

"We admitted we were powerless and that our lives had become unmanageable."
The First Step of the Alcoholics Anonymous Program

In completing this assignment, your goal is to fully confront, admit, and accept:

- 1) That you are powerless over your addiction and
- 2) That your life has become unmanageable

SECTION 1: Preoccupation and Attempts to Control

To recover from the most baffling, insidious, compulsive disease of addiction will require diligent effort. Furthermore, it will take HONESTY, OPENMINDEDNESS, AND WILLINNESS; key words to keep in mind throughout your presentation.

Consider the following as a guide to looking at the ways powerlessness and unmanageability are both present in your life. For this first section of your presentation, we ask that you divide your alcoholism/addiction into three states – early, middle, and late. This distinction will help you to see the progression of your disease, the powerlessness you experienced, and the ways in which your life has become unmanageable. In all of your examples, avoid generalities and vagueness. The more specific you are, the more accurately you will see your addiction and the more in touch you will get. **Be sure to include who, what, when, and why in your examples, taking special care to TIE THE BEHAVIOR/ EMOTION BACK TO YOUR USE OF CHEMICALS.** By doing so, you see the connection to your addition and the true scope of how it has affected not only your life, but also the life of those around you. It is for your benefit to be as complete and inclusive as possible, thereby allowing you to become an expert and authority on the topic of your addiction.

Ask for help, as needed, from group members (or staff) and have at least (3) peers review your assignment before presenting. If you are asked to redo, revise or add to your examples, it does not mean that you failed or that you did your assignment wrong; it simply means staff/ peers believe you need to take a closer look at the affect addiction has had on your life.

1. PREOCCUPATION: List (2) specific examples for each: Early, Middle, and Late of how your thoughts turned to using when you should have been paying attention to other things, such as work or family. Examples should relate to your hiding, sneaking, or planning to use, preoccupation with finding. Making up an alibi, manipulating others (i.e. causing a fight to have an "excuse" to use), and other ways of demonstrating the growing importance of chemicals as the center of your life.

TOTAL = 6 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!

2. ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL: List (2) specific examples for each: Early, Middle, and Late of how you attempted to control or quit using. Examples could include trying to cut down, changing or substituting chemicals, making promises to quit, limiting the number of days/ times you used, etc. Be specific and complete each example by stating what prompted the attempt to control, how long it worked, and what happened as a result. Include previous treatments, counseling, going to support groups (i.e. AA or NA) or any geographic moves you made. **TOTAL = 6 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**

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SECTION 2: Affect on Emotions, Family, and Spirituality

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3. EMOTIONALLY: List (1) specific example of how your addiction affected **each** of the following feelings: 1. Anger 2. Blame 3. Resentment, 4 Retaliation (i.e. the need to get even/ revenge) 5. Jealousy/ fear/ paranoia 6. Loneliness 7. Guilt 8. Shame 9. Self-pity 10. Hopelessness/ impending doom 11. Sadness 12. Hurt and embarrassment. Addiction is a "feelings" disease, so this area of your presentation will be very extensive. Make an effort to connect with your emotions, and 'feel' what you were going through. Connect each of your examples to your use and using behaviors. **TOTAL = 12 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**

4. FAMILY: List each member of your family (include anyone that has been. Could have been/ should have been/ is a significant part of your life), whether living or deceased, and give (2) specific examples of how your chemical dependency has affected them. How were they hurt physically and/ or emotionally, how was their daily life affected (i.e. having to provide transportation for you, having to pay legal fines, etc.), how was their *quality* of life affected. If someone objected to your use, how did you react? How did you protect your addiction from the 'attacks' of family members and keep it as a "do not discuss" topic? **TOTAL = VARIES** (depending on number of family members.

5. SPIRITUALITY: List (5) specific examples of how you became demoralized and went against your beliefs in order to practice your addiction (i.e. becoming dishonest, cruel, ungrateful, selfish, unforgiving, hateful, greedy, etc.). Through your examples, try to answer the following questions: How did you try to be your own "Higher Power" by trying to control the circumstances of your life or others? What are the ways you have destroyed the love others had for you or your ability to love others? How have others lost respect for you? How did you become 'disconnected' from your religious or spiritual beliefs? **TOTAL = 5 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**

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SECTION 3: Affect on Social Life, Sex and intimacy

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6. SOCIAL: List (5) specific examples of how your social life has been affected by your addiction. Examples should include withdrawing or avoiding certain friends (or certain friends avoiding you), superficial relationships centered on using, having a hard time enjoying yourself at social events without using, staying away from events where chemicals are not available. **TOTAL = 5**

EXAMPLES, relate to your use!

7. SEXUALITY: List (5) specific examples about the impact your addiction has had on your sex life, including loss of sex drive and interest, impotency, manipulating others with sexual behavior, affairs, going against your morals/ beliefs about sex and feelings about yourself as it relates to your sexual behavior. **TOTAL = 5 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**

8. INTIMACY: The definition of intimacy is best demonstrated by dividing it into the phrase "into me see." List (1) example of how your addiction has impacted your ability to let others know the 'real' you (i.e. your inner thoughts, beliefs, feelings, hopes, dreams), and/ or your ability to know them on an intimate level. **TOTAL = 10 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**

AREAS OF INTIMACY: **1) Intellectual Intimacy:** Sharing of any thoughts or experiences that stimulate a person intellectually, i.e. having a conversation about something read, heard, or observed; **2) Emotional Intimacy:** Sharing of one's feelings and inviting self-disclosure; **3) Sexual intimacy:** Feeling comfortable enough with someone to share physical, sexual contact, i.e. cuddling, foreplay, intercourse, touching, massaging, kissing, hugging; **4) Social Intimacy:** Going with someone to a social event, i.e. a dinner/ holiday party, attending an athletic event, family get-togethers, engaging in mutual friendships, etc.; **5) Recreational Intimacy:** Sharing in activities which allow for a change of pace, such as hobbies, vocations/ trips, excursions, picnics, volunteer work; **6) Parting Intimacy:** sharing any activities related to children – playing, transporting, bedtime routines, school related activities, cuddling; **7) Economic Intimacy:** Sharing about all areas of finances – working together to make a budget, investment plans, speculations, purchases, retirement plans; **8) Household Intimacy:** Sharing of regular household projects – cleaning, grocery shopping, car maintenance, building an extra room, organizing, gardening (lawn care), home maintenance; **9) Life- Work Intimacy:** Sharing of that which is both meaningful and challenging in your area of work – your dreams and goals; **10) Physical Health Intimacy:** Sharing in the care of one's body through nutrition, rest, and exercise.

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Section 4: Affect on Work, Behavior, Physical Health and Finances

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9. WORK: List (5) specific examples of how your ability to work (at your job, at school, or around the house), was impacted by your use. Include missing work, calling in late or sick when hung-over, being less efficient on the job (or doing poorly at school), being fired, quitting in order to use, not doing your share of work, procrastinating, starting fights or creating drama so others won't notice your incompetence, using before/ during school, work or while doing chores around the house.

TOTAL = 5 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!

10. INSANE AND DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS: List (5) specific examples of insane/ destructive behaviors towards yourself or others. This includes: starting fights, blackouts (not remembering what you did or what happened), driving under the influence, verbal or physical abuse towards friends or family members, suicidal thoughts, plans or attempts, putting yourself and/ or others at risk for physical or emotional harm (i.e. exposure to chemicals/ infections, violent or volatile atmosphere, criminal activities, overdosing, etc.). This personalizes the lengths you have gone to for your addiction and what you were willing to sacrifice. **TOTAL = 5 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**

11. PHYSICALLY: List (5) specific examples of how you have been physically affected by your addiction, i.e. hangovers, poor hygiene, neglect to health and appearance, organ injuries or deterioration, doctors advising you to cut down or quit your use, hospitalizations/ detoxifications, not meeting basic needs for sleep, food, et., motor vehicle accidents, falls, injuries related to fighting, etc. **TOTAL = 10 EXAMPLES, relate to your use!**