall back into bad habits.

Using at other people is easy. They are outside of us. We can get angry and they go away. We can then think about them and hold a grudge for a long time. We don't have to think about ourselves. Then, we don't have to change. Also, these other people aren't changing. Why should I?

When we don't practice gentleness, things are so bad that sometimes just getting angry isn't enough. We might want to get high or drunk because the world and people around us are so messed up.

We can get strung out on turmoil. We can drift into abusive behaviors.

We can have serenity in our lives. Anyone can have serenity. Anyone can gain peace of mind. Gentleness exhibits to ourselves and to others how secure we are in our serenity.

However, we need to continue learning about our mental illness. We need to affirm daily that we must stop using drugs, alcohol, and abusive behavior.

What is interesting about peace of mind and serenity---we don't need money or power or prestige to have peace of mind.

We can learn to walk down the street and be happy. We don't need to buy one more thing to make ourselves happy. We don't need to fix one more person to feel better. We don't need to tell other people what they should do or how they should live. We can let go. We can fix ourselves. We help other people when we can or when they are willing.

Through gentleness we can learn our limits.

Prayer and meditation can increase our sense of gentleness. We can learn to pray with thanks. We can learn how to give gratitude in our prayers. We can learn to say thank you to God for giving us another day-to see who we are and get to know other people.

Meditation is time fifteen minutes, thirty minutes or an hour of just silence. We can face ourselves through quiet and solitude. We can quiet our minds.

Mental illness can leave us with endless racing thoughts. Every day our minds are roaring. Because of mental illness, our racing thoughts are on over drive. If we don't practice quieting ourselves, we can never gain peace of mind.

We have to practice prayer and meditation. Prayer and meditation are skills which can be learned and practiced.

If we don't know prayer and meditation, then we ask and get taught by someone who does know how to pray or meditate.

Through prayer and meditation we can become more gentle.

Through gentleness, we can demonstrate the new life that we are discovering by learning to live with mental illness and reducing our abusive behavior.

## **MIA Part Four**

### **STEP ONE**

1. We admitted we were powerless over mental illness and all abusive behaviors (substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse) - that our lives had become unmanageable.

Wrecked. We were wrecked. We had burned bridges and ruined relationships. The marriages were over. The jobs lost. The homes lost. We felt finished.

Wiped out by both mental illness and abusive behaviors. We kept thinking that there was a way that we could get away from this mental illness and abusive behavior. There was a way. That way was right inside of us. We can admit that we are powerless.

We can not control our mental illness. We are wrecked by substance abuse and all abusive behavior. We can't yell at people. We can't seek out conflicts. We can't react to anger with anger.

Then, when we work past our personal abusive behavior--we cannot live in an abusive environment.

We are powerless. Once we stop taking drugs, alcohol, illegal prescription pills--we are still mentally ill. We have to struggle every day to keep us sane, stable, safe, and sober.

Mental illness leaves us very disoriented. We might want to go back and start using drugs and alcohol. We might want to start getting high off anger.

Through the fellowship of MIA, we can change our lives. Mental illness won't go away. We will probably have to learn to live with these ongoing aspects of mental illness:

1. Interrupted sleep patterns, sometimes all night long (The worst insomnia)
2. Jumpiness all day long
3. Depression which leaves us emotionally disturbed both day and night

(Even a drift toward suicidal thinking)

These emotional mood swings of mental illness, we can probably live with. With the right medication, the right people, the right activities--we can live with mental illness.

We can never live with mental illness if we think that we control it. We can never live with mental illness if we think that we cut some corners and have a drink, get high, or tell somebody off in anger.

We are powerless over mental illness and all abusive behaviors. We have to self monitor every day. We

need to go to meetings and learn from other people who have mental illness. How do they get by?

We cannot figure out all we need to know about both mental illness and substance abuse on our own.

We need to admit that we are powerless and start going to educational support groups.

We need to go to as many educational support groups as possible. We are so powerless that only getting knowledgeable help can benefit us.

We need to realize every day just how powerless that we really are.

There might be some people who say:

I have already gotten everything that I need from those meetings or those people.

There is no end to our progress. Every meeting--every contact with other people who are powerless and trying to come to terms with their lives and life around them--can benefit us.

MIA offers the steps and discussion about both mental illness and all abusive behaviors (substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse).

We can also attend other support meetings which discuss the psychiatric condition and help with understanding abusive behaviors.

Our lives had become unmanageable. Our lives will stay severely unmanageable unless we start to learn and change. We can change. We cannot cure mental illness.

We can live with mental illness. We can learn how to navigate through life with mental illness.

What is more important is that we can stop putting other people through our personal turmoil with

mental illness. We can live our life with this mental illness and also stop hurting ourselves through substance abuse, and physical abuse.

We read and reflect on these steps. We have to learn from each other how did we get through the day--sane, stable, safe, and sober.

We can succeed. Others have succeeded. We can succeed. We are part of fellowship of Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA) and all other groups associated with Alcoholics Anonymous.

We are proud to be part of that fellowship. Attending meetings, learning from the readings, learning from each other and hearing our stories brings some relief from the unmanageable lives that we have.

We are ravaged by mental illness and swept away by substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse.

Through knowledge about mental illness and abusive behaviors, we can succeed in bringing sanity, stability, safety, and sobriety into our lives.

## **MIA Part Five**

### **STEP TWO**

2. Came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Who can keep us sane? Our Higher Power can! We couldn't do it. We had to get outside help. A power greater than ourselves.

We had tried everything. In the end, only a Higher Power could restore us to sanity.

There are some people who don't believe in God. If not God, we need to talk to someone who can help us.

We cannot be restored to sanity on our own. We need to go to someone else. We need to find a Higher Power to help us get to sanity.

We also will not have a complete recovery unless we get the feedback from our Higher Power. We need the external feedback to insure that we have stabilized with our sanity.

If we believe in God, we can ask for help from God. We can pray. We can talk to our Higher Power. Our Higher Power is with us at all times. We don't need to make an appointment to talk with our Higher Power. Our Higher Power is with us.

We can also thank our Higher Power. We can be grateful that there is a Higher Power to talk with. We can be grateful that we have a Higher Power. We can thank all those who help us.

We can't do all the work which is necessary to bring us to sanity.

Only a power greater than ourselves can help restore us to sanity. We can be grateful that we have the chance to experience sanity and serenity. There are no miracles or cures with mental illness.

We can have some moments of sanity restored.

Our lives can be a life time struggle with mental illness. We have to be prepared for a long term quest to gain realistic levels of recovery.

Again, we can live with mental illness. We can be mentally ill, but we don't have to act crazy.

We can be restored to sanity. We cannot be restored to sanity on our own. Through the help of our Higher Power, we can ease the pain of mental illness.

We can have a life free from all abusive behavior (substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse).

Also, many of us stopped abusing people and then become abused. This sets us up for cycles of being abused for awhile and then we might move back into being the abuser.



We can break free from all abuse. We can change our patterns of abuse. We can ask our Higher Power to help us not to become abused or be abusers.

Through the help of our Higher Power, we can get rid of those patterns of abuse and abusive behaviors which have plagued our lives.

Restoring ourselves to sanity is a long term process. Restoring ourselves to sanity can take a life time. There will be no short cuts. We need to continually go back to our Higher Power and see how we are doing.

We can go back and continually ask our Higher Power for help. Learning to pray and meditate is important. Through prayer and meditation we can be learn to be clearer and more precise with the help that we ask from our Higher Power.

We can learn to express gratitude to our Higher Power. We can learn to calm ourselves down through prayer and/or meditation.

We need to always remember to thank our Higher Power for giving us the chance to be restored to sanity. We need to learn to thank our Higher Power that we have a Higher Power. We can also thank our Higher Power for staying with us.

We need to be grateful for having a Higher Power.

We continue to attend educational support meetings. We continue to learn about mental illness and abusive behaviors (substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse).

We are not alone. We are part of a fellowship of other people. We are Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA). We can live with our mental illness. We can get free from abuse and abusive behaviors. We can have a new chance in life. We need to keep coming back.

We can attend MIA meetings. We can also learn through other 12 Step meetings.

We can also learn about mental illness through professional and peer information.

We have hope because:

We believe that power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity.

## **MIA Part Six**

### **STEP THREE**

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

God--That name can send tremors through some people. Can strike fear into the hearts of some people. Can bring tears to the eyes of some people. Can bring love to the hearts of some people.

People through the centuries have wanted to know God. Yet, for most of humanity, there has been a silence. God has not spoken. God has not appeared. We have read the stories.

Some people once saw God. God once talked to a person here and there through history.

There is a God. God is not far away.

Human beings are a unique animal. We can speak complex language to each other. We have disrupted life on the planet more than any other animal. Yet, we know so little about ourselves.

Who are we? Where did we come from? We forget that God can be the breath of life that goes through everything. The atoms and subatomic particles don't crash and don't collapse. God is every where. We need the help of God. God can help us from collapsing. God is with us.

God is looking over our shoulders. God can also wander off and leave us to discover on our own and alone.

God gives us freedom. God forces us to live together. God is good. God is destructive. God can help us. God can throw up an obstacle. God can pick us up. God can knock us down.

Turning our life and our will over to God is risky. We have been in control for so long. We have tried to do what we wanted for so long. When things don't go well, we run to God. Learning how to turn our life and our will over to God on a daily basis is something that we don't like to do.

Yet, we have no choice. Each of us are really just small people on the planet. We think that we have power. We are powerless.

We could lose ourselves, our homes, our jobs, our loved ones, and our very existence at any time. There is no hope except for God. In the end, the planet keeps spinning because of God.

There are some people who don't believe in God. Still, they can learn to be good to other people. They can love their neighbor. They can love other people and other forms of life then they have loved God. They can ask for help. They can look to someone else for help and answers. When they look outside themselves, they acknowledge that they are not powerful. A Higher Power to them might be another person who seems to be more stable or sane. We all have to discover who is and who can be our Higher Power.

Also, we have to discover who is God.

There is no easy way to find God. God can be elusive. Maybe, we should remember that turning our lives over to God, to a Higher Power or to someone else is a very big step.

We might think:

We will I use ourselves.

We will lose other people.

We will lose our jobs.

We will lose our families

We will lose our homes.

These are frightening thoughts. Turning our lives over to God is not easy.

Realizing that God might not speak back can be discouraging. Realizing that the interactions which God has with us can be very quiet and subtle is disorienting to some people.

There will be no white flashes or voices coming out of the sky.

God can be seen and experienced by the way we live our lives. The way we live our lives with other people is an important connection with God.

God is with our neighbors and friends.

God is not distant. God is with our wives and husbands. God is with our children, mothers, and fathers. God can also be part of the unlimited and knowing consciousness which keeps us from falling apart.

Probably, what we have the most difficulty with is learning how to thank God.

God can be there for us. We can thank God every day. We have a chance to live. We have a chance to improve our lives. We have the chance to make amends to those we have hurt. We have the chance to try again.

We can be a better person. We can have serenity. We can have moments of peace of mind. We strive for clarity.

That life is free from turmoil might also be momentary. We have to be prepared that turning our will and lives over to God might be a daily event.

We can turn our lives over to God and try to experience maybe only a few fleeting seconds of peace. Sometimes just those few seconds of peace can buy us the time to go on living. We need hope.

Some people believe that God is love. God might also be experienced through hope.

Every day

We can be good to each other. We can give the gift of hope to ourselves and others.

Every day we can turn our will and lives over to God.

## **MIA Part Seven**

### **STEP FOUR**

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We keep coming back to the question. Who am I? Who are we?

The only way to know that question is to make a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.

Many of us run hard every day. We don't look back. We say - wouldn't it be nice to take some time off? We don't stop. We can learn how to stop and make that searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We can never figure out how to get to a safe place in life with our mental illness--unless we know ourselves. We can't reach sanity--unless we know ourselves. We will have difficulty gaining and keeping sobriety--unless we know ourselves.

Mental illness means that we have lost some of idea of self. We might not know where we fit in--unless we know ourselves. We will never know--where we fit in--unless we know ourselves. We cannot know ourselves unless we start to make that searching and moral inventory. This step is put off by many people.

We cannot get sane, stable, safe, and sober--unless we know who are. We will be tossed around by the winds of chaos unless we are grounded with realistic knowledge about ourselves. Making a searching and fearless moral inventory about ourselves is hard work. We will probably have to make several different moral inventories about ourselves over the years.

The more we learn about ourselves then the more we can dig deeper to continue to learn more. There is no end to the understanding that we can gain about ourselves.

We are not learning about ourselves to then live in isolation. We are trying to find out who we are so that we interact better with people around us. When we were at our worst with mental illness and abusive behaviors we not only trashed out our lives, we also hurt other people.

We also sometimes trash ourselves out. We have an effect on other people when we hurt ourselves. When we hurt ourselves, other people can get hurt. People try to help us and they get hurt and tired. Our erratic lives from mental illness and substance abuse cause turmoil in many people's lives.

We need to understand--WHO ARE WE?

The searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves won't be pleasant. We want to see ourselves and understand ourselves in a way which is accepting. We don't want to feel worse after this moral inventory. The moral inventory should be like a road map so that we better understand ourselves. We don't need to unnecessarily put ourselves down.

We need the moral inventory so that we can better explain to other people who we are. We are discovering ourselves so that other people can know us.

Sometimes it is better to start writing down the moral inventory with only ourselves and sometimes it is better to start writing down the moral inventory with other people.

The challenge is to start making that list of who we are. The good and the bad about ourselves, we need to know. Write down what we think.

We need to write and reflect. We need to set aside the time in the day that goes into writing down our searching and fearless moral inventory.

We can share the inventory with people who we trust. We need to learn to get feedback from others. Did we state correctly who we are? What else can we say? These are questions which may take a life time. Understanding ourselves is like peeling back the layers of the onion.

We go deeper. Day by day. Year by year. There is no easy road. There is no quick fix. There will be no miracles or cure. We have both mental illness and abusive behaviors. There is lot to understand. There will a lot of adjustments to make in our lives. Some parts of our lives we will have to accept and some parts of our lives we will have to discard.

Mental Illness Anonymous (MIA) only introduces us to the knowledge that we have both mental illness and abusive behavior. Even admitting that we have mental illness and abusive behaviors can be difficult and take a long time. Learning to understand our whole selves can take a life time.

We will succeed at living with mental illness and changing abusive behavior.

We need to understand both--how bad is the mental illness and how bad is the abusive behavior. Only a searching and fearless moral inventory will tell us.

We can help create that better life for us.

A searching and fearless moral inventory can help us build our new life and strengthen our old life. A searching and fearless moral inventory is our fourth step toward recovery from mental illness and abusive behavior.

## **MIA Part Eight**

### **STEP FIVE**

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

We didn't only hurt ourselves. We hurt many other people along the way. We have tried to get through life without these steps. Maybe, we succeeded for awhile. We thought that we didn't hurt anyone. We didn't have to admit any wrongs to anyone.

When we ask other people the nature of our past wrongs, we might be surprised. They have a different memory of our lives and events.

Our Higher Power and our inner selves know what is honest and who is telling the truth.

There have been times when we haven't been honest. No bolt of lightning came out of the sky and struck us. We felt bad after our dishonest conversation. We knew that we were not honest. We might have gone back on our knees. Prayed to God. Asked forgiveness. Wanted to tell the truth.

Sometimes we didn't. We just lived with the lies and misdeeds. We were also not accountable to other people.

Lies and misdeeds will corrode us. We can morally and physically rot out from the inside because of lies and misdeeds. We need to learn how to keep an open heart and an open mind.

We can clear our minds. We need to stop telling lies and performing misdeeds.

The safety valve which makes sure that we have honestly tried to change is--we can admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.



So, we also need to admit the nature of our wrongs to another human being. We need to be able to admit the nature of our wrongs with such clarity that we can stand before both God and other human beings with our honesty. We need to pass their judgment and also get the feedback from others.

We have seen the look of knowledge and recognition in the eyes of other people when we have spoken the truth. We know that they know our honesty. A bond can be built between people as the truth is spoken.

God not only created humanity. God moves through consciousness. Be careful. Tell the truth. Admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. We are all God's children. We can be connecting to a Higher Power through our relationships with other people.

Before we admit our wrongs, we might want to set aside some time to be reflective. This constant activity and running around might not lead us to the peaceful life that we will need for deep honesty.

Activity is good. Many of us should stay active. There comes a point when activity can become escapism. We need to find the balance between activity and stillness. We can become reflective. Then, admit our wrongs.

Mental illness is turmoil and chaos in the mind. Abusive behavior is cunning, baffling, and powerful. Abusive behavior comes from seemingly justified resentments and conflicts. We are caught between a mind in turmoil and chaos mixed with a personality that is cunning, baffling and powerful-trying to escape all reliability.

We have double the trouble. Mental illness and abusive behavior. We need double rigorous self honesty. That honesty can only come from self maintenance and self monitoring.

When we make mistakes, we can become reflective. Admit to God, ourselves, and another human the exact nature of our wrongs. We can live with mental illness. We can break the cycle of abusive behavior

(substance abuse, physical abuse and verbal abuse).

We won't grow past mental illness and abusive behavior. We only struggle to keep the turmoil and chaos of mental illness in check. We struggle to keep the lies and misdeeds to a minimum. We struggle to continuously attempt to break out of the cycles of abusive behavior (substance abuse, physical abuse, and verbal abuse).

The salvation in our lives comes not from leaving behind our mental illness and abusive behaviors. Salvation through peace of mind and serenity. Salvation comes from knowing that we have mental illness and abusive behaviors. Salvation comes from knowing that we are capable of lies and misdeeds.

Salvation comes from knowing the nature of our wrongs, and admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the nature of our wrongs.

We can't lose mental illness. However, we can get better. We can reduce the turmoil and chaos.

We are here in this life to be good to other people and to be good to ourselves. The way we treat other people is the way we treat God. Lies and misdeeds are hurtful. We have hurt other people. We will probably make the same mistakes in the future. We are not saints. We are struggling human beings.

We are trying to find our way through life. We can reach new found levels clarity.

We can admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

## **MIA Part Nine**

### **STEP SIX**

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

There comes a time in each of our lives when we can do no more. There comes a time when what we need to do and what we will try to attempt to do is humanly impossible. Only turning to our Higher Power is the answer.

People might try to skip this step. God seems intangible to some people. God has never directly spoken to many of us. We pray to God. We talk to our Higher Power. Nothing seems to happen.

The answer from God can come from the satisfaction that the defects in our character are gradually being removed.

The responses from our Higher Power are sometimes small and subtle. God is like the builder sanding the wood. Our rough edges are slowly sanded down. We will probably not get sanded down at once or at one moment in time.

Our lives will probably need to become a life time of constant prayer, meditation and support meetings. These prayers, meditations and support meetings can help us have our Higher Power remove these defects in our character. We need to learn how to ask our Higher Power for help.

We need to learn how to see and understand our Higher Power's responses. We also need to learn from other's perception about us and also search our inner selves.

We need to see and appreciate the work of our Higher Power removing the defects of character.

The removal of character defects is a life time of learning and working. We have been abusive and abrasive to people. We need to move toward being a nicer person. We need to become more honest. We need to try to stop our misdeeds.

We have been mentally ill and/or involved with abusive behaviors for a long time. We have been lost and confused for many years. We can get better. We can change.

There will probably be no miracles and no cures. Life can become a constant interaction between God and ourselves to help remove our defects of character.

We need to be entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. We need to be prepared for along term relationship with our Higher Power. We need to set aside the time for reflection and prayer. We need to be ready when our interaction with our Higher Power takes place.

We have our fearless and moral inventory. We can use that as a check list. We keep trying to improve by reviewing our moral inventory. We have the prayers and interaction with God. We have discussion with our Higher Power. We can keep going back to the fearless and moral inventory.

We can see what defects of our character are being removed. We strive for improvement and not perfection.

## **MIA Part Ten**

### **STEP SEVEN**

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Our short comings! We have loved to find out a few things wrong with other people. We have wanted so bad to tell people off and get rid of our resentments. If people didn't listen to us or change, then we could have drink. Or, we could smoke something. Or, yell at someone. We knew everyone's shortcomings. We didn't see our own.

Just focusing on us is difficult. Rigorous honesty is going to be demanded to ask God to remove our shortcomings. We have to be prepared that we might think that asking God to remove our shortcomings is something we do every once in awhile. Maybe, only once in our lifetime.

No.

We need to keep going back to Twelve Step meetings. Keep going back to learning about mental illness and abusive behaviors. Seeing and understanding our psychiatric condition. Understanding our real pattern of addictions. Also, discovering our shortcomings. Going back to that searching and fearless moral inventory. See how we are doing. Go back to our Higher Power.

Humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.

We can try to write down what we are doing and thinking. Bring those written ideas to meetings. We can even write down our prayers. We can even write down our conversations with our Higher Power.

Some of the time can be spent rewriting and editing what we want to say. Then, go back and ask God to remove those shortcomings. We can work every day toward reflections on those shortcomings.

We started to drink and do drugs because we didn't feel good. We were resentful and angry. Drinking, drugs and anger were an instant fix. We might have felt good for one, two, three, five minutes then the giant mood swings started. Then, we really felt angry, sad, happy, and/or anxious. Our abusive behavior kicked in.

We have been left to live with mental illness and/or abusive behavior. We might succeed on cutting back on the abusive behavior. We will still have to watch that mental illness doesn't sweep us away. The life of mental illness will require a lot of self monitoring and self maintenance.

Our shortcomings can be of our own making. There are some people who are intentional in their mistakes and misdeeds.

Also, many people become involved in mistakes and misdeeds from lack of knowledge. We need to have knowledge about who we are. What are our values and principles.

We also need to understand our psychiatric condition. We need to understand that substance abuse is another disease. We have two illnesses at once. We need to work twice as hard. We need to be vigilant. We can not be vigilant on our own.

We need the help of our Higher Power and other people who are striving for realistic levels of recovery. We need to keep checking ourselves out. See how we are doing.

Our humbly asking God to remove our short comings is only a dress rehearsal. We will have to be honest with many people in our lives. There will come a time when we have to make amends to several persons.

Humbly asking God to remove our short comings is just a step in our lives. This is a step which we might have to make many times. Just like all the steps. This interaction with the twelve steps is not a progression. We cycle through these steps.

Learn what we need to learn. Keep learning. Share our experiences with others. Share our experience with God. Go back and try again.

Learning how to be humble is a skill. Most of us think we are humble. Feedback from other people doesn't hurt. Then, humbly go back to God and humbly ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings.

## **MIA Part Eleven**

### **STEP EIGHT**

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Who have we known in our lives? What have we done together? Who did we harm? We have to learn to say, I am sorry.

We have defended our positions when we thought we were right. Sometimes, we have even been right and still lost the argument.

We have known conflict. We have tried to get even. We have carried resentments. We have gotten other people in trouble. We have said bad things about other people. We have made fun of people who were different from ourselves.

There are many patterns in our life. These patterns always led to substance abuse, verbal abuse, and/or physical abuse. Conflict and resentments drew us right into abusive behaviors.

We were like a moth to the flame. We knew all the right answers. We had all the right reasons why we were high, drunk, or angry.

We had to stop. We have stopped. We can continue to stop. We have got to learn to live with the emotional pain of mental illness. There is no escape. Other people, places, and things can be unpleasant. We don't have to be unpleasant and unhappy.

We learn how to cool ourselves out. We have admit that our lives are unmanageable. And, we have to make a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them.

This is not easy. Many of these same people hurt us. Harming other people and being harmed can almost become indistinguishable in some relationships.

For instance, we get harmed and we turn around and harm other people. We have to break out of the cycle.

By attending MIA and other twelve step meetings, we are making the commitment that we had enough. We no longer want to be harmed. We no longer want to harm other people. To make sure that we are going to break out of the cycle of harm, we are going to make a list of all people we had harmed and we are willing to make amends to them.

Making a list of people who we had harmed and become willing to make amends to them is a one way street. We make amends. We don't wait for people to make amends to us.

We are learning forgiveness. For many human beings, forgiveness is the most difficult action to take. We can no longer get even. We can longer hold resentments. We are humbly prepared through our time with God to remove our shortcomings. We learn about our shortcomings. We are making amends. We will not carry on the conflict. We will not attempt ongoing one upmanship. Time has come to make amends.

There is a lot of hurt and sorrow in life. The only way out is to make amends to other people. We don't need to reestablish friendships. We don't make amends to reconnect relationships.

Just the opposite is probably going to happen. We might be making amends because the chance of reconnection is over. We might never again see the people who we have made amends to.

We might have to strike out on our own. Never to return to the relationship or friendship that we had with the people who we were making amends to. Life can be lonely.

We are making amends because we are truly apologetic. We are learning to make our amends without a hidden agenda. We might have to learn to live without ever reconnecting again. We make amends because we are sorry for the harm that we have caused people.

People might some day make amends to us. Maybe, they won't. We are making amends because we harmed people. We have to stop harming people. We have to acknowledge that we have harmed people. We have to stop. The only way to stop is to face up to our past. Make a list of people who we had harmed and make amends to them.



## **MIA Part Twelve**

### STEP NINE

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

We have done enough harm. We only make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

There are many people who had enough of us. We can't return to everyone. We can't go back and make amends to some people. Our contact with some people will just be over.

We made the list. We know who we have harmed. We can say we are sorry to God. We can really be sorry and say so in the quiet of our prayer and meditation. There might some people who just don't want to hear from us.

The amends are written. We want forgiveness. We go out and try to find the people who want to hear from us. We make direct amends to them.

Life is difficult. We might not be able to find some of the people on our list. Again, they might not want to hear from us. We might have harmed them in different ways than we remembered.

They might have other memories than ours of how we harmed them. Our list might not be complete enough for some people. Our list might be different than their list. Some people might demand more from us.

We will be making amends to other people. What other people want and need might be different from what we want.

We have to be prepared that our amends and our new selves might not be accepted by other people. During the course of our lives with our mental illness and abusive behaviors we have harmed people. Not everyone will share our interest in forgiveness.

We only make direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

## **MIA Part Thirteen**

### STEP TEN

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Promptly admitted we were wrong? How often have we put this off?

What we wanted was to be was right. We wanted to win. We can be right and still lose.

We have lost love. We have lost jobs. We have lost friendships. We have lost family. We were right. We never had to say that we are sorry. We never had to say we were wrong. We defended our ideas and positions.

Continuing to take personal inventory is difficult. There is no easy way to see who we are. We need to keep taking our personal inventory. We need to keep thinking about who we are and writing this down.

The list can be long or short. The list can have order or not have order. The idea is that we need to start making the list.

The problem with those of us with mental illness is that we live in our own minds. We can think that we are doing something-when we are doing nothing. We need to start making the personal inventory. The better way is to write out our personal inventory.

We can learn to edit and rewrite and continue to work on our personal inventory. We need to try to start taking our personal inventory. We need to start.

Taking a personal inventory can take a long time or take a short. time. We need to start to take one. Once we start, we keep a running list, or several lists. Or, we can make different lists over different periods of our life time.

Start to write down some random thoughts. Or, get organized and have the inventory all planned out.

Then, over and over, we continue to take personal inventory.

## **MIA Part Fourteen**

### STEP ELEVEN

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him.

Contact with God is difficult. We can forget every day to have contact with God.

We have the chance to have a new life. We can live without drugs, alcohol and/or abusive behaviors. We can have a life of mental illness in partial remission. We can get to new levels of recovery.

Just within a few days of wellness, we can forget God. We have time for everything but prayer and meditation.

We can learn to set aside set times for both prayer and meditation. We can try to pray every day. We can write down the prayers so that we remember what we prayed and about. Through writing down our prayers, we can also see in front of us what were the prayers so that we can continue to work on those prayers. We learn to talk things over with our Higher Power. We learn and practice prayer and meditation.

## **MIA Part Fifteen**

### STEP TWELVE

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, people suffering from substance abuse and/or abusive behavior and mental illness, and practice the principles of MIA in all affairs.

#### Being of Service

Being of service to another human being is an honor. Everyone needs help. We all can help each other. First, we have to make sure that we are helping.

In the world of AA and other twelve step groups, we are but trusted servants.

#### ***Please remember STEP TWELVE:***

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, people suffering from substance abuse and/or abusive behavior and mental illness, and practice the principles of MIA in all affairs.

We can be good to each other. We carry this message. We are not leaders. We are fellow workers. We are trusted servants. We learn to work together. We learn to work on ourselves and our growth as the priority.

We don't want to leave out and forget other people. However, our job is to help when asked. We do not run around and judge other people, either. Judging is not helping.

We have a daily struggle with keeping ourselves sane, stable, safe and sober. Trying to stabilize from mental illness is hard. Trying to keep ourselves sane from mental illness is a full time job.

We can be with other people when we are ready and able. Also, we can be with other people when they are ready and able.

However, our primary job is getting and keeping ourselves sane, stable, safe, and sober.

We love other people. We care for others who are still suffering.

Our job is helping who we can. Helping when, where, and how we can. When we cannot help someone we remember:

Sometimes letting go and not helping is also just as difficult.

Many of us were not willing or ready to be helped. Many people made suggestions to us over the years. There might have been people who kept saying, "Why are you drinking and doing drugs? You are already too wild. You are naturally crazy with your mental illness. Why do you want to become more out of control?"

We didn't listen. We kept drinking and doing drugs. One day what we were being told sunk in. We needed to stop acting out our insanity.

We can be of service and help. We have to be prepared that not all people learn and react the same way. We can offer some hope through our example.

With mental illness, addictions, and abusive behaviors, there is no end to the tunnel. We have to work every day to keep ourselves stable. We have to work every day to keep ourselves sober. One moment of forgetting can lead us to conflict. Conflict can lead us to abusive behaviors or being abused. We can start drinking or doing drugs again. Remember, many people who start fights end up being the ones who get beat up and lose the fight.

Finding our way out of the maze of mental illness and abuse, requires us to be continually learning. We are of service to others because we want to learn. We are not teachers. We are trusted servants. We are learners. We are trying to learn from each other. We want to find out what other people have found out. We pass on the information to each other after we find out if the information is real.

## **Mental Illness Anonymous Meeting**

Select someone to read a selection from the Big Book to serve as the meeting topic. In the first Friday of the month, the topic is the step of the month. The reading should be selected from the 12 by 12.

Welcome to the meeting of the fellowship of Mental Illness Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am your chairperson for this meeting.

After a moment of silence, will those of you who wish to, please join me in the Serenity Prayer.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Preamble.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the 12 steps.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the 12 traditions.

Are there any visitors or newcomers who would like to identify themselves by their first names only so we may get to know you? If there are newcomers, say, "Serenity from ongoing mental illness is difficult, but serenity is important for recovery. Serenity can be tough to understand. Please stay after the meeting and find out more about the opportunity of serenity and mental illness recovery."

Are there any MIA reports or announcement?

This group celebrates serenity and abstinence from abuse birthdays. Is anybody celebrating 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 months abstinence this week? Anyone celebrating an annual birthday?

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read a selection from the literature to serve as a topic for this meeting.

Everyone will have a chance to share at this meeting, so be considerate of others. The leader of meeting picks a person to share by a method of their choosing. A person only shares if they want to share.

At the half hour: Every MIA group is fully self supporting. Money collected buys our literature and pays group expenses. We ask newcomers who are here for the first time to not contribute, but we encourage you to become familiar with the literature.

At ten minutes before the meeting closes: We only have ten minutes left. Is there anyone that has burning desire or need to share At the end of the meeting: Will those who wish, please join me in the Serenity Prayer.