



Taking a Trip to the Other Side

This activity is focused on considering other viewpoints. It is helpful to be as open-minded as possible for this activity. Imagination may be required

Remember, the focus is **empathy without agreement** which means simply looking at and understanding other viewpoints *even if we do not agree with them*.

Complete the following:

What is your view? - What needs to change according to what you believe? If nothing needs to change then make a statement about why everything is fine the way it is

Now identify at least one to four people who may want to see you change. They may want you to change because they care about you (like a spouse, friend or family member), or perhaps it is their job to supervise change in you (for example probation officer or boss) List below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Empathy – Try your best to *understand* why each person listed above wants you to change, even if you do not agree with their reasoning

Try to be as specific as possible with regard to what each person wants to see change and why they want to see it

Examples:

1. My wife wants me to change and stop drinking and get help for my anger because she thinks that I will be a better husband and father if I don't drink. My wife thinks I will be healthier and have more energy to do more at work and around the house and she thinks that if I don't drink I will be closer to the kids. My wife says she wants me to stop drinking because she loves me, even though I am not sure that I agree

2. My Boss wants me to stop drinking because he thinks that I called out sick too many times because I drank the night before (even though he is wrong as I really was actually sick) My boss thinks I will focus better and have a better attitude at work if I stop drinking at home, even though I don't think it is any of his business what I do at home.



Now try your best to empathize and understand each person's viewpoint similar to the above examples. Try to include what people want to see change in you and why they may feel that way. Give others the benefit of the doubt where needed. Use your imagination and try to think the way they would think:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Discussion –

- A. If alone share your answers with at least one other person and get their feedback, or if in a group, discuss your above answers with the group.
- B. Then, answer the following questions with regard to increasing your understanding about why people may want you to change.
 - **Being as honest and open-minded as you can (even if you don't agree), are there any legitimate reasons why any of those people that you just listed could be concerned about your situation? (A good example would be, "I got arrested" "I lost my job" "Most of my friends get high" "The person found drugs in my room" etc.)**
 - **Again, being honest, are there any situations that you DID NOT get caught doing that would concern any of those people you listed? (For example – My wife has no idea that I did coke once over the summer, she thinks I just drink" or "I have been selling weed a little bit for extra money and my father would flip out if he knew" or "I have gotten away with using a few times in between visits to my probation officer")**



- C. **Interactive Activity for Groups** – Counselor should pick a role based on some of the answers given for the first section. For example counselor could say “Parent” or “Boss” or “Probation officer” etc. Everyone in the group should assume that role. (For example, if “Probation officer” was picked everyone in the group should now pretend to be a probation officer, whether or not they really have one)

With everyone in their assigned role, try to have a group discussion on one or more of the following topics. (For example, if the role selected was “Parent”, try to discuss the following topics based on how you think a parent would answer these questions)

- **How do you feel about drug and alcohol abuse?**

- **What does it take for people to stop abusing drugs and alcohol?**

- **If someone is getting clean and stopping use of drugs and alcohol, what kind of changes do they need to make with their attitude?**

Repeat with different roles if time allows.

Final Insight Question: Have you learned anything about yourself from this activity? Can you on some level *understand* why others are concerned about your substance use situation?