12 STEPPERS

Step 4 Harms Done to Others Worksheet

A Guided Harms List That Prepares You for Step 8

A printable 4th step harms list with prompt lists, worked examples and a patterns page that turns your inventory into the start of your Step 8 amends list. For AA, NA, Al-Anon, OA, CoDA and other 12 step programs.

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Want the complete 4th step workbook?

This worksheet is one part of the free **Step 4 Worksheet** from 12steppers.org, which includes all four inventories, a character defects and assets checklist and guided reflection questions. Find it at 12steppers.org.

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SECTION 1

Before You Begin

Step 4: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Why Keep a Harms List

Your resentment and sex conduct inventories will already name many of the people you've hurt. Many sponsors and workbooks add a separate harms list to catch everyone else: people you lied to, stole from, neglected, frightened or let down.

This list matters well beyond Step 4. It becomes the foundation for Step 8, where you list everyone you've harmed and become willing to make amends, and Step 9, where you make those amends wherever doing so won't cause more harm.

How to Use This Worksheet

1. **Read, then write.** Each section opens with a short explanation. Read it, then fill in the chart that follows.
2. **Go one column at a time.** Finish all of Column 1 before you touch Column 2. This keeps you from arguing your case on every line and helps patterns show up.
3. **Work with a sponsor.** Step 4 is designed to be shared in Step 5. Ask your sponsor how they'd like you to approach it, and call them when you get stuck.
4. **Set a steady pace.** Pick a regular time and place to write. Don't rush and miss things, and don't let it drag on for months either.
5. **Keep it private.** Store your inventory somewhere secure and share it only with the person you choose for Step 5.

A note on safety and self-care

Inventory work can stir up painful memories, including trauma, abuse or grief. That's normal, and it doesn't mean you're doing it wrong.

If someone abused, assaulted or exploited you, **you do not have to find "your part" in what was done to you.** You can write it down so it doesn't stay buried, then talk it through with your sponsor and a licensed counselor or therapist.

If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, pause and reach out. In the U.S., you can call or text **988** (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) any time, or call SAMHSA's free National Helpline at **1-800-662-4357**. This worksheet is a recovery tool, not medical or mental health treatment.

SECTION 2

How the Harms List Works

Keep the focus on your own actions. Even when the other person behaved badly too, this list is only about what you did and why.

How to Fill Out the Harms Chart

Column 1: Who did I harm?	Name the person, group or organization.
Column 2: What did I do?	Describe the action briefly and specifically.
Column 3: Why did I do it?	What were you after? Money, approval, escape, control, protection?
Column 4: My part	Check the defects that drove the behavior.
Column 5: Instead	What would a better choice have looked like?

The Five Defects of Self (Column 4)

Selfish	Focused on what I want, with little thought for what others need.
Dishonest	Lying to others or myself, including half-truths and leaving things out.
Self-seeking	Acting to get something for myself: approval, control, advantage or revenge.
Frightened	Letting fear drive my choices instead of my values.
Inconsiderate	Not thinking about how my actions affect other people.

Don't reach out to anyone yet

Writing a name here is not a commitment to contact that person. Amends come later in Steps 8 and 9, with your sponsor's guidance. For now, the only job is an honest list.

Tip: harm includes what you didn't do

Some of the deepest harms are absences: missed birthdays, broken promises, a phone call you never returned. If someone counted on you and you weren't there, it belongs on this list.

SECTION 3

Harms Prompt List

Use these to jog your memory, then carry the names into Column 1. Some people will show up more than once, and that's okay.

Who might I have harmed?

FAMILY

- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Siblings
- ☐ My children
- ☐ Spouse or partner
- ☐ Former partners
- ☐ Extended family
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

WORK AND MONEY

- ☐ Employers
- ☐ Coworkers
- ☐ Employees
- ☐ Businesses or stores
- ☐ Landlords
- ☐ Creditors or lenders
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

COMMUNITY

- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Neighbors
- ☐ Strangers
- ☐ People in the program
- ☐ Organizations
- ☐ Myself
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

What kinds of harm?

WORDS

- ☐ Lied
- ☐ Insulted or belittled
- ☐ Gossiped
- ☐ Yelled or threatened
- ☐ Broke promises
- ☐ Manipulated
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

ACTIONS

- ☐ Stole or borrowed without repaying
- ☐ Cheated in business or a deal
- ☐ Damaged property
- ☐ Drove impaired
- ☐ Physical aggression
- ☐ Put someone at risk
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

NEGLECT

- ☐ Didn't show up
- ☐ Ignored my kids or family
- ☐ Skipped responsibilities
- ☐ Left others to clean up my mess
- ☐ Withheld support
- ☐ Disappeared
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Harms Done to Others

Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. Shaded rows are examples. This list becomes the starting point for Step 8.

			COL. 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 **Who did I harm?**	Col. 2 **What did I do?**	Col. 3 **Why did I do it? (What was I after, or guarding?)**	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened	Inconsiderate	Col. 5 **What should I have done instead?**
My kids	Missed their school play and broke promises to show up. Came home after using.	I wanted to keep using without anyone stopping me. Protecting my image as a “good parent.”	✓	✓			✓	Kept my word or been honest about why I couldn't. Asked for help sooner.
Former employer	Padded expense reports and took supplies home.	Money for using. Felt like I was owed it.	✓	✓	✓			Lived within my means and been honest about needing help.

Harms Done to Others (continued)

Need more rows? Print this page again or add rows in the Word version. Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. Shaded rows are examples. This list becomes the starting point for Step 8.

			COL. 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 **Who did I harm?**	Col. 2 **What did I do?**	Col. 3 **Why did I do it? (What was I after, or guarding?)**	**Selfish**	**Dishonest**	**Self-seeking**	**Frightened**	**Inconsiderate**	Col. 5 **What should I have done instead?**

Harms Done to Others (continued)

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			COL. 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 **Who did I harm?**	Col. 2 **What did I do?**	Col. 3 **Why did I do it? (What was I after, or guarding?)**	**Selfish**	**Dishonest**	**Self-seeking**	**Frightened**	**Inconsiderate**	Col. 5 **What should I have done instead?**

SECTION 5

Patterns and Getting Ready for Step 8

Read back over your chart. Notice which defects drove most of the harm and which people appear again and again. That's where the most important amends usually are.

Which defects drove my behavior most?

	Times checked
Selfish	
Dishonest	
Self-seeking	
Frightened	
Inconsiderate	

1. People who appear more than once on my list:

2. The harms that still weigh on me the most:

3. Harms where making amends might cause more harm (talk these through with your sponsor):

4. Something I'm willing to do differently starting today:

What Comes Next

Step 5	You share your finished inventory, including this list, with your Higher Power, yourself and another person, usually your sponsor.
Step 8	This list becomes the starting point for your list of everyone you've harmed, along with your willingness to make amends.
Step 9	With your sponsor's guidance, you make direct amends wherever possible, except when doing so would injure them or others.

SECTION 6

Resources and Sources

Read the Step 4 Literature Free Online

- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "The Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition)." *aa.org.* Read, listen or watch in ASL.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Chapter 5: How It Works." *Alcoholics Anonymous (PDF).* The Step 4 inventory instructions appear on pages 63 to 71.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Step Four." *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (PDF).* Begins on page 42.

If You Need Support Right Now

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "SAMHSA's National Helpline." *SAMHSA.* Free, confidential treatment referral and information, 24/7, in English and Spanish: 1-800-662-4357.
- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. "988 Lifeline." *988lifeline.org.* Call or text 988, or chat online, any time.

More From 12steppers.org

- 12steppers.org. "Step 4 Worksheet: The Complete 4th Step Inventory Workbook." *12steppers.org.* All four inventories, a defects and assets checklist and guided questions in one free download.
- 12steppers.org. "Step 8 Worksheet With Questions." *12steppers.org.* Turn this harms list into your Step 8 amends list.

You'll also find standalone Resentment, Fear, Sex Conduct and Harms Done worksheets, plus worksheets for every step, at **12steppers.org**.

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