



## Addiction Awareness Activity: *Wagon Wheel*

• *Length: 35 minutes*

• *Set-up: 2 concentric circles/  
Equal number of chairs facing  
each other*

• *Type: Large group*

### *Trainer Script:*

To help get organized for the next activity, we need everyone to number off by twos. Ones, please bring your chairs to the center of the room and form a circle with your chairs facing out, then ones, take your seat. Twos, please take your chairs and place them in front of a person and facing that person in the ones circle. Twos, you may now be seated. The person facing you is your partner.

Shake hands with your partner—the person opposite you.

### *Wagon Wheel Discussion Starters*

In this activity you're going to have a short amount of time to discuss different topics. But first, we need a system so that you'll know when it's time to **stop talking**. When I say stop and raise my hand, that means it's time to stop talking. When you see my hand raised, immediately stop talking and raise your hand, too. Eventually, everyone will see the raised hands and know that it's time for silence.

*Note: Raise hand and when everyone is silent, read the first Wagon Wheel Discussion Starter.*

The first topic I want you to discuss with your partner is:

1. **What was your career path to your present position? We don't need a summary of your resume, but what events brought you to where you are in your professional life?**

### *Materials needed: none*

- Ask the large group to form 2 circles inside each other—the inner circle facing outward.
- Ask participants to shake hands so you can see that everyone has a partner.
- Demonstrate the call for silence with the whole group.

**Note:** Allow participants 2-4 minutes to share their response to the first statement. Then, call "Time!" and raise your hand to signal for silence.



Now we want to move the Wagon Wheel. We'll do that by taking turns between the inside circle and the outside circle. Will the people on the **inside circle** please stand and move one chair to the right. Everyone should have a new partner. Shake hands with your new partner.

The topic I want you to discuss with your new partner is:

**2. Discuss what you think is the most serious drug problem in your community.**

**Note:** Allow participants 2-4 minutes to share their response to the second statement. Then, call "Time!" and raise your hand to signal for silence.



Will the people on the **outside circle** please stand and move one chair to the right. Everyone should have a new partner. Shake hands with your new partner.

The third topic I want you to discuss with your new partner is:

**3. What's the first recollection you have of alcohol in your life?**



- Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion.

**Instructions for Moving the Wagon Wheel**

1. Stand up (either inside or outside circle).
2. Move one chair to the right.
3. Sit down.
4. Shake hands with your new partner and introduce yourself.



- Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion.

- Move the Wagon Wheel.
- Ask participants to shake hands with new partner.

**Note:** Allow participants 2-4 minutes to share their response to the third statement. Then, call "Time!" and raise your hand to signal for silence.



Let's move the Wagon Wheel. Will the people on the **inside circle** please stand and move one chair to the right. Everyone should have a new partner. Shake hands with your new partner.

The fourth topic I want to discuss with you new partner is:

#### 4. What's your first recollection of illegal drugs?

**Note:** Allow participants 2-4 minutes to share their response to the fourth statement. Then, call "Time!" and raise your hand to signal for silence.



Let's move the Wagon Wheel again. Will the people on the **outside circle** please stand and move one chair to the right. Everyone should have a new partner. Shake hands with your new partner.

The fifth topic I want to discuss with you new partner is:

#### 5. What role did alcohol and illegal drugs play in your high school years?

**Note:** Allow participants 2-4 minutes to share their response to the fifth statement. Then, call "Time!" and raise your hand to signal for silence.



- Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion.
- Move the Wagon Wheel.
- Ask participants to shake hands with new partner.



- Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion.

- Move the Wagon Wheel.
- Ask participants to shake hands with new partner.



- Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion.

Let's move the Wagon Wheel again. Will the people on the **inside circle** please stand and move one chair to the right. Everyone should have a new partner. Shake hands with your new partner.

The last topic I want you to discuss with your new partner is:

**6. Describe a situation in which someone you knew was "out of control" because of substance use.**

***Note:** Allow participants 2-4 minutes to share their response to the sixth statement. Then, call "Time!" and raise your hand to signal for silence.*



***Note:** After all 6 questions have been discussed, give instructions for moving back into the large circle.*

***Instructions for moving back to one large circle:***

1. Persons in the Inside Circle, please point your finger at your last partner.
2. Next, move your arm slightly to your right and point to the empty space.
3. Please move your chair into that empty space.
4. Turn your chair around to once again form the large circle and be seated.

Now I'll re-read each statement or question you discussed in the same order as during the activity.

Your task is to make eye contact with the partner you discussed the statement with. Remember the conversation. No talking, just make eye contact.

- Move the Wagon Wheel.
- Ask participants to shake hands with new partner.



- Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion.
- Give instructions for moving back into large group.
- Read all 6 Wagon Wheel Discussion Starters in order.
- Allow time for participants to make eye contact.

After I read the first couple of statements, you will probably see a pattern in the way you responded to the 6 statements.

***Closure***

Thank you for participating! Each of us has different past experiences related to alcohol and drug use. In some way or other these experiences have influenced our present-day attitudes and beliefs about alcohol and drug use and addiction treatment. It is a valuable exercise to occasionally rethink those past experiences and to hear the experiences of others in order to be reminded of one of the reasons we bring such varying perspectives to discussions on this topic.

- Closure

---

Taken from Hayton, R., Cormack, S., Baehni, S., & Pilot, M. (2002). *Foundations of Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence*. Kansas City, MO: Mid-America Addiction Technology Transfer Center.

---