HEALING HEARTS
FAMILY RECOVERY
With Jo

MINI EMERGENCY TOOLKIT

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Gentle Tools to Use in the Moment

This toolkit is here for the moments that feel overwhelming, reactive, or confusing. Use it as a soft place to land—a pocket guide of tools to support calm, connection, and clarity, even when everything feels chaotic.

Note from Me

Have you ever found yourself in full-on panic mode — like, you just found out your loved one is struggling with substance use, and your first thought is, "Oh my god, I need to fix this right now… what do I do?"

That’s exactly how I felt. Overwhelmed, scared, and desperate to make things better.

This Emergency Toolkit was created from that place — a place of love, fear, and a deep need for answers. I’ve learned that when we’re not constantly in conflict, when we start to connect and communicate more calmly, it opens the door to more positive change — for them, and for us. And that’s what this is about: helping you find your calm in the chaos, so you can respond with clarity instead of panic.

You’re not alone. I’m so glad you’re here.

THE TOOLS

1. PAUSE

“When in doubt, pause.”

What it is:

A gentle way to interrupt your automatic reactions so you can take a breath and respond with intention.

How to use it:

- Notice the urge to react (to fix, defend, explain, shut down, etc.).
- Say softly to yourself: “Pause.”
- Breathe.
- Remind yourself: “I don’t have to do anything right now.”

Try this grounding breath work:

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4, out for 6. Repeat 3 times.

Do something that makes you feel less anxious in the moment.

2. DON’T ENGAGE

“Not every comment needs a response.”

What it is:

Permission to step away from escalation or chaos. Choosing not to engage isn’t weakness—it’s wisdom.

How to use it:

Recognize when something is pulling you into a power struggle or emotional spiral.

Stay calm. Say something short if needed:

“I hear you.”

“I’m not having this conversation right now.”

“I’ll check in later when we’re both calmer.”

Walk away or give space, without explanation or defense. **Remember: Silence and stillness are also responses.**

3. POSITIVE REINFOREMENT

Notice and reinforce what's going well."

What it is:

A mindset shift to catch and encourage the moments of connection, effort, or honesty—even the small ones.

How to use it:

Look for the good things (calm actions, honesty, showing up, trying).

Gently acknowledge them out loud:

"Thank you for texting me when you got home."

"I appreciate that you kept your voice calm just now."

"That must've been hard, but you did it."

Encouraging words don't fix everything—but they plant seeds of change.

4. I-FEEL STATEMENTS

"Speak your truth without blame."

What it is:

A way to share how you feel without accusing or escalating, helping you stay in your own experience.

How to use it:

Stick to how you feel. Use everyday language.

Keep it short and simple:

"I feel scared when I'm yelled at."

"I feel hurt when I'm ignored."

"I feel anxious when I don't know what's going on."

"I feel overwhelmed when things change suddenly."

You are allowed to speak your truth gently—even if it's not received perfectly.

5. GREEN LIGHTS - WHAT TO LISTEN FOR (CHANGE TALK)

Sometimes, in the middle of a hard conversation, our loved one might drop little clues that they're thinking about change—even if they don't say it directly. These are *green lights*. They're like little openings that say, "I might be ready," even if just for a moment. These are moments to lean in with curiosity, not pressure.

Green lights might sound like:

- "I can't keep doing this."
- "I'm tired of feeling like this."
- "I think I might need help."
- "I'm not proud of what I did."
- "Maybe I should cut back."
- "This isn't working anymore."
- "I hate the way I treated you."
- "I have no money"

Even if it sounds like complaining or venting, it could be the start of something new. Try not to shut it down or jump in with solutions. Just *notice*. These are moments to listen deeply and respond gently—maybe with something like:

- "Sounds like something's really weighing on you."
- "I hear you. That sounds hard."
- "What do you want to be different?"

Green lights are signs of *possibility*. You don't have to steer the car, but you can watch for the light to turn green—and be ready when they're ready.

6. I'LL SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR RECOVERY

"I'm here to walk beside you—not carry you."

What it is:

A clear, compassionate message that says: I believe in you, and I'm here for you.

It honors both your loved one's autonomy and your commitment to stay supportive without enabling or controlling.

How to use it:

Say it clearly, calmly, and only when you mean it.

Let it be an anchor phrase you return to in hard moments—especially when you're unsure what to say.

Examples:

“I love you. I’ll support you in your recovery.”

“If you want help, I’m here to support you.”

“I can’t fix this, but I’ll support you in your recovery when you’re ready.”

This phrase holds boundaries and connection. It leaves the door open with love, not pressure

7. IF YOUR LOVED ONE RELAPSES

“Recovery isn’t a straight line. It’s a journey—and sometimes it loops back before it moves forward.”

Everyone in life is in constant recovery and relapses.

What it is:

A gentle reminder that relapse is often part of the process. It doesn’t mean all is lost. It means your loved one is still on the path—and so are you.

What to remember:

Relapse does not equal failure.

This is not your fault.

Their journey is not black and white—it’s full of grey, and that’s okay.

It’s a marathon, not a sprint.

What NOT to do:

- Don’t yell, shame, or punish.
- Don’t spiral into fear or control.
- Don’t assume they’ve given up.

What you can do instead:

- Speak calmly and gently.
- “What’s going on right now?”
- “Do you want to talk about it?”
- “I’m here for you. I care about you.”
- “Can I help in any way?”
- “You don’t have to go through this alone.”

Even if they don’t open up, **they will remember your calm presence.**

8. TELL ME MORE…..

Tell Me More is a simple tool for conversations, especially when you’re not sure what to say. It works in two ways:

If you’re stuck and don’t know how to respond, saying “Tell me more” keeps the conversation going without pressure.

It also helps you show genuine curiosity. Instead of jumping in with advice or assumptions, you’re inviting the other person to share more of their thoughts and feelings.

At its heart, Tell Me More is about slowing down, listening, and creating space for the other person to open up.

HEALING HEARTS FAMILY RECOVERY - SERVICES

Family Intervention and Support	**1:1 Family Recovery Coaching**	**Retreats**
2-hour in-person or Zoom intensive. **Includes:** Personalized plan + 1 support follow up. Perfect for someone who needs breakthrough guidance without committing long-term. You'll get a taste of personalized coaching and create a plan of action to support your loved one.	Personalized coaching support for people navigating the emotional weight of loving someone with substance use challenges. **Includes:** 1 x 60 minute session per week offered by phone or zoom**,** plus additional check-ins or support as needed. To truly see the benefits, I ask for a **3-month commitment**, to create lasting change for you and your family.	Confidence to Rise is a small, in-person retreat for women who feel exhausted and overwhelmed, and who don't know what to do anymore while loving someone who's struggling with substance use. Some of the tools and approaches we will be learning about include: - Motivational interviewing - Open ended questions - Responding instead of reacting - Listening for change talk

*****Book your free discovery call today to see how I can best support you.*****

❤️ **Final Note**

You don't have to do this perfectly. You're doing something brave by trying to stay grounded in hard moments. Use these tools as often as you need. Practice, pause, reset, repeat.

Your calm is a gift to yourself, and to everyone around you.

Warmly,

Joanne Feist | healingheartswithjo.com

TESTIMONIALS

★★★★★

“I can’t thank you enough for all you did for us. You gave me hope and support when I was really suffering. I will be forever grateful for that. We have a better understanding of addiction and ADD.”

– Support Group Attendee

“I want to say, I cannot thank Joanne enough for getting me through some extremely hard times with our son in his addicted state. I was at the end of my rope. I felt I had no place to turn or anyone to talk to.

I attended my first meeting at Healing Hearts Family Recovery - Support Group, it was amazing!

I realized after the first meeting, Joanne was onto something that is different in regard to Recovery. I had to go back and learn more!

It is a whole different way to look at addiction. With love and science. With taking pauses when conversations are getting heated. Calming down the talk, letting them know that you will support them in the recovery. Learning what boundaries are and how to set them.

With even just a little bit of guidance from Joanne, I was able to calm myself when talking with our son.

It has also helped my life in many ways. It has calmed me down. I’m better able to manage situations rather than react.

I am one of the lucky ones, my son is in rehab. I know Joanne will be there to help me with any steps moving forward from her Healing Hearts Support Group, or a private family consultation.

This is all being a lifesaver for our family.”

– Support Group Attendee

“The support group is such a relaxed and welcoming environment.

The material is explained in a very realistic, and easy to understand way, and is very easy to incorporate into everyday life and situations IT MAKES SENSE!

absolutely no judgment, even when you completely lose your shit on your loved one and do all things you’re not supposed to do!

I always leave the support group feeling so relaxed and less stressed, and ready to take on any new challenges I may be faced with.”

– Support Group Attendee

“I just wanted to express my heartfelt gratitude for your 1:1 support. You are truly a lifeline for so many. Your compassion and expertise are making a tangible difference in people’s lives and I feel so blessed to have experienced it first hand.”

– Family Clarity Session Attendee