



ECHO Idaho: Counseling Techniques for Substance Use Disorder CASE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Presenter Credential: Intern

Summary: The client is a 33-year-old American Indian female currently living with her mother, children, and brother. She has a high school education, is employed, and insured through Medicaid (MCO). The client has a history of emotional, mental, and physical abuse during a 13-year marriage and was recently served divorce papers. She has been sober for 150 days, with fentanyl as her primary drug and methamphetamine as her secondary and has been on suboxone since May. She graduated from a treatment program (May–June 2025) and is diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Her physical health is good, and she takes medication as needed for anxiety and sleep. The client receives individual and group therapy as well as case management and reports strong support from her mother, brother, coworkers, and boss. She is motivated for treatment, working to maintain sobriety, improving emotional regulation and coping skills, building healthy boundaries, and eventually taper off suboxone. Her parole officer referred her to new treatment program for additional treatment support.

Recommendations:

Medication & Suboxone Management

- Reframe the client's desire to taper off Suboxone — focus on underlying goals (e.g., stability, recovery) rather than being “on/off” medication. Explore *why* she wants to discontinue (stigma, misconceptions, personal beliefs). Encourage her to discuss any negative side effects with the prescriber.
- Educate the client on the benefits of Suboxone and the increased risk of overdose if discontinued, especially in the fentanyl era.

Coping Skills & Emotional Regulation

- Support development of coping skills and emotional regulation without substances or self-medicating.
- Obtain more details: what coping skills she uses, for what situations, with whom, and what triggers them.
- Reinforce and build upon the strategies that have worked during her 150 days of sobriety.
- Encourage reflection on strengths and resilience — recognize how much she has already overcome.

Recovery Supports & Engagement

- Explore additional recovery supports outside treatment (e.g., NA/AA or other self-help groups).
- Encourage participation in culturally relevant supports such as *Walking a Red Road* or the *Wellbriety Workbook*.
- Coordinate with her parole officer to ensure consistent support and communication across systems.

Therapeutic Focus & Boundaries

- Help the client achieve her goal of a “clean divorce” while maintaining mental and emotional stability.
- *Set Boundaries, Find Peace* by Nedra Glover Tawwab for guidance on boundary-setting.
- Provide support around life transitions (divorce, housing, finances) and strengthen her sense of family and community from a culturally humble perspective.

Strengths, Motivation & Rapport

- Acknowledge 150 days of sobriety as a major achievement — build on that success and momentum.
- Recognize her natural inclination to talk and engage in group settings; leverage this in treatment.
- Continue fostering strong rapport, trust, and connection with the client to support ongoing progress.

Consider presenting follow-up for this patient case or any other patient cases at a future ECHO Clinic session.

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