

RESPONSIBLY DRIVEN

AN IMPAIRED DRIVING PREVENTION CURRICULUM

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FOREWORD

Responsibly Driven (RD) was created by impaired driving offenders for the purpose of affecting long-term change in other offenders who have been arrested and those who are at risk of driving impaired¹. Our firsthand knowledge and experience have allowed for the development and delivery of a curriculum that meets other offenders at their level of responsibility while challenging their destructive beliefs and behaviors. The program's uniqueness is our approach to impaired driving prevention. Our program helps participants identify and address their underlying issues with impaired driving through our *Clean, Sober, Safe, and Sustainable (CS3) Sobriety Plan*. **Responsibly Driven** participants who complete the program leave with a clean, sober, safe, and sustainable approach to sobriety and impaired driving.

“It will never happen to me” is a common thought amongst impaired drivers. Throughout our years of driving intoxicated, the founding members of **Responsibly Driven** entertained this distorted belief. It gave us permission to abuse alcohol/drugs and then to drive in a car. We were unwilling to examine our selfish decisions, because we refused to acknowledge the reality that impaired driving is inherently deadly. We believed that we were “special” and immune from such travesties. But everything changed in 2014 with the formation of **Responsibly Driven**.

The creation of **Responsibly Driven** and its curriculum filled a void for us that was missing from our past attempts at change. Despite multiple encounters with law enforcement agents, DUI courts, and impaired driving schools, our denial proved impenetrable in the midst of the self-induced chaos, admonitions, and the implementation of punishments. Yet, we could no longer hide behind our delusions when confronted by fellow DUI offenders who found a way to be accountable for their past and present actions. These conversations created a situational context conducive for honest introspection. We found that this approach fueled everyone's desire for accountability, authenticity, and contrition.²

For those facilitators who have no prior history of impaired driving, we strongly encourage a review of one's life. At some point in our lives, we all have entertained some distorted thought patterns and/or behaved in counterproductive ways. Use those experiences as a resource in your group discussions. Be willing to share your failures and vulnerabilities. Your courageous

¹ **Responsible Driven** has chosen to use the term *impaired driving* to highlight all dangerous forms of driving. Impaired driving is commonly known as driving under the influence (DUI), driving while intoxicated/impaired (DWI), or operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated or under the influence (OWI), but it is also important to recognize a DUI driver shares many of the distorted thinking patterns with other dangerous drivers (i.e., distracted driving). This curriculum addresses the core destructive issues all said drivers possess.

INTRODUCTION: “HOW DID I GET HERE?”

*In 2016, more than one million drivers were arrested
for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.*

(United States Department of Justice, *Crime in the United States 2016: Uniform Crime Reports*)

If you want something you've never had, then you've got to do something you've never done.

Thomas Jefferson



Welcome to **Responsibly Driven (RD)**. **RD** is a comprehensive rehabilitative program that seeks to prevent impaired driving by empowering individuals to uncover and treat the underlying issues and their destructive behavior of impaired driving and substance abuse. **RD** views impaired driving as a series of bad choices. We make a choice to become intoxicated, then an additional choice to drive while intoxicated. The purpose of **RD** is to help individuals understand both of these choices and, with this understanding, create a plan that ensures they never drive impaired again.

In 2018, 10,511 people died in alcohol-impaired auto collisions (US Depart. of Transportation, *Traffic Safety Facts 2018, 1*), and more than one million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics (US Depart. of Justice, *Crime in the United States 2016: Uniform Crime Reports* n. pag.). We believe these numbers can and should be zero. As members of **RD**, we seek to raise awareness of the destructive force this preventable tragedy afflicts upon victims and survivors, families, and our communities. Over the next ten sessions, our goal is to create an environment that promotes positive change towards these goals through education and small group sessions.

Small Group Guidelines

1. Confidentiality must be strictly observed by all members. What is said in the group stays in the group.
2. Be respectful of one another.
3. Keep your sharing focused on yourself.
4. No side-talk. Side-talk is when two or more individuals engage in conversation with themselves separate from the group.
5. Be willing to consider new perspectives and tools.
6. Be open to feedback.

There is no quick fix to becoming more honest. We develop the habit of being honest by practicing honesty. Thankfully, honesty is empowering and contagious. One honest moment creates space for more honesty. The more we practice honesty, the more we will find others around us becoming more truthful. Try it for yourself. Give an honest statement to someone you encounter today and see what happens. Often, you will find that your honest statement is immediately followed by another honest statement from your counterpart. Honesty begets more honesty.

For all its gifts, honesty can be challenging to channel in the moment. We lie for a reason. In the moment, a lie can feel like the perfect way to impress someone, to get what we want, and to avoid uncomfortable moments and/or negative consequences. Yet, every lie has a price.

Lies damage us. The act of keeping a lie alive means that we must live in constant conflict with reality. A lie can only be kept alive by another lie. As we continue down this path of deception, the burden grows heavier and its consequences worsen. When we hear a person say, “I can drive drunk because I’m a good drunk driver,” we know such a statement cannot exist on its own. It lives within a vast web of dishonesty. Thankfully, one honest moment can give us the clarity that we need to identify the falsity of our thoughts.

An essential tool in gaining this clarity is the ability to see our actions through the eyes of others. This technique allows us to separate from the emotions and thoughts we use to justify our actions, thereby giving us the necessary space to view our actions in a more objective (honest) light. Victor Frankl spoke of such a technique when making choices:

So live as if you were living already for the second time and as if you had acted the first time as wrongly as you are about to act now!

In this example, Frankl encourages us to look at our actions as an older, wiser version of ourselves. By doing so, we separate from the person we are now in order for us to see ourselves from a different perspective. Notably, when we say *see* ourselves, we are seeing what is happening on the inside and the outside: both the act itself, in addition to the mindset (thoughts/beliefs) that enabled it. This technique could also work by choosing to see our actions through the eyes of a loving parent, a supportive friend, or a fictional person.

This practice gives us an opportunity to reflect upon our actions apart from our personal biases and sentiments. Free from these prejudices, we can ask ourselves the critical questions: “Do my actions reflect who I want to be?” and “Are my thoughts based on what is true?”

We will begin by viewing our decision to drive impaired. Throughout this exercise, we will pay attention not only to the action but also our rationalization of why it is okay for us to make these choices. We will have the opportunity to see our thoughts and actions from a different perspective. Afterward, we will discuss our experience with this activity and our thoughts on the lesson.

2. Why should you practice honesty in your life?

3. Describe what you saw during your fifteen-minute visualization exercise.

4. Describe what you heard the visualization exercise. (What kind of reasons did you use to justify your actions?)

5. How has your opinion of these things changed when you saw them from another person's perspective?

6. Whose viewpoint is more accurate, the others person's perspective or yours? Why?

7. How would this experience look if you were practicing honesty?

8. How can you begin to practice honesty in your daily life?
