



Fun Facts

Background– The purpose of this activity is to help the group get to know each other and build group cohesion which helps build comfort and trust. A group that feels comfortable and trusting has a greater potential to advance together in the therapy process. Substance use and mental health topics will also be discussed

Directions – For this group everyone will be discussing “fun facts” – Just to make sure everyone is on the same page, consider these two following qualities of “fun facts”

- 1) **A fun fact is a fact.** This means it should be something real and truthful as opposed to just a made-up story or a random thought or personal opinion
- 2) **A fun fact should be fun** – For this exercise, things that people share as fun facts can be happy and fun or they can be dark and not so fun. If you are going to share something darker, please make sure it is something you are comfortable with today and it is something you have accepted and can share without getting emotional. *Consider some examples below*
 - a. A fun, fun fact – “Fun fact: I consider myself a Disney fanatic as I watch all the old Disney movies repeatedly and I go to the theater on opening day for every new Disney movie”
 - b. A “darker” fun fact – “I have a glass eye from an accident I had when I was a teenager”
 - If the person sharing this feels anger, sadness or other unresolved emotions, it is NOT a fun fact and should not be shared in this group (perhaps in a future session or later today but not now).
 - If the person sharing this feels comfortable and can discuss this without getting upset, it can be a “fun fact” (even if it does not sound all that “fun” when it happened)

Now just take turns going around the group sharing fun facts. The counselor//group leader should generate follow up discussion as appropriate (For example “*Can anyone else in the group relate to that?*”)

Suggested topics for fun facts – (Feel free to share this list with the group to help them come up with ideas)

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hobbies/Interests | Likes/Dislikes | Food related | My Body |
| Skills or talents | Achievements | People I have met | Places I have gone or lived |
| Family/Relatives | Childhood | Beliefs | Groups/clubs I belong to |
| Scary Experiences | Fun Experiences | Unusual Experiences | Interesting Experiences |
| Fears/phobias | Personal Strengths/Qualities | “I’m really good at...” | “I am not so good at...” |
| Future plans/goals | Animals/Pets | Things I own/owned | I have a friend who... |
| Relationships | Work/School | Entertainment | <u>Other? – Make your own</u> |



Part 2 – Fun Facts about Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health – Review and discuss as a group:

Studies repeatedly show that addiction is treatable and can be successfully managed. (Good news, right?)

Although drug/alcohol addiction is very serious in the world, tobacco is #1 as annually it kills more than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.

Research shows that men are more likely than women to use almost all types of illegal drugs

People may at times tend to value memories more than actual people, so sometimes you may really just miss the memories, not the actual person. (*Keep in mind, this says “may” and is not always true in every case*)

Many factors can influence the development of addiction. Environment, mental health, genetics, substance use and past experiences such as trauma can all be causes of addiction. (It does not seem to be just one thing alone, rather it is a combination of factors)

Legendary composer Johann Sebastian Bach created an opera specifically about an addiction to coffee

At one point in Vietnam, marriage applicants were required to obtain a Certificate of Good Mental Health from a doctor, proving that they are "mentally sound for marriage", before being allowed to marry

Some researchers who study brain scans have found that a brain in the initial stage of love looks surprisingly like a brain experiencing a drug addiction.

Some degree of stress can be a useful motivator for increased performance and productivity; therefore, stress isn't always all bad

Maladaptive daydreaming is a psychiatric condition characterized by intense daydreaming that distracts a person from their real life and therefore can negatively impact relationships and functioning

Research shows that cuddling strengthens the frontal lobe of the human brain, the region of the brain responsible for how you react to emotional stress. (The “snuggle buzz” is real!)

Dopamine, the pleasure hormone, can cause some people to become addicted to seeking information. This is why some individuals find themselves struggling to stop endless scrolling on the internet or social media.

The smell of chocolate has been found to slow down brain waves, making us feel calm.

Convicted serial killer Ted Bundy worked at a mental crisis/suicide hotline and probably helped several people work through what they were dealing with and may have even saved lives.

Crying has a physiological effect on the body, releasing neurochemical substances that can improve mood.

The cells in your body react to what your mind says, so negativity can bring down your immune system

Studies show that massages, hugs, and hand holding reduce stress and boost the immune system

People who oversleep tend to crave even more sleep.

Evidence shows that listening to music can improve memory, strengthen immune system, and reduce depression risk

Reading aloud (and talking to yourself about the material) helps you learn more. Talking it out helps!