



## Knowing What You Don't Know II (*Advanced In Depth Discussion*)

### **Opening Icebreaker – Sharing what you don't know.**

Directions: Choose a subject that you do not know much about and complete the following two sentences:

1 - "I can't speak intelligently about.... (Name subject)

2 - "The only thing I know about (Subject) is..."

For example:

1- "I can't speak intelligently about **Quantum Physics**."

2- "The only thing I know about **Quantum Physics** is that it involves really smart scientists studying small things like electrons."

Before the next person takes their turn, the counselor should ask the group if anyone knows about the chosen topic (In this example, quantum physics). If someone in the group wants to volunteer to say a few things that they know about the topic, that person may provide some BRIEF facts (one minute or less, keeping it short, a few sentences only, to keep the group flowing) Afterward, continue again with the next person picking a new topic.

Repeat giving everyone in the group a chance to share something they do now know much about

When the icebreaker is complete: Discuss as a group: **Why is it important to know what you don't know?**

Knowing what you don't know is a critical aspect of self-awareness and effective decision-making, especially in the field of substance use and mental health recovery. Here's why it's important:

**Humility:** Recognizing our limitations and areas of ignorance fosters humility. In counseling, humility shows that we are open to learning and growing. (Humility is freedom from excessive pride or arrogance)

- **Discuss: How does humility help promote positive growth in a person in recovery? (Keep in mind that humility involves being teachable)**

**Honesty:** Being aware of your knowledge gaps is essential for honest communication. It prevents us from providing inaccurate or misleading information to others, which can be harmful for our recovery and growth.

- **Discuss: Why is honesty important if the goal is positive change and self-improvement?**

**Insight and Self-Awareness:** Instead of assuming you have all the answers, you can focus on your own self-discovery and empowerment.

- **Discuss: Why do we need insight and self-awareness to be able to effectively change and grow?**



**Effective Decision-Making:** Understanding what we don't know enables us to make more informed decisions. It prevents overconfidence and encourages seeking additional information, insights, or expertise when necessary. It helps us to avoid rash judgments or flawed conclusions based on incomplete understanding.

- **How important is decision-making when it comes to substance use and mental health recovery? How about when it comes to life in general?**

**Continuous Learning:** In the recovery and positive change process, knowledge is constantly evolving. Acknowledging what we don't know encourages personal development and learning to stay updated with whatever changes, adjustments, and improvements we may need to work on.

- **Why is it beneficial to approach life from a perspective of wanting to continuously keep learning?**

**Collaboration:** When you're aware of your limitations, you're more likely to collaborate with peers. This increases the likelihood of building closer relationships and developing a strong support system.

- **Everyone has surely heard the cliché “You can't do it alone” – With that in mind, why is it important to be able to successfully communicate and collaborate with other people when dealing with substance use and/or mental health issues?**

**Avoiding Harm:** Providing advice or interventions in areas where you lack expertise can lead to unintended harm. Recognizing your knowledge gaps helps you avoid causing harm to yourself and others. In other words, talking openly about things we do not know or understand can be dangerous as bad advice can have negative outcomes.

- **What are some harmful outcomes you want to avoid?**

**Close out:** Knowing what you don't know to come up with future group topics:

When you know what you don't know you can effectively ask for more information on topics that are important to recovery. What are some topics for future groups that you know that you need to learn more about? No need to answer these questions now, just check all that apply to you and what you “know that you don't know”:

- Do I need to learn about more about the overall process of recovery and what works for success?
- Do I need to learn more about effectively avoiding setbacks and relapse?
- Do I need to take time to learn more about myself and what motivates me?
- Do I need to learn more about managing a mental health issue (like anxiety, anger, self-esteem, etc.)?
- Do I need more coping skills?

Based on the idea of knowing what you don't know, what are some other ideas for future groups based on things you know that you need to learn more about?