

# Check-Ins

There are so many ways to do a daily check-in with your spouse, the following are suggestions; find out what is best for you both. The purpose of check-ins are to build safety, honesty, accountability so that trust and relational intimacy can be established.

## 1) A.E.I.O.U.Y. Check-In

Abstinent, Exercise, I, Others, Unresolved Emotions, Yay for the Day!

**A= Abstinent:** Have I been Abstinent today?

- o For him: did he lust, experience triggers, or act out in any way? Did he feel anger, resentment, or go to victim mode?
- o For her: Did I go to a place of fear, judgment, or control during that day?

**E= Exercise:** Physical activity. Walking, weights, cardio, yoga, breath work.

**I= (I) Self-Care:** Do something that makes me happy. Engage in my hobbies. Get sufficient sleep, Don't compare myself with others, Eat well, Take a power nap. Slow Down! Breathe!

**O= Others:** Serve someone, show kindness and support.

**U=** Are there any **unresolved emotions** that I need to share?

**Y=** What is your **"Yay!"** for today? Meaning the happy and exciting things that happened during the day.

## 2) Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Social, Intellectual, Money, Food

**Physical:** Exercise, movement, cardio, weights.

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**Emotional:** journaling, listen to music, ponder, cry, Be Present!

**Spiritual:** pour my soul out to God, read scriptures, meditate, be in nature.

**Social:** Be willing to ask my sponsor for help, go to SAL meetings, Go to therapy, contact someone for support in my SAL group, connect with a friend. Don't isolate yourself.

**Intellectual:** Step study or addiction/betrayal trauma material, read a book, learn something new, pick up a new hobby.

**Money:** Did I stick to my budget? Was I honest about my spending?

**Food Plan:** Did I treat my body with respect? Did I use food wisely?

## **3) F.A.N.O.S. - Feelings, Appreciation/Affirmation, Needs, Ownership, Sobriety/Spirituality/Struggles/Step Work**

**Feelings** – How am I feeling? This is not a time to blame or explain, just to acknowledge your emotional state. See feelings chart, as needed.

**Appreciation/Affirmation** – What about your partner or what they have done that you appreciate?

Tell them. Examples: “Thank you for doing the dishes tonight” or “I am proud of you for doing that presentation” or “I noticed you spending extra time with the kids”.

**Needs** – State one or more of your needs. Examples: “I need to take a nap” or “I need a hug or companionship” or “I need to do my dailies” or “I need your help with the laundry”.

**Ownership** – What have you done recently that you can take responsibility for? Something that was not helpful or was hurtful in some way?

Remember to take ownership of your actions, not to blame your partner.

**Sobriety/Spiritually/Struggles/Step Work**– Have you been “sober” since your last check-in? Remember, the spouse is not your accountability partner, so caution is recommended in deciding what you will share with

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your spouse. It is also recommended to decide in advance what will be shared, with the help of your therapist. This can also be a place for a spiritual check-in and stating what step you are working.

Successes for Partners:

For partners of addicts this could refer to behaviors that are a part of your recovery, such as "I have been sober from trying to control your behavior today". It is my belief that if this is not something you feel you cannot share or want to share with your husband, then don't. It's up to you. Determine if this part creates safety for you in check-ins. (Optional)

-Adapted from Dr Mark Laaser

## **Some additional food for thought:**

**Scheduled Check-Ins:** Set aside regular, scheduled times to check in with each other. This could be a daily or weekly ritual where you sit down and discuss how you're both feeling, your progress in recovery, and any concerns or challenges that have arisen.

**Active Listening:** When your spouse is sharing their thoughts and feelings, practice active listening. Give them your full attention, maintain eye contact, and refrain from interrupting. Show empathy and understanding by acknowledging their emotions.

**Open and Honest Communication:** Encourage open and honest communication. Be willing to share your own struggles, triumphs, and concerns. Transparency is essential in recovery, as it fosters trust and understanding.

**Use "I" Statements:** When discussing sensitive topics or concerns, frame your statements using "I" instead of "you" to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, say "I feel worried when..." instead of "You always make me worried when..."

**Express Gratitude:** Take time to express gratitude for each other's support and commitment to recovery. Recognize and appreciate the positive changes you've seen in each other since beginning the recovery journey.

**Set Boundaries:** Discuss and establish healthy boundaries that support both your recovery and the relationship. Clear boundaries can help prevent triggers or conflicts that might jeopardize your progress.

**Plan Sober Activities:** Plan and enjoy sober activities together. Engaging in enjoyable, substance-free activities can help you bond and create positive memories in recovery.

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**Problem-Solve Together:** If you encounter challenges or stressors related to recovery or other aspects of life, work together to find solutions. Brainstorming and collaborating can make you feel more connected as a team.

**Seek Professional Help:** If necessary, consider seeking couples counseling or therapy with a therapist who specializes in addiction and recovery. A trained therapist can facilitate productive conversations and offer guidance for navigating complex issues.

**Celebrate Milestones:** Celebrate recovery milestones together. Whether it's a day, a week, a month, or more, acknowledge your achievements and the progress you've made as a couple.

**Support Each Other's Self-Care:** Encourage and support each other's self-care practices. This might include attending 12-Step meetings, therapy sessions, or engaging in activities that promote physical and emotional well-being.

**Stay Informed:** Continue to educate yourselves about addiction and recovery. Understanding the nature of addiction, relapse triggers, and coping strategies can help both of you be more supportive and empathetic.

Remember that recovery is an ongoing process (it's not linear), and it's normal to face challenges along the way. By maintaining open and supportive communication with your spouse, you can strengthen your relationship and provide the necessary support for each other's recovery journeys. Patrick Carnes references the 3 legged stool of recovery; your recovery, partner's recovery, the relationships recovery.