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## LEADER'S GUIDE:

### **Mind Games** by Jackie Crisp

Getting high felt like the only way to keep myself sane.

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#### **DISCUSSION FOCUS:**

**Understanding the power of self-deception.**

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#### **ACTIVITY GOAL:**

**Participants will explore ways they may have used chaos to escape more painful feelings about themselves and their lives.**

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#### *STORY SUMMARY*

*As a child, Jackie was abused and sexually abused and developed a drug addiction and a habit of lying to herself about reality in order to survive. She also involved herself in an abusive relationship, and the drama of it helped her avoid taking responsibility for her life.*

*When Jackie's fourth child is born with drugs in her system, Jackie hopes that her love for her children may help her go clean. But drugs are the only way she knows to hide from the shame and pain she feels inside.*

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

#### **GROUP INTRODUCTION: 10 minutes**

Today we are going to talk about the ways that drug abuse and the chaos of domestic violence can sometimes help people hide from other, even more painful emotions than the ones they are experiencing in their abusive relationship. We will look at the ways that drug abuse and domestic violence can sometimes protect us from things that are even harder for us to bear, such as painful childhood memories, our own self-hatred, and the hurt we are doing our children.

- How do you feel about this topic?
- Do you have experiences related to this topic that you'd like to share before we get started?

## READ AND DISCUSS STORY: 15 + 30 minutes

Read the story out loud as a group. Help participants recognize the writer's emotions and coping mechanisms and their own. Go back over important moments in the story and ask the participants about how they've handled similar experiences:

STORY MOMENT	DISCUSSION QUESTION
Jackie feels that she will never be a good person.	What negative messages do you tell yourself when you are at your lowest?
Jackie uses drugs to believe the fantasies that she wishes were true about her life.	What fantasies have drugs helped you believe and what painful feelings have drugs helped you avoid?
Jackie says that "creating a chaotic mess gave me something to do and a reason to feel like I was a victim, not responsible for my own life."	Has your abusive relationship ever felt like another addiction that keeps you from facing your fears and taking control of your life? If so, how?
When child protective services first comes into Jackie's life, she can't face who she has become and what she has done to her children.	What are some feelings that have been hard for you to face since leaving your relationship and/or starting the process of recovery?
A year after losing custody of her children, Jackie enters drug treatment and is eventually reunited with her children.	What positive changes do you hope to make in your life that would help you feel strong enough to leave the chaos of addiction and domestic violence?

## JOURNAL TIME: 15-30 minutes

By writing in their journals, participants can more deeply reflect on their experiences and the steps they can take to strengthen themselves and their families. Hand out the "Journal Reflections" worksheet and give participants 15-30 minutes to write. They can share their responses with the group or in pairs, or after the workshop with a counselor, therapist, or peer.

**NAME:**

**DATE:**

**JOURNAL REFLECTIONS: Mind Games** by Jackie Crisp

Jackie keeps herself from facing her deepest fears and taking responsibility for her life by hiding in the drama of addiction and domestic violence. She has to overcome the power of self-deception before she can make a positive change for herself and her children.

Write in your journal (or below) about feelings that have been hard for you to face, and about what positive changes in your life might help you walk away from the chaos of addiction and domestic violence.

What words do you use to put yourself down when you are at your lowest?

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What words could help you begin to forgive yourself for mistakes you have made?

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How might self-forgiveness help you face your fears or feelings of self-hatred and break away from drugs and/or domestic violence?

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OVER 

What positive changes in your life might make you want to walk away from addiction and/or an abusive relationship permanently?

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### **ACTION STEPS**

Write down 2-3 steps you could take to forgive yourself for the past and begin to build a positive future.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **A SUPPORTIVE CONNECTION**

A person I want to share my reflections and actions steps with is:

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