

## Facilitator Notes Supplemental Lesson: Kristen Smith Video

**Overview:** This lesson is based on an interview with Kristen Smith, a Phoenix, Arizona, practicing therapist, with specialties in addiction and family issues. Kristen talks about the difficulties facing parents who have addicted loved ones, healthy ways to respond, and practical tools for parents to use. This lesson can be presented in two ways. First, as a substitute for a regular meeting, treating it like having a guest speaker. In other words, show the video and discuss it, using the handouts provided and do not have the usual time for check-in. It can also be easily used in a normal meeting setting as the educational component of the meeting. In this case, it is highly recommended you view the video in two parts over a two-week period. There are handouts for Part I and Part II of the video.

### Notes:

- Blanks Part I: D = dreams, D = drama, C = coping, M= mechanism, D = dopamine.
- Blanks Part II: CO = codependency, EX = experiences, UN = unmanageable, MOD = moderation, GR = grief
- This video has a lot of information to take at one time. Even if you decide to show and discuss the video as the entire meeting, you may want to just do Part I one week and Part II the following week.
- The concept of this lesson is to watch the video, then work through the handout. The handout has built in questions to discuss. Of course, you can augment these questions. See below for alternative questions to ask.
- Questions for the group:
  - What was the most impactful thing that Kristen said in the video? Why?
  - What was something difficult to hear that she said?

### Driving points home:

Ask the following high-level questions at the end of your discussion. These will help bring people back to focus on hope.

- What about the video that gives us hope when it comes to our response to our loved one?
- What about the video gives me hope for my loved one?

### Other follow-up questions:

- What does this video teach us about the need to let go of control of our loved ones? Reminder, letting go is not abandonment. Notice it is not “let go,” it is “let go of control,” you can also use that as an example and ask what the difference is when we say let go versus saying let go of control.
- What happens when we do not practice self-care? Follow-up with self-care can lead to hope in our loved ones! How?
- Note to the group that when we do not take care of ourselves when we respond to our loved ones and state things like: “you are killing me, you are making me miserable, you are causing me so much stress” etc. We are potentially giving them another excuse to use drugs or alcohol. Why is that the case? (Answer: Our loved ones are likely using substances to cope with life, they don’t

seem to know how to without substances, when we tell them they are ruining our lives, we are just giving them one more reason to feel miserable about themselves. Hence, they might say to themselves “see, I’m ruining my parents lives as well, I’m worthless, at least if I take drugs or drink, I will feel numb.” How is this different than us being positive and being a role model like going on vacation or seeing a counselor rather than sitting at home alone miserable?

- The counter-intuitive issue of parenting is a reason to attend PAL and or see a counselor. Talk about and ask questions about what are things we need to do that are counterintuitive to normal parenting and why is it helpful to have a group to support you in those efforts? (Answer: the group empathizes with you, they get it, they know what you are feeling, and they may have experienced exactly what you have, whereas others without this issue may think setting boundaries are cruel or not helpful.
- Co-dependency is a word you do not hear much until we are involved in situations like dealing with an addicted loved one. You can ask “How and why are parents co-dependent and why is that such a problem when dealing with someone with addiction issues? (Partial Answer: this contributes to treating them like children rather than adults (for those over 18) and hinders them from growing up, we tend to keep them in their childhood, we often cannot separate from their drama and problems, and they cannot learn how to solve their own problems and grow up)
- Talk about the impatience issue that parents experience. We want them to get better and we want it immediately. Even though we set boundaries, and our loved ones get into recovery, why do we jump in when they are first in recovery and want to start helping again? Why is this a problem? (Answer: remember the goal is allowing them to experience problems and solve their own problems, jumping in may send the message, “you cannot do this without me, you cannot solve your own problems.)
- What is the spiritual aspect of dealing with this issue? Do you think there is a spiritual aspect to our recovery and theirs?
- Is it possible to experience joy in our lives regardless of the choices of our loved ones? What is the difference between happiness and joy? What is keeping us from joy? (Partial Answer: our co-dependency, I cannot be ok if my loved one is not ok. It is not right for me to be joyful if they are miserable” etc.

#### **Cross-reference material from Mike Speakman’s book, *The Four Seasons of Recovery***

- Page 46 (Co-dependency is not healthy dependency)
- Page 76 (Through a Parents eye)
- Page 164, 167 (Letting Go)
- Page 43, 98 (Helping, over-helping)
- Page 23 (The risk of change)
- Page 98 (Changing how you help)
- Page 123 (New parent roles)
- Page 191 (Experiencing a new level of peace)

#### **Cross-reference material from Melody Beattie’s *The Language of Letting Go (TLOLG)*, and *More of The Language of Letting Go (MTLOLG)***

- Jan 9 – “Responsibility for ourselves” - TLOLG
- Jan 26 - “Off the Hook” – TLOLG

- Mar 6 - "Peace" - TLOLG
- Mar 8 – "Surrender" - TLOLG
- Mar 9 - "Taking Care of Ourselves" - TLOLG
- Mar 25 - "Letting go of Worry" - TLOLG
- May 5 – "Control" - TLOLG
- May 22 – "Times of Reprogramming" - TLOLG
- May 29 - "Powerlessness and Unmanageability" - TLOLG
- Oct 15 – "Letting Go of Chaos" - TLOLG
- Dec 4 - "Letting Go" - TLOLG
- Jan 11 – "Throw the Ball" - MTLOLG
- Mar 10 – "Let it Be" - MTLOLG
- May 12 – "Say when it's time to save your own life" - MTLOLG
- Aug 1 - "Learn to say thanks" - MTLOLG
- Aug 5 – "Stop fighting it" - MTLOLG
- Dec 2 - "The lesson is joy" – MTLOLG

Another great resource is "40 Days to a Joy-Filled Life" by Tommy Newberry