The Holiday *Plan.*

One page the person in recovery fills in, with the family at the table, before Thanksgiving. Keep every answer short and specific: a name, a time, a sentence. Read it again before each holiday and change what did not work.

01 THE THREE DATES

Thanksgiving, and the night before: where, who is hosting, and are we going?	PLACE / HOST / YES, PART OF IT, OR NO
Chanukah or Christmas: where, who is hosting, and are we going?	PLACE / HOST / YES, PART OF IT, OR NO
New Year's Eve: the party, or something else?	THE PLAN

02 EACH EVENT

What time do we arrive, and what time do we leave?	ARRIVE / LEAVE
How does the person in recovery get home if they want to leave sooner?	OWN CAR / RIDE / DRIVER
Who is their point person in the room, and what is their job that day?	NAME / JOB
The word or text that means "I need to go," and what we do when it is used.	WORD / WHAT WE DO
Four people I can call right away if I need to leave: a sponsor and people I trust.	NAMES / NUMBERS

03 THE HOUSE AND THE TABLE

Will alcohol be served? If yes, where is it kept and when is it cleared?	YES / NO / WHERE / WHEN
What is poured in its place, and who calls the host ahead of time?	DRINKS / NAME / DATE
Prescription medications in the house: locked up by whom?	NAME

04 WHAT THE RELATIVES KNOW

Who knows, what are they told, and who tells them? The person in recovery decides.	NAMES / THE SENTENCE / WHO
The answer to "why aren't you drinking?"	ONE LINE

05 HOW WE TALK

One thing I would like to hear that day.	EACH PERSON WRITES ONE
One thing nobody says, and the topic we all leave alone for the day.	EACH PERSON / TOPIC

06 BOUNDARIES, BOTH WAYS

The person in recovery: I will leave, step outside or call someone if…	
The family: what we will do, and what we will not do.	WILL / WILL NOT
If anyone arrives after drinking or using: what we say, and how they get home safely.	THE SENTENCE / THE RIDE

07 THE ROUTINE

Meetings and appointments each holiday week, and the first one in January.	DAYS / TIMES / DATE
My bookend person: one call before each event and one call after.	NAME / TIMES
Each family member's own support this season.	NAME / SUPPORT / DAY

08 IF THERE IS A SLIP

Who gets the first call, and who makes it?	NAME / NAME
Who is called next (Advisor, sponsor or therapist), and by when?	NAME / NUMBER
What does not happen that night: ultimatums, big decisions, a scene at the table.	

SIGNED, THE PERSON IN RECOVERY

SIGNED, FAMILY

DATE, AND THE DATE WE REVIEW IT

How to use this page.

Fill it in this week.	The best place is a session with your Advisor before Thanksgiving. They can help you set things up. The next best is a calm evening at home. The hardest is the car on the way to dinner.
The person in recovery writes it.	Have the person in recovery hold the pen for the whole plan, with the family at the table. They know which rooms and which people are hard for them. Writing it themselves helps them feel empowered, and a plan they wrote is one they are far more likely to use.
Be specific, and kind.	"We'll leave if it gets to be too much" leaves everyone guessing. "We leave by 6:30, and sooner if you text me the word coffee" gives everyone something to follow. A boundary works best as one calm sentence about what you will do.
Staying away is allowed.	Some people are safest spending the first holidays where their recovery is: in treatment, in sober living, or at a meeting. If your person says they need to be somewhere else this year, respecting that is one of the most supportive things a family can do.
Review it after each holiday.	Take ten minutes the next morning. What worked, what did not, and what changes before the next one. Bring it to your next session with your Advisor.

WHERE ALONGSIDE FITS

A Family Advisor can help you make this plan and hold the entire family to it.

A planning session this week, an Advisor at the event or on call for the day, a companion for holiday travel, and daily check-ins through New Year's. Call or text (561) 823-8777, or start a conversation at alongside-advisors.com. Confidential from the first call.

Headquartered in Delray Beach, Florida, and serving clients nationwide.

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