



Cell Phones: Double Edged Sword

In today's digital age, our cell phones have become indispensable tools that connect us to information, resources, and each other like never before. From instant communication to accessing a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips, the benefits are clear. However, this technological marvel also comes with its challenges. How often have we felt distracted, overwhelmed, or even isolated by our constant connectivity? Today, we're exploring the double-edged sword of cell phone usage—examining both its potential as a helpful companion and its impact as a potential hindrance in our daily lives. Or cell phones can help us or hurt us in our individual process of recovery and positive change, all depending upon how we decide to use it.

Opening Exercise: Share and discuss each item listed. *Optional follow up question below each item*

- **One of Your Most Recent Pictures**
 - Share the story behind the picture or what it represents or means to you personally.
- **Last Person You Texted**
 - What was the conversation topic or tell us about the nature of the relationship?
- **A Saved Meme or GIF**
 - What is meaningful or funny about the meme or GIF in your opinion?
- **One of Your Most Frequently Called People**
 - What is meaningful or important to you about this relationship?
- **Most Used Social Media Platform**
 - What are some of the benefits of it as well as some of the downsides of the platform?
- **Your Most Used App (Other than Social Media)**
 - Discuss why you use it frequently and how does it benefits you?
- **Favorite Podcast, YouTube Channel or Followed Person or Page**
 - Why do you enjoy it and what have you learned?
- **Current Wallpaper**
 - Why did you choose it and what is meaningful about it to you?
- **A Recent Google Search**
 - What is the back story and why were you searching this topic?
- **A Recent Article That You've Read**
 - Why did it catch your interest?
- **Favorite Emoji or Emoticon**
 - Explain its meaning or how and why you use it in communication.
- **One of Your Most Played Songs, Playlists, or Artists**
 - What is something about the music that resonates with you?
- **Recent Notes or Reminders**
 - What was the significance or importance of it and how does using notes and reminders help?
- **Other?**
 - Is there anything else noteworthy or interesting on your phone not already discussed?



A Double-Edged Sword for Substance Use and Mental Health Recovery: *For example:*

You can use your cell phone to call drug dealers and you can also use it to call recovery support.

Your phone can trigger anxiety, depression, or anger and it can also promote recovery and wellness

Consider how your cell phone currently impacts your recovery and mental health for good and for bad. Take a moment to reflect on specific instances where your phone has been a helpful recovery tool, such as using it to reach out to a supportive person or engaging in positive distractions like relaxation apps. Conversely, note any times when your phone has been a trigger, such as accessing negative social media content or contacting unhealthy connections or viewing/reading material that instigates negative feelings or moods. This exercise aims to increase awareness of how our digital habits influence our well-being.

Discussion Questions for the Group:

1. Do you possibly use your cell phone too much? For example, do you find yourself wasting time scrolling on your phone, perhaps even staying up late or avoiding more important responsibilities at times?
 - a. What are some key steps in managing the amount and frequency of cell phone usage to positively impact recovery? *People in the group doing well in this area, share your strategies.*
2. Are there habits or connections associated with your cell phone that you should consider limiting or avoiding? Some examples below:
 - a. Communicating with negative, irritating, or discouraging people either through talking, text, or other means?
 - b. Viewing content that may be entertaining while viewing but it also can trigger negative feelings or mood states (like reading comments that are ignorant or hateful)
 - c. Mindlessly just wasting time on content that sucks you in for longer periods of time than you intended yet it has little or no value
3. How can you leverage your cell phone as a recovery tool more effectively?
 - a. For instance, a cell phone can be an excellent relapse prevention tool for both substance use and mental health recovery if there are supportive people to reach out too especially in times of need.
4. What specific apps or resources can you integrate into your daily routine to support your recovery goals?
5. What strategies can you employ to minimize triggers and distractions on your phone?
6. How can you cultivate a supportive digital environment that aligns with your recovery and mental health priorities?
7. Considering everything discussed thus far: What are three concrete goals you can set for yourself to use your cell phone more positively going forward?

