

WEBVTT

1 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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Yeah, and thank you for joining us for Cigna's substance use Disorder awareness series. My name is Jordan Nielsen and along with my coworkers, Stephanie Gisstol, Kerry Mac, and Wanda Russell. We appreciate you for joining us today. We are a team of nurses and behavioral clinicians for the substance use disorder team.

2 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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Here at Evernorth, part of Cigna. Due to the format of the seminar, you will not be able to ask questions during the presentation. You are, however, able to add questions at any time in the Q and A section found at the lower right side of your screen. We will try to address as many questions as time permits during the last 15 min of our hour together.

3 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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Please limit your questions to the seminar topic. If you have specific questions regarding substance use disorder treatment or your policy, please contact me or one of my team members. Our contact information can be found on the last slide of the powerpoint.

4 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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Today's powerpoint will be part of the presentation here in Webex or you can click the link found in a chat section near the Q and A Today I have the pleasure of introducing Mary Bassel Connor for our September webinar on lifelong secular recovery.

5 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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Empowering sobriety. Mary Beth has been sober since 1994. She is also in recovery from abuse, trauma, PTSD, and anxiety. Her story is chronicled in her memorial from junkie to judge.

6 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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One woman's triumph over trauma and addiction. She's had essays and such publications at the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times and recovery today. Mary Beth is the director for for she recovers foundation and lifelong secular recovery. She regularly speaks on behalf of these organizations.

7 "Nielsen, Jordan" (3829501952)

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Organizations and about multiple and secular pass through recovery to

develop relationships with other organizations such as Women for sobriety. Mary Beth trains attorneys and medical professionals about substance use disorder and recovery. I will now turn it over to our presenter, Mary Beth from Lifeling.

8 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:02:20.136 --> 00:02:36.480

Hey, thanks everyone. Thanks for having me. So empower your server self, you'll find as part of our terminology and I'm gonna go through what lifeling is. Let me see. It's not going. Okay, so I've lost control of the powerpoint if you guys can give me control.

9 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:02:36.480 --> 00:03:04.040

Okay, let me just make sure, ok, so went to the next one. Next, I still can't, ok, thank you. Alright, so, I'm gonna go through my personal story in brief and then I'm gonna go through what lifeling is, the basic philosophy, the meeting format, and some other, details about it. For me.

10 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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I say that the short version of my story is that childhood abuse led to childhood addiction, which I'm sure we all know is a very common pathway. I grew up in a household where my mother was not bonded to me and she wasn't interested in me and she could be violent at times, but things got a lot worse when I was nine and she married my.

11 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Dangerous stepfather. He was very violent with her. He was physically and sexually violent with me. So it was just that kind of household where it was very high stress, where what I did and what happened to me were not connected, and where I never knew how bad things were gonna get. And so when I found my 1st drug, which is when I was twelve and it was alcohol.

12 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Paul. It was boons, farms, Starbury Hill wine, which a lot of people know. What I noticed about that experience was how much better it made me feel. I felt like, you know, sort of like my muscles relaxed, like I could take a deeper breath, like I was laughing and giggling with my girlfriend in a more sort of openly joyful way.

13 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:04:04.040 --> 00:04:22.170

And that really captured my attention. I need more of this. And so I pursued alcohol right away. I was looking for opportunities to drink, making opportunities to drink. I, I even stole beer from my dangerous

stepfather because that's how much I wanted the alcohol.

14 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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But I also moved on quickly, I added in weed, I added in pills, I did a lot of acid, my sophomore year of high school, and when I was 16 I found what became my drug of choice, which was methamphetamine. And I was shooting meth within six months at 17. I was in full bore addiction when I graduated from high school.

15 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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I did leave my, my home town in Central Jersey to come to California for college. I graduated from Berkeley and for the 1st couple years I did better, worse than the people around me, but for me it was an improvement. I mostly used alcohol, Sometimes cocaine, which was new to me.

16 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Sometimes hallucinogens, sometimes pills, mostly on the weekend, but sometimes it rolled into the week. But it was an improvement. But I had a really life threatening kidnapping by three men, 6 h rate by them. I moved in with a violent boyfriend, and it was sort of like the little grip that I had, I lost.

17 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:05:22.239 --> 00:05:51.229

And in January of my senior year of college, I started doing meth again on a regular basis, and I did not get sober until I was 32 years old. At 302I was really in a bad shape. I, I couldn't hold a job. My, my terminology is that I had worked my way down the corporate ladder. I couldn't get there, I couldn't concentrate. I was having physical problems by 302I was also just emotionally devastated, debilitated, feelings so.

18 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:05:51.229 --> 00:06:11.229

Trapped and miserable, and my partner was ready to throw me out. So it was sort of everything in combination that made me say, you know, maybe I want to go to read it. And so I did. I looked, I live in the Bay Area and I looked for a program. I I went to a women's program 90 day minimum commitment, so it was longer term.

19 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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And this was in 1993. And in my mind, when I'm going to rehab, I'm going for medical treatment. But when I got there on my 1st day I found out that it was adamantly and vehemently exclusively twelve step house. Twelve steps of course is alcoholics anonymous, narcotics anon.

20 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:06:31.229 --> 00:06:51.229

Anonymous and all of the anonymouses. And twelve steps is a good fit for for some, but it wasn't right for me. And the way I found out was because of my 1st day there they were doing step three, which is made a decision to turn my will in my life over to the God of my understanding. So they would read the staff, read either the AA big book or the NA text.

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About the step and then we'd have a good discussion. So during the discussion I raised my hand and I said, you know, what about me, you know, I'm an atheist. And they did say it doesn't have to be God, can be any higher power. And I said, but I don't believe in a higher power, and then I read more and I I wasn't going to turn over my will in my life. I I didn't agree I was powerless.

22 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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I wasn't happy with the focus on defects, but whenever I raise questions, they were really, they really pushed back on me. They told me there is NO other way, this is all there is. Do this or fail. Repeatedly I was told, do this or fail, do this or fail. And that was a real shock to me. I wasn't expecting it and I.

23 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:07:31.229 --> 00:07:51.229

Didn't know, you know, what am I gonna do about it? And so I decided, you know what, I'm just gonna, you know, these are the experts. If they say this is all there is, I assume it's true. And so I thought, well, I guess what I have to do is just sort of keep my ears and my mind open and look for the parts I can use and ignore everything else. And so, you know, I took.

24 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Rehab seriously. I did all the homework, I wrote what I was supposed to write, and they, they provided some good information, some science of substance use got a little bit of trauma therapy. They told us some techniques like how to recognize and handle triggers. And I read all of the AA big book and all of the NA tax. And I was looking for are there any.

25 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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The parts underneath this that I can use. I found the twelve step one day at a time idea helpful. If I was having a craving day, I'd say I'm not deciding for tomorrow, but for today I'm not gonna use. And I did

that, but I still really vascinated between some hope that I could recover like everybody else and really fear.

26 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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When faced with the universal consensus that I could not. And so when I got home and now it's January of 94, and I'm gonna emphasize for the younger people in 1994, there was NO google. Okay, I got home and I thought, isn't really true that there aren't any other options? And so I got my car and I drove.

27 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:08:51.229 --> 00:09:11.229

To the library, and it turned out it wasn't true, not even in 904I found women for sobriety, which still exists today. I I have a relationship with them, I speak at their conferences, I found smart's parent organization, which was rational recovery, and I found lifeling cyclar recovery's parent organization, which was SOS.

28 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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And 1st, my 1st reaction was relief, like, ok, great. Other people have done it other ways, that was reassuring. But I actually did it the way that I started. I didn't follow anyone program exactly. I read the books for all the three new programs. I attended the meetings of the programs and I was still doing the same.

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00:09:31.229 --> 00:09:51.229

Thing I was synthesizing the ideas. What do techniques and strategies that I'm being presented with do I think I can use? And that's how life frameworks a recovery plan. It's a personal recovery plan, and that's what I did. I also of course had to deal with my PTSD and my trauma. I went into recovery from that, which I.

30 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Actually took much longer than my substance recovery, and professionally I had to work my way into middle management, started at a very low point when I got sober because of my horrible resume, and at six and a half years sober, I went to Berkeley law school, was a lawyer for a number of years and in 2020 at 2014 at 20 years.

31 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:10:11.229 --> 00:10:34.289

Sober I was appointed a federal administrative law judge. Whoops. Sorry I went to the end. And, and, and now I took early retirement and now I'm on the board for lifeling and others and I, I I'm a writer and a speaker as you heard. Alright, that's me in brief. How lifeling works? Oh, it's ignoring me again. Hold on.

32 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:10:34.289 --> 00:10:53.189

Alright, it's ignoring me again. Can somebody do the next slide? Oh, alright, is that the next one? Okay, so we call the lifelong philosophy the three S philosophy, and the three S's are sobriety, secularity, and self help or self empowerment.

33 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:10:53.189 --> 00:11:13.109

Next slide, so, the, this is just an overview. I'll go into all of these in more detail, but sobriety teaches that we, that does need to be the top priority in our lives for success. Although what we really mean by that is in the 1st, you know.

34 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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18 months to 36 months, which is when most people need to hyper focus on their sobriety. And secondarity just means if out of respect for all face and then there's NO religion in meetings and self help doesn't mean alone, it means I am the architect of my recovery. I am the decision maker.

35 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Next slide, please. Alright, so sobriety, for for for lifering, sobriety for the way we define sobriety is it's complete absence from all drugs and by drugs I always mean including alcohol. Okay, so anytime I say drugs.

36 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:11:49.549 --> 00:12:09.549

I of course mean including the liquid legal drug of alcohol. So we are absence based, but for lifering, any drug that's taken that is medically indicated, and I really emphasize taken as prescribed, that counts as sober for us. So if somebody's on medication assisted.

37 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:12:09.549 --> 00:12:26.729

Treatment for substance use disorder, and they're taking it as prescribed that counts as sober. If there are mental health meds and they're taken as prescribed, it counts as sober any medication. We do not believe we have the skill set to get between our members and their medical treatment providers, and we don't.

38 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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The other thing is that for us, we put all drugs are together, in other words, we don't separate out alcohol. In fact I think only twelve steps does that, but all drugs, including alcohol are in the

same room. And then as far as absence goes, we are an absence based organization. However, we understand that most people don't walk into the.

39 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:12:46.729 --> 00:13:06.729

Recovery rooms on day one, a hundred percent committed to absence. That happens, but it's not the norm. So, we understand that many of our members will go through ambivalence or, you know, back and forth. They, they, one day they think, ok, absence is the right goal and the next day they think, well, maybe in, you know, after a 90 day break I can use it.

40 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:13:06.729 --> 00:13:26.729

Yeah or I'm gonna get rid of alcohol but not cannabis or whatever it might be. While the member is going through that process, it is ok to talk about it in a lifeling meeting. In other words, we don't want our members to pretend they're further along in the process than they actually are. But if at some point they decide that they've, they've thought about it and they've made.

41 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:13:26.729 --> 00:13:58.279

You know, a definite decision that something other than absence is their goal, then we would NO longer be appropriate for them. But during the process, we are, and we want them to talk about it openly. Next slide please. Ok, so you see I know this so well. I I did it. Medication ok next slide I've already said this. Alright, the other thing is that when we talk about sobriety, we talk about it in the metaphor. We talk about the server self versus the attic self. So.

42 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Well, everyone with the substance use disorder is generally very familiar with the attic self. It's the part of them that's pushing them to keep using. But lifeline teaches that even in the deepest depths of addiction, there is a sober self inside. And that's the the self that wants to be sober or at least wants to live a.

43 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:14:18.279 --> 00:14:38.279

Happy and productive life. And so what lifing talks about is that when member when you're faced with the decision, whether it's large or small, you can either make the choice that's leading in the direction of chaos and misery because that's the choice your attic self wants you to make or you can make the choice that's gonna be in a.

44 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:14:38.279 --> 00:14:58.279

Positive direction that's gonna strengthen that sober self. And so as you make that same positive choice over and over, it becomes habit. And now you don't have to sort of spend your brain energy focused on it. It's just natural. And that allows you to start making other positive choices. And the more.

45 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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The positive choices that you make, the stronger the server self gets and the weaker the attic self gets. And so over time, you know, of doing this, the server self will sort of beat the attic self into submission. And it's just a metaphor we use to sort of conceptualize what sobriety looks like. And part of it is to show that it's typically a.

46 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:15:18.279 --> 00:15:43.379

The process of getting to where your server self is really as strong as it needs to be for you to have ongoing perfect absence if that is your goal. Alright, next slide please. Thank you. Yes, and I've said this already, you make positive choices and that server self gets stronger and stronger. Next slide. The purpose of a lifelong meeting.

47 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:15:43.379 --> 00:16:03.379

Is for us to help each other empower our server selves. And so the belief is that when your server self and my server self interacts, we can actually reinforce each other's sobriety and the and the meeting's goal, the, the goal of it is to strengthen our server self. I want to help you strengthen your server self.

48 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:16:03.379 --> 00:16:19.889

And in return you are trying to help me strengthen my server self. It's a sharing of a mutual goal, it's a sharing of, of offering support, offering suggest ideas, offering example of being, of having a, a strong server self.

49 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:16:19.889 --> 00:16:39.889

Next slide, please. This is an example of our workbook, which I'll talk about a little bit more later, but, our workbook does have a number of sort of side by side sheets like this charts to T charts to figure out what is a good plan, what's a good recovery plan in different areas.

50 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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And so this is an example of when you're faced with a decision where you where you would write in where it says the issue, you can make a

list of how the the choice that you're thinking about would reinf, reinforce the annex self or how it would empower your server self. It's also a way to think about perhaps what choices would reinforce my.

51 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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And versus what choices that I could make would re would empower my server self. And then using this as a way, it's an analytical tool. It's a way to think it through. It's a way to help you see clearly what your choices are and to make the choice that's going to empower the server self. Next slide.

52 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:17:19.499 --> 00:17:39.499

Secularity. All right, next slide. So, so the basic definition of secularity for lifering is that out of respect for all face and none, there is NO religion in meetings. However, many of our members have personal spiritual or religious beliefs and lifing has.

53 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:17:39.499 --> 00:17:59.499

No opinion about that at all. It's just that we know it's not necessary for recovery and we're self empowered focused rather than that idea of turning your will and your life over to a higher power. So we conduct our meetings without religion or prayer, but some of our members do use, you know, their faith or their spiritual beliefs to strengthen their recovery planning.

54 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:17:59.499 --> 00:18:19.499

And that's fine. The other side of it is that we really rely on our individual efforts rather than a higher power. So e.g., what we teach in liferring is that our members are actually not powerless. In fact, they need to take charge of their recovery, that that is really sort of a fundamental idea. The other thing I'll say.

55 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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Is that this relates to how there isn't any sort of strong hard line on the face side. So it isn't as if all faith based people go to twelve steps because of that higher power idea and all non faith based people go to the other alternatives. There are atheists and agnostics that make twelve steps work.

56 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

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And there were actually a very high number of people with religious or spiritual beliefs in the alternatives including lifering. And the reason for it is that those people prefer, let's say life ring for

reasons other than higher power. They may prefer the self empowerment focus, the self empowerment idea. They may prefer the meeting format.

57 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:18:59.499 --> 00:19:17.099

Because the meeting formats of the different programs are very different. So it's not, again, it's just it's not that hard line. It's really about looking at the whole picture, the whole philosophy, the whole program meeting options to see what's the right fit for, for a person. Next slide.

58 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:19:17.099 --> 00:19:37.099

Self help. This is really sort of a core part. Next slide, please. So as I said, one of our key ideas is that you're not powerless, you need to take charge of your recovery. And a big fundamental idea about lifelong is that idea of the personal recovery plan, which is what I ended up doing. I was the.

59 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:19:37.099 --> 00:19:57.099

The decision maker in my recovery plan, I was the one who was deciding what my priorities were and what my goals were and how to reach those goals, doing that analysis and, and, and then taking the steps to to attain those. And we have a personal recovery plan for a reason. For one thing, people walk in the rooms in different places.

60 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:19:57.099 --> 00:20:17.099

So, e.g., one person may walk in the room having destroyed themselves professionally but still have relationships. And for someone else it could be the opposite. A lot of people walk into recovery for substances with trauma histories or mental health conditions as I did. I had PTSD and I didn't even know it.

61 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:20:17.099 --> 00:20:37.099

And that for me showed up as severe anxiety, so that had to be part of my recovery plan and that's not uncommon. But also members have different philosophical beliefs, different learning styles, different priorities. And priorities are important because for many of us, we have so many things to work on that we can't work on every.

62 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:20:37.099 --> 00:20:57.099

Everything in the beginning. So even if you and I had the same list of, of things we needed to work on to because we had sort of broken them during our, our drug use, even if we had the same list, we may have different priorities based on our different individual circumstances, and so our initial plan maybe.

63 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:20:57.099 --> 00:21:17.099

Different. In other words, your plan and my plan maybe different. But I really do want to emphasize that when lifering says personal recovery plan, we do not mean alone. You know, we want our members to think, to read, to, to attend, to get support where needed. That is, these are all sources of a personal recover.

64 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:21:17.099 --> 00:21:37.099

Every plan, there are sources of ideas. The other thing is that we do emphasize with our members that asking for the help you think you need is a self empowerment decision. So if our member, you know, or if someone thinking about recovery, if they think they need professional help, peer support help, inpatient treatment.

65 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:21:37.099 --> 00:21:53.039

You know, medication assisted treatment, whatever help help from friends or family, whatever it might be. That is a self empowered decision. You're doing the analysis. Here's I have done the analysis, here's what I think I need. I'm gonna go get it. We encourage that.

66 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:21:53.039 --> 00:22:13.039

The other thing to know is that lifeling, many of our members do do do lifeling just lifeling, but a significant percentage of our members also do other programs at the same time and lifeling supports that 100 %. Because again, it's a personal recovery plan. If a member thre.

67 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:22:13.039 --> 00:22:33.039

Things that go into AA and lifeling or lifeling and smart is gonna be give them the best chances of successful recovery, we encourage that. It's the the our members don't have to hide it. They could even say in a lifeling meeting, you know, I was at AA last week and somebody said X and I I thought that would.

68 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:22:33.039 --> 00:22:53.039

Was an interesting idea I wanted to share it with the group. Nobody would think that was weird. It's your plan. You get to decide what you want to do and that includes which peer support organizations you want to participate in. The other thing I'll say about that is that, and I'll talk about this a little more later, but while lifing does have face to face meetings around the.

69 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:22:53.039 --> 00:23:13.039

Country, we still haven't rebuilt to our pre COVID number. So sometimes our lifeling members do twelve steps locally because we are not, we aren't in their community. So they'll attend twelve steps to meet people, you know, people in recovery to build a recovery community, but they might do lifeling online and actually follow.

70 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:23:13.039 --> 00:23:41.389

Called the lifeling program. So that's the way it happens sometimes, but it's the member's choice as to what their plan is gonna look like, including peer support. Next slide please. So we do believe there were a lot of benefits from the personal recovery plan emphasis. And one of them is really self knowledge. What we're asking our members to do is an analysis, sort of like, who am I, where am I? Where am I trying to get to and how.

71 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:23:41.389 --> 00:24:01.389

How do I think I can get best get there? It's an analytical process. And then that kind of self knowledge and that connection to the plan because you decided what the plan is, that can create a strong sense of ownership. And that ownership can help our members with resilience. When they're either pushed off track.

72 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:24:01.389 --> 00:24:21.389

Back or about to be pushed off track, that connection to the plan because they did the analysis, because they understand why they built it and because it's their choice, that can be helpful. But the other side of it is that what we're really trying to help our members do is to build up their sense of self efficacy, that they can guide.

73 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:24:21.389 --> 00:24:41.389

Themselves forward. We do believe that our members fundamentally know who they are. They know what won't work for them and they know what might work for them. It doesn't mean that we think they are going to make perfect choices in recovery. I don't care care what plan somebody picks. They are not gonna make perfect choices, but fundamentally they.

74 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:24:41.389 --> 00:25:01.389

They do know who they are. And so we do believe that you can effectively guide yourself forward. But it's also this process of doing the analysis, doing the analysis about where you are, where you're trying to get to, and what your plan might be, that, and then setting your 1st goal, setting your 1st.

75 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:25:01.389 --> 00:25:21.389

Plan implementing your 1st plan when you reach your 1st goal setting goal number two, analysis, develop plan, implement. We know that that same skill set applies to all areas of life. And so we are helping our members develop their competence and their confidence in their ability to lead that.

76 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:25:21.389 --> 00:25:43.549

Themself forward. The other thing that we do talk to our members about is that plans will need to be adjusted over time. And there's a couple of reasons for that. I mean, the plan that you have, let's say on day one and it's six months, will probably be different. Hopefully are different for many reasons. One is that hopefully the member has achieved.

77 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:25:43.549 --> 00:26:03.549

Some of their initial goals. So now they can set the next goal in that same area of life, which Lifeline calls a domain or they can start working on something that they couldn't work on, because it wasn't on their 1st priority list. So they can start working on something that was, on their list, but not, not.

78 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:26:03.549 --> 00:26:23.549

As high of a priority. But the other, a couple other possibilities are that sometimes when you start to carry out a goal, sometimes as you try to carry it out, it actually makes you realize that that's not a good goal for me or it's not as high a priority as I thought. And so the goal can then be put aside either per.

79 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:26:23.549 --> 00:26:48.859

Definitely or temporarily and now you have the bandwidth to work on something else. Sometimes when a member tries to carry out their plan, despite having done their best to do a robust analysis when they created the plan, sometimes as you try to implement it, you realize you overlooked something. And so then you have to go back and do the analysis again factoring in what you had overlooked.

80 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:26:48.859 --> 00:27:06.569

And sometimes our members had a really good plan and they just didn't do it, ok? And then we really encourage them to stand back and they do the analysis of why am I standing in my own way? Why am I not carrying out my plan? What do I need to help me move forward?

81 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:27:06.569 --> 00:27:26.569

Alright, next, thank you. Meetings. Yeah, next slide. Okay, so, our meetings are, are a little bit different than some other programs. So as I mentioned, the goal of the meeting is peer to peer support. We do have a meeting leader that we call the convener. The the meet goal, the job of the convener is really to get them.

82 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:27:26.569 --> 00:27:46.569

Meetings started on time, stopped on time to to time shares, which I'll talk about, and to make sure that everything stays on topic and that everyone's behaving appropriately. In our meetings, as I said, all drugs are together. Our goal is to have meetings of such a size that everyone.

83 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:27:46.569 --> 00:28:02.969

There who wants to participate, who wants to share, can. So we try to have meetings be of a size where that's true and the convener will time, the shares to make sure that there is time for everyone. Now, sometimes, like let's say on Zoom.

84 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:28:02.969 --> 00:28:22.969

Some meetings there will be, let's say, a recovery house and the convener may know, you know, there's, you know, 15 people from the recovery house, but NO from past experience that only five or six are gonna share. So the convener, you know, will time based on sort of reality rather than just the number of people. But the other thing is that on zoom.

85 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:28:22.969 --> 00:28:54.619

Some of our meetings get too large regularly. And for those meetings, we try to have a 2nd convener so we can do breakout rooms and split the meeting and get them down to an appropriate size. Another thing is that our meetings tend to be less regimented than some other programs. So in lifeling, e.g., we offer the conveners a multiple opening and closing statement options, but they don't have to use them or they can do the opening statement but not the closing or vice versa or they can.

86 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:28:54.619 --> 00:29:14.619

Them as long as they're consistent with lifeling philosophy. Also in lifeling, our members do not have to identify themselves as an addict. They don't have to agree they have a disease or a disorder or that it's a habit run a muck, and they don't have to track time. Many of our members find these tools.

87 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:29:14.619 --> 00:29:34.619

It's useful and they do them, but it's not required and many members don't. And certainly, e.g., on the identifier, there are a wide range of identifiers. So some people will use the traditional I'm an addict or I'm an alcoholic and others will use something else. And I like to use this identifier as an example that what works for me.

88 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:29:34.619 --> 00:29:54.619

Us over time can change. So when I 1st got into recovery, I, for the 1st six months I really felt that saying, you know, I'm very Beth and I'm an addict over and over and over. I felt like it was important. Like I needed to bang it into my brain. But by six months I was uncomfortable with it anymore. I felt like I was saying it.

89 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:29:54.619 --> 00:30:14.619

As if it was, I was announcing it that this as if it were the essence of who I am, and it wasn't. And then I found woman for sobriety's identifier, which is I'm Mary Beth and I'm a competent woman. And that felt empowering to me and that met me where I I'm at. And so that's an example of why lifeling doesn't take.

90 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:30:14.619 --> 00:30:34.619

All our members what to do in this regard or really, we don't even really have a norm. It's because it's up to our members. Is this useful? Is it not? Tracking time, same thing. A lot of people find it useful. It's, you know, proof of success. It's reinforcing that success. But sometimes when people are struggling with recurrences, you know.

91 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:30:34.619 --> 00:31:02.509

And they're having trouble putting together any length of time, it can be demoralizing. And so it's really up to our members to make these choices. The meaning format is called How was your week? And so the focus is on what happened last week and what, what's coming up in the next week. So what happened last week? Did you have any successes that you want to share with the group? Because the group's gonna be really happy for you. Yay.

92 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:31:02.509 --> 00:31:22.509

Hey, you know, good job. Did you have any challenges that you either handled well or didn't handle as well as you wish that you wanna, talk about? But it's also about the upcoming week. Are there any recovery challenges that you wanna talk about with the group? So the example that I use is that let's say that you're going to an event.

93 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:31:22.509 --> 00:31:42.509

That with alcohol being served for the 1st time because almost all of us will face that at some point, right? So the member might say in the group, might just say out loud on Friday I'm going to my 1st event with alcohol, and maybe they just want to say it. Or maybe they want to say, and here's my plan as to how to handle it. And maybe they.

94 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:31:42.509 --> 00:32:02.509

Just want to say that or maybe they want to say it for accountability and then come back next week and say, whether they follow their plan or not or what disrupted it, let the group know how they did. But it can also be an opportunity to ask the group, does anyone have any suggestions that, that has worked for them? Has it.

95 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:32:02.509 --> 00:32:31.369

Everyone else faced this situation and have any ideas that I should consider as to how to handle it. Because in life ring there is crosstalk. So members can talk directly to each other. Crosstalk has to be wanted, has to be wanted by the speaker. It also has to be positive or neutral, and it has to be on point and the convener will control of that. But it can be really useful to get the group to say, you know, contribute.

96 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:32:31.369 --> 00:32:51.369

Through ideas. And I I used to say suggestions, but it's not even really suggestions. A suggestion sort of suggests you really should do this. It's not. It's, these are ideas. Here's what worked for me. Here's the technique I used. Here's the strategy I used. We're just offering it up for consideration because it's that person's.

97 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:32:51.369 --> 00:33:11.369

Personal recovery planning. They get to decide if that technique is a good fit for them. So it is expected that the, the person may accept the ideas, may reject the ideas, may modify the ideas. That's fine, but there's still value in getting ideas from the group that you might not have thought.

98 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:33:11.369 --> 00:33:31.369

And so we view crosstalk as an opportunity to provide information and to help support the sober self of our fellow members. The other thing is that we don't do drug histories in life. We don't have drug logs where someone talks, you know, for any length of time about their drug history.

99 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:33:31.369 --> 00:33:51.369

But drug history can be discussed if it's relevant to what happened last week or what's coming up in the next week. So, e.g., if, let's say you were going to a wedding on Friday, that was your 1st working or your 1st event with alcohol was your sister's wedding. And a year ago you went to your other sister.

100 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:33:51.369 --> 00:34:11.369

Was wedding, and you were so out of control, so high that you caused the scene, well now that maybe something that's praying on your mind because you're going to this your 2nd sister's wedding, and so then it's relevant. It's relevant to what you're feeling, it's relevant to your concerns, it's relevant to what's happening. And so it's ok to talk about drunk history. If it's.

101 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:34:11.369 --> 00:34:34.009

Directly relevant to what's going on right now. Next slide, please. At crosstalk. All right, I think I answered all that. Yes. And the other thing, then one other point about it was that we don't Relifering doesn't really view recovery as hierarchical, and so we do believe that, say, somebody with six months might have a really good idea for someone with two years. And so that.

102 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:34:34.009 --> 00:34:46.649

That's part of the dynamic, right? It's that the whole group is there to support each other. Anyone in the group could be helpful to anyone else regardless of the amount of time that they have. Next slide now, thank you.

103 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:34:46.649 --> 00:35:06.649

Alright, so sometimes, there, these are the kind of topics that may come up. So, e.g., what happened or led up to a relapse or slip? If a member had a recurrence and they want to have a conversation about it with a group, again, they want to, then there could be a conversation, you know, what exactly.

104 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:35:06.649 --> 00:35:26.649

Be happened. What's your plan when that happens again? Or somebody in the group may even say something like, you know, I've noticed that the last three recurrences you have, they always involved events with your family or whatever. So it's, it can be a discussion to help the person analyze it to consider things.

105 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:35:26.649 --> 00:35:46.649

That she may not have considered and strengthened her plan for next time. And yeah, does the group have any suggestions? My partner isn't supportive of my recovery. That could be a topic. You may say, you know, how do, have the rest of you dealt with getting your partner on board? That can be a topic of conversation or or something related to your employment.

106 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:35:46.649 --> 00:36:06.649

Right, my boss is near the end of the rope because of how I acted when I was using. I'm afraid I'm not gonna be given the amount of time I need to remedy that. Any suggestions as to how I can approach my boss or what I can do. And then also I haven't reached the horrible bottom. Do I really need to stop? Do I really have a substance use disorder?

107 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:36:06.649 --> 00:36:26.649

And this relates to life rings belief that that horrible bottoms are not necessary in order to recover. We encourage our members who come in that still have jobs, still have, they're still married. They still have custody with their kids, we are thrilled for them. We want to encourage them to disaw.

108 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:36:26.649 --> 00:36:46.649

Dropped their substance use disorder now rather than later. You know, as you know, substance use disorder is on a spectrum, mild, moderate or severe, just like all mental health conditions. If we have new members come in and they were at the mild or moderate level, we are thrilled for them, and we want to encourage them to understand.

109 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:36:46.649 --> 00:37:06.649

Understand that if it's having negative consequences, you know, they need to really think about if or when they can ever use again and and that it's it's it doesn't have to, you don't have to lose another five or ten years and destroy more of your life before it's appropriate for you to make a positive health choice as to what your use of substance is.

110 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:37:06.649 --> 00:37:30.559

Is going to be, and that may well include abstinence. Next slide please. Alright, the pal study. So, I hopefully you know this, but, there was a study, it's called the Appear alternative study. It was in 2018 and it was done by Sarah Zimore and others. And basically they compared the effectiveness of lifering women for survivor.

111 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:37:30.559 --> 00:37:50.559

Already smart, and AA as to alcohol use disorder. And what the study found is that basically they are all equally effective. And so what Lifting really wants to emphasize is choice, right? We want to make sure make sure that people who are considering peer support know that they have options other than twelve step. If twelve step is.

112 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:37:50.559 --> 00:38:22.399

The right fit for them, we support it. If smart's the right fit for them, we support it. But we want them to know of their choices so they can increase their odds of success because they're in the program that fits them best. Next slide, please. The other thing is that actually members of the alternatives had more positive benefits from their participants than twelve steps. Over 91 % of lifting respondents reported that they would recommend lifting to a, to a friend. There are some follow up studies, one of which was just relief but it was release.

113 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:38:22.399 --> 00:38:56.090

That was on a slightly different point and they've also looked at online meetings versus in person meetings, which are close to equally effective in case you want to take a look at that. That was one of the studies that just came out recently. Alright, next, next slide. Alright, next slide. So, again, why do we think it works? It works through positive social reinforcement. It's, the meeting process can empower that server self within each participant strengthen the server south. We're offering information, understanding, and support. Next slide.

114 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:38:56.090 --> 00:38:59.070

Okay.

115 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:38:59.070 --> 00:39:19.070

And I did this about how it's not just for religious nones, we actually have a broad range of faith faced and spiritual beliefs in our group. We're just trying to create emphasize that personal recovery plan doing an ongoing analysis, and using group support. We believe the right recovery pathway is the one that's right for the indust.

116 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:39:19.070 --> 00:39:40.070

Individual. Next slide. Other key ideas, I did this absence, but we can talk about initial concerns. The other thing is that we really do view relapses and slips as learning opportunities. And so we don't want to have, you know, any kind of judgment, any negative feedback.

We don't ever tell someone they're back to day zero.

117 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:39:40.070 --> 00:40:00.070

We don't believe that's true. No one ever goes back to day zero. It's not as if a recurrence causes you to have amnesia about everything that you learned when you had some sobriety time, right? You're starting further along because you've had some success, you have some skills, you have some more information, and now it's about strengthening your.

118 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:40:00.070 --> 00:40:20.070

Plan. We also don't believe that substance use disorder is a character defect or that it's only certain personality types that develop it, those just aren't true. There are some data that certain personality type characteristics are a little more likely, but the differences are small and certainly any type can develop a problem.

119 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:40:20.070 --> 00:40:40.070

And we do encourage early intervention. We don't want people to wait until they have a horrible bottom. Now, don't get me wrong. When I do that, that DSM test, I end up at the very severe end because I used math at a high rate, you know, for many years, but at and I recovered. But we certainly hope that not everyone.

120 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:40:40.070 --> 00:41:02.990

Feels a need to bottom out at that level. Next slide. So these are some ways that you might think about lifelong compared to twelve steps in particular. We, we have a more individualized approach to the recovery plan rather than a prescriptive step by step. What, what I say about twelve steps is that people who like it, like the structure.

121 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:41:02.990 --> 00:41:22.990

Sure and people who don't like it find it rigid. So that's sort of, you know, depends on what works for the individual. And also we believe that you are empowered by your personal choices by building up your strengths and doing the analysis and setting goals and carrying them out. Whereas most few in their members as powers over their their.

122 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:41:22.990 --> 00:41:50.780

We also have crosstalk, which is not generally not practicing many of the other programs. Next slide. So, pre COVID, we had around 200 face to face meetings in the US, although we also have meetings in other countries, but even before COVID, we had several online meetings

because we were never everywhere. So we wanted, let's see someone in Montana who was interested in living to be.

123 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:41:50.780 --> 00:42:10.780

Be able to participate. With COVID, of course, we went exclusively online for a while, and now we are still in the process of rebuilding our face to face meetings. I think we have around 75 now, and we're getting like one to three new ones a month. But we also now have about 905 I think it's actually close to.

124 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:42:10.780 --> 00:42:30.780

A hundred online meetings and regardless of what happens with face to face, we will continue to have a large number of online meetings. I'd be surprised if it ever went down in any notable way. And there's a couple of reasons for that. One is that many of our members are used to online meetings now and they prefer it. But it's also allowed us to offer what we call focus groups.

125 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:42:30.780 --> 00:42:48.540

So now we have women's meetings, men's meetings, veterans meetings, LGBTQIA plus dual diagnosis, chronic health conditions, and a wide variety of others. So the online meetings allow us to offer those focus groups. We also have email groups and we have what we call form. Next slide.

126 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:42:48.540 --> 00:43:09.920

I'm going through, oh, so these are just examples of types of meetings, the basic meeting format, how was your week? Oh, we do have workbook meetings. I'm gonna talk about the workbook in a 2nd. Some occasionally people have topic meetings. I talked about the focus meetings. Friends and family, I offer a monthly meeting where, explaining living and friends and family.

127 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:43:09.920 --> 00:43:34.610

Are welcome there as well, so that the friends and family of our members understand the program. Next slide. We do have meetings in other countries and these are examples of them. Next slide. Alright, and these are our books. So our basic tax is called Empowering Your Server self. And by the way, the books are all available online at Amazon. On the Powering Your Server self goes into a lot more detail.

128 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:43:34.610 --> 00:43:54.610

Today about the three S's, the server self versus the theantic self, the personal recovery plan, and then recovery by choice is our

workbook, and we actually sell many more workbooks than we do our basic texts because a lot of peers support specialists like our workbook for non liferated people. What it is is an analytical tool.

129 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:43:54.610 --> 00:44:23.616

To help people build their personal recovery plan. So it's checklists and worksheets and fill in the blanks that helps them build their plan if they want it to be more structured. And we have recover workbook meetings if they want even more structure. And then humanly possible is a book of stories of lifing members with long term sobriety. Next slide. Alright, so, I was asked to stop at 45 and I'm doing so and I got through the slides, so I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

130 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:44:23.616 --> 00:45:02.698

Yes perfect timing. Thank you so much again Mary Beth for the great information. We are going to move into the Q and A section here of our portion together today. So you can continue to submit those questions in the Q and A section here and we'll just answer as many questions as we have time for. We do have a lot of questions. So, 1st question I'm gonna ask, we've actually have multiple questions about sponsorship. We know that most twelve step programs require sponsorship or they encourage sponsorship. Is this something that lifeling does? If not, who can people reach out to when they're a part of lifeling?

131 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:45:02.698 --> 00:45:30.610

Sure, so I I'm sure you know sponsorship has pros and cons, right? And it works well for some people and not so well for others. For life ring, because we're not hierarchical in that same way we don't have sponsors. But the way I think about it is what is the role of a sponsor? The role of a sponsor, number one, is supposed to be to help them their sponsee work the steps. So to meet that sort of similar need, life ring has our, our recovery by choice workbook, which helps people.

132 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:45:30.610 --> 00:45:50.610

Build their, their personal recovery plan and we have workbook meetings where people can do the workbook together with sort of a leader who's gonna help them. Another role of the sponsor is to be able to offer advice and guidance. We view the whole group as available to offer advice and guidance. That's one reason we have crosstalk.

133 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:45:50.610 --> 00:46:10.610

And then the other is to have the sort of that personal relationship

or be available in sort of a time of stress. So Lifeline does meet that need as well. For our face to face meetings, there is generally a list of our, the regular members who are willing to be contacted. So it'll have their email address and or their phone number. Our.

134 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:46:10.610 --> 00:46:30.610

Lifering online meetings. Many people actually develop personal relationships. They do private chat, but also, we give our lifering conveners the Zoom number for 2 h, not one. So the 1st hour is the meeting, the official meeting, but many of the groups have a 2nd hour that's more of a chat. And that.

135 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:46:30.610 --> 00:46:50.610

It's a way for people to develop personal relationships. In addition many of our Zoom meetings have unofficial like whatsapp groups for their meeting so that people can join that whatsapp group and have access to the members of the group if they have, if they're ever struggling in between meetings. So that's, oh, and the other thing is that if any of our members.

136 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:46:50.610 --> 00:47:10.610

Or in a, in a program, let's say a court program or similar, that absolutely insists that they get a sponsor, even though there's NO reason since life ring is equally effective without sponsors. But if the member can't get out of it, we don't want them to be disadvantaged and so we will arrange for a mentorship relationship so that they can meet the.

137 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:47:10.610 --> 00:47:13.834

Criteria and not and not be disadvantaged.

138 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:47:13.834 --> 00:47:42.853

Wonderful. Thank you. We have a few questions that kind of piggyback off that then talking or asking about crosstalk and relationships. So one of the questions is, can you explain how Crosstalk works with keeping to the meeting agenda, and why this or does not work in a group? And then also other groups discourage personal relationships especially romantic one with other group members. Whoever Crosstalk almost seems to encourage this. Can you elaborate on that?

139 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:47:42.853 --> 00:48:04.462

So, on the romantic side, we don't have an official policy, but our book does talk about how it is often better not to make major life decisions, you know, in the 1st six months to a year. And so we do

have that in, in our materials. But the crosstalk, so can you repeat the crosstalk question cause there was the 2nd part of it I didn't hear.

140 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)
00:48:04.462 --> 00:48:13.734

Yep, so can you explain how crosstalks works with keeping to the Amina with keeping to the agenda basically not getting sidetracked I think?

141 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)
00:48:13.734 --> 00:48:44.770

Yes. Okay, so the convener's role, one of the convener's roles is to make sure that that happens. So, the crosstalk, I mean remember most of the meetings, some meetings have topics, but mostly it's how was your week format. Last, what happened last week and what's coming up. And so for crosstalk, it's really important that if you wanted. In other words, I have to initiate that I would like crosstalk, and then it has to be positive or neutral and it has to be on topic and the convener is there to make sure that it stays on topic. Because the truth is sometimes crosstalk will drift away. It'll.

142 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)
00:48:44.770 --> 00:49:04.770

Start talking about, I don't know, the best fishing spots in Tahoe or something and the convener is trying to keep it, but it's also really important for the convener to remind people of the purpose of crosstalk. So e.g., if anyone ever uses language like I think you should do this, right? The convener will intervene and say, as a reminder, life.

143 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)
00:49:04.770 --> 00:49:23.335

Program is a self empowerment program, we're sharing ideas, but what works for one person might not work for another. So it's sort of the convener's job to keep the crosstalk on track. But, you know, once it's modeled for new members, generally speaking, everyone understands that and it doesn't really, people don't usually go off track very often.

144 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)
00:49:23.335 --> 00:49:41.995

Sure. I'm gonna combine the next two just cause they're a little bit more housekeeping questions about meetings. Are the services free? Is there a cost associated? And when you do attend a meeting, do you have to be on camera or could I have a support person attend the meeting with me if I'm feeling nervous about attending alone?

145 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)
00:49:41.995 --> 00:50:01.280

Yeah, so, so, you can have your camera on or off. In fact, the, the

steam says if you're eating or smoking or anything, I think you're supposed to have your camera off, you can have a non member attend, some, if it's sort of like a professional who's sitting in usually we like the commuter to know and.

146 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:50:01.280 --> 00:50:21.039

For the group to agree that it's ok, but like if it's your personal support person, that should be alright. Although you might wanna just double check with the convener for the meeting because the conveners have a lot of control over their meeting. If they're I don't see why it would be a problem, but I would let the convener know, is it ok? And I'm sure what was the 1st part of the question?

147 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:50:21.039 --> 00:50:23.494

Cameras on, is there a fee?

148 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:50:23.494 --> 00:50:40.760

Thank you. No. So, so we're, we make our money through donations and book sales and then, you know, gifts and things like that. We do have a little, like when the meeting's over, could you, you know, if you're interested in contributing, here's the link to the paypal or whatever or whatever it is, and we do fun.

149 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:50:40.760 --> 00:50:50.274

Razors, but, it's definitely free. It's, donations, at your discretion and and then we make money off our books.

150 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:50:50.274 --> 00:51:15.077

Okay, great. We have a, we have a question here about, the powerlessness concept. So, in lifeling, the concept is that we are not powerless. However, in the twelve steps, powerlessness admitting powerlessness is a big part of that program. How do people who attend both maybe AA and lifeling? How do they overcome that difference or how is that addressed?

151 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:51:15.077 --> 00:51:35.330

I think it can depend from person to person, but I think that we all know that some people attend twelve steps and don't exactly follow the entirety of the program. But, but some of our members specifically choose to follow the lifing program, but they're using twelve steps as a way to meet people in their local community. And so.

152 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:51:35.330 --> 00:51:55.330

So some people are trying to integrate it, but a lot of people maybe doing the lifeling program explicitly and not using many features of the twelve step program. Now that doesn't mean they're not considering it or implementing some ideas, but it may, it means they may well not be working steps. But it can depend on person to person about what works for them.

153 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:51:55.330 --> 00:52:10.633

I mean even some twelve step people will look at, you know, they modify how they think about that powerless step. And so, I, you know, I think it's, it's really gonna be on an individual basis, but some people definitely explicitly follow our program but attend twelve steps just to meet local sober people.

154 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:52:10.633 --> 00:52:20.993

Okay, next question talks also about twelve steps. Can you describe some of the differences between topics that would be covered at a twelve step meeting versus a life ring meeting?

155 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:52:20.993 --> 00:52:50.620

Well, definitely faith based things, right? We wouldn't have a faith based conversation. We we wouldn't tell people that they have to, you know, turn over their will or their life or that they're, that they're powerless or any of those kind of ideas. If it were sort of more focused on strategies and techniques, there could definitely be overlap when people talk about what they do for them, but programmatically there's, oh, so also the do the 4th step, right? Write up all your defects.

156 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:52:50.620 --> 00:53:10.620

And share it with someone, that kind of thing is not what we encourage. I mean, we, it's not that we don't want our members to do a self analysis that would include defects because self analysis does include that, but we really, the goal is more to, instead of focusing on sort of ego busting, here's all my defects, I need to work on those. We focus more on.

157 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:53:10.620 --> 00:53:23.116

Let's build up, let's strengthen you, let's build your competence, let's build your confidence. It's sort of a very different approach, the self empowered approach versus the turn you will in your life over approach.

158 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:53:23.116 --> 00:53:40.515

Okay. You had mentioned earlier, I think it was like once a month for family and friends to join to learn more about life ring. But question was asked, is there an affiliated program for family members who may need additional support in addition to that monthly family meeting?

159 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:53:40.515 --> 00:54:00.140

Yeah, so that's a good question. So, so I do hold the monthly meeting and also just so you know, it's for anyone, it's for our current members members thinking people thinking about joining new members or friends and family where I do a presentation about what life ring is a little different but with a lot of overlap with this one. But yes, we do have a friends in south.

160 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:54:00.140 --> 00:54:20.140

Family support group as well. Right now we only have one, I believe it's on Sunday, but we do have one. And when I talk to friends and family, one of the things I emphasize to them is that just because your family member with the with the addiction shows lifeling, that I I really think the family member has to make their own choice. In other words, you know, lifing maybe.

161 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:54:20.140 --> 00:54:35.117

What helps their song, but maybe that's not a good fit for them. The only challenge can be if someone gets sort of Alanon language is gonna be a different than the way Lifeline views it and so they have to sort of resolve that. But we do offer friends and family meeting.

162 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:54:35.117 --> 00:54:44.777

Okay, how another question is how often are meetings held? So not necessarily the friends and family, but just the regular life ring meetings. How often are they held both in person and online?

163 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:54:44.777 --> 00:54:58.696

So in general it's a once a week meeting schedule, you know, every regular meeting meets, you know, Tuesday at 05:00 or whatever it might be and the in person meetings are the same. So the meetings are generally once a week.

164 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:54:58.696 --> 00:55:07.850

Okay, great. We're winding down to our last couple of questions here, so we'll hopefully be able to get them all in. What is life rings views on medication assisted treatment?

165 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:55:07.850 --> 00:55:37.388

So we view medication assisted treatment as a part of our our sober sobriety definition, which is any drug that is medically indicated and taken as prescribed, that counts as sober for us. So if someone's working with their medical professional and they're prescribed MAT and they're taking it as prescribed, I always have to emphasize that, that counts as sober. So that is perfectly acceptable within life ring. As are all drugs medically indicated and taken as prescribed.

166 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:55:37.388 --> 00:55:51.790

Okay, great. And final question here, what does discuss initial concerns and challenges regarding absent mean and life ring? Does this mean that people can come to meetings while still using?

167 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:55:51.790 --> 00:56:17.680

So they we certainly don't want them if they're, you know, high in the moment, we would ask them, they can attend, but usually generally speaking, it's not good to share, but yes, we don't require an absence decision before you walk in the room. So, and because the reality is that most people aren't there yet. I wasn't there. When I went into rehab, my goal was not absence. I didn't think that was an option on the table.

168 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:56:17.680 --> 00:56:37.680

For me. My goal was let's figure out how to use less, so my life is less chaotic. So we know that most people don't walk in the doors on day one, a hundred percent committed to absence. We want them to be able to be honest about where they are in that process and talk about it, either themselves or or talk about it as a discussion.

169 "Mary Beth O'Connor" (1543802112)

00:56:37.680 --> 00:57:02.030

Question within the group. So we want them to be able to say where they really are and not pretend they're further along than they are. If, however, they decide I have definitely decided I'm not gonna do absence. I'm gonna do moderation or I want to do, I want to get rid of everything except I want to keep smoking cannabis for enjoyment, then we would not be the right fit for them. But in the beginning, as they're processing it through, we understand.

170 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:57:02.030 --> 00:57:22.190

Perfect. Great. Okay, that was awesome. We got through all of the questions, some great questions, and just want to thank you again Mary Beth for all of the great information and all of the great resources and supports that we did go over today. There is for all of you on the call here, there is a five question survey on the side panel. We

kindly ask that you.

171 "Mack, Kari" (613658368)

00:57:22.190 --> 00:57:35.670

Take a few seconds just to quick fill that out for us. This helps us to keep our seminars relevant to you. And again, thank you to Mary Beth and thank you everyone for joining us today and I hope that you do have a good rest of your day. Thank you.