

Counseling Session 3 Program Transcript

Welcome to Marge's third counseling session, where you will ask questions to determine if there are any codependent or family issues related to her addiction. Before you begin, please carefully read through the paperwork that contains information obtained from team members.

After reviewing this information, click the "continue" button to begin Marge's first counseling session. Using your cursor, rollover buttons A and B to review your question options. Click what you think is the best question to ask Marge out of the two options offered. If you ask an effective counseling question, you will receive more information from Marge. If you ask an ineffective question, you will receive an equally unhelpful response. Choose wisely, because the better you counsel Marge, the better her treatment experience.

**Please keep in mind that the video has been made in a way that gives you a realistic vantage point from where you would sit and counsel your client in real life. A close up view of the individual has not been added because you, as a counselor, will not have varying angles of your client to work with.*

Paperwork:

- Marge C.
- 15th day out of 30 days of treatment
- Family sessions scheduled for today. Husband was interviewed individually earlier today; the children will be interviewed later this afternoon
- Patient is showing signs of improvement. Withdrawal symptoms have disappeared, patient no longer takes a sedative
- Patient continues to exhibit signs of depression

[Marge's 15th day, half-way through treatment. This is the first family session. The children are not here for the first session; they will come later. Ken and Marge sit next to each other across from the counselor/camera. Initially, their chairs are turned toward the counselor/camera so they can face him or her. After the counselor asks them to face each other, they turn their chairs directly facing each other, their profiles to the counselor/camera.]

Question #1:

Option A:

Counselor: I'd like to ask you both to face each other in today's session and talk to each other. Ken, you expressed a lot of guilt the day Marge came here. You said that you enabled her to continue drinking. Talk about that, both of you.

Marge: (faces Ken) You did the best you could, Ken.

Ken: (faces Marge. Ken's body language begins to subconsciously show signs of anger—clenched fist, tightens and loosens jaw, folds arm and crosses leg, looks away, etc. But his tone of voice remains calm)

I did do the best I could. For years, I just turned my back on your drinking, probably thinking it would go away if I ignored it. It didn't. I always made excuses for you, telling people you were ill or calling the school when you were too hungover to go. I've been telling the kids that their mom acts the way she does because she's sick. We never talk about it, and if they ever try to bring your drinking up I quickly change the subject. I worry about what your drinking has done to them.

Option B:

Counselor: Ken, you expressed a lot of guilt the day Marge came here; you said that you enabled her to continue drinking. Tell me more about that, Ken.

Ken: (facing and talking to counselor/camera. Marge and her reactions can also be seen while he talks). I did do the best I could. For years, I just turned my back on her drinking, probably thinking it would go away if I ignored it. It didn't. I always made excuses for her, telling people she was ill or calling the school when she was too hungover to go. I've been telling the kids that their mom acts the way she does because she's sick. I worry about what her drinking has done to them.

Marge: (looks ashamed and left out as her husband talks about her to counselor—then interjects with hesitation. To counselor/camera) He tells you that, but he never would say that to me. I guess that's what he's been telling everybody else behind my back.

(looks at Ken) Why can't you look at me and say that?

Question #2

Option A:

Counselor: Ken, by the tone of your voice you seem to be pretty calm when you talk about Marge's drinking. That's good; you must be a pretty strong and accepting person. Am I right?

Ken: I never thought about it like that, but now that you say it, yeah! I guess I have held together okay in spite of Marge.

Option B:

Counselor: Ken, notice your fists; they're clenched. To me that says you're angry and holding it in. Look at Marge and tell her if you agree with what I just said?"

Ken: (reflects briefly on the validity of what the counselor said) Yeah....you're darn right I'm angry... (smolders visibly now, acknowledging his anger)

Marge: You have a right to be angry at me.

Ken: Not just at you Marge, at myself too. Nothing I did would change you. I tried everything I could think of, and you and your bottle just went on your merry way. I feel like a fool and like I'm not important in your life, and I'm angry at myself because I just kept on doing what I was doing. I haven't let myself be angry before now, but it's time I let it out. I've had to work hard to pay the bills, take care of the children, and try to be both father and mother. And like I said, look at how this has affected our children, Marge.

Marge: You're right Ken... (sobs softly)

Question #3

Option A:

Counselor: Ken, you say you worry about what Marge's drinking has done to the children. Tell Marge about your worries.

Ken: Marge, I think Roger, that's our 12-year-old son (looks at counselor/camera to explain then back to Marge), acts out like he does, getting in all that trouble at school, to get our attention. When you're under the influence, you're really not there emotionally for him, and I'm at work most of his waking hours trying to pay our bills.

Carla, our 16-year-old daughter (looks to counselor/camera to explain then back to Marge) does most of the parenting for Roger, not us. The only time he ever gets the attention of both of us is at all those teacher conferences for his bad behavior or failing grades. And Carla is the complete opposite of him; I know you agree, Marge. Good grades, sports, popular, and she is more of a father and mother to her two younger brothers than you and I. She's the one who gets them up in the morning and off to school and puts them to bed at night. I think she feels an obligation to the boys to make up for our absence.

And cute little Scotty, our youngest... I don't know, maybe he hasn't been affected yet, he's only 10. He's our only source of laughter in the family anymore.

Marge: You're right Ken, except for Scotty. I think my drinking affects him as much as Roger and Carla. You ever notice how he clowns around and makes us laugh when the rest of us are uptight? You think he thinks it's his job to do that? To make us stop arguing and worrying all the time? If so, that's a big responsibility for such a little boy.

Ken: Yeah, I know it hurts you too, Marge. Maybe if I hadn't ignored your problem, if I hadn't been a weak fool, I could have changed you and things wouldn't have gone this far. (begins to soften a little, relaxes body)

Option B:

Counselor: Ken, tell me, has Marge's drinking affected your children? [make sure the two characters are sitting in chairs facing each other even if Ken is talking to the camera – this style needs to continue once the student is shown this is the correct way to approach Q#1 earlier.]

Ken: (Directly to counselor/camera as if Marge isn't present. Camera includes Marge even though she's silent) Yes, I think it has, and it hurts me to see them exposed to her behavior sometimes.

Marge: (says nothing, only sits still, head down, and looking more dejected and left out as Ken talks about her as if she's not there)

Question #4

Option A:

Counselor: Marge, what are your reactions to what Ken's been saying? Can you look at Ken when you say this?

Marge: I'm hurt and ashamed because you're telling the truth about me, but not about yourself. You've enabled me a lot, yes, but you did it not because you're a fool. You ARE important to me. You did it out of love for me and the children and

because you didn't know what else to do. And you couldn't have changed me, Ken; you didn't make me an alcoholic, and you can't unmake me one. Only I can do that.

Option B:

Counselor: Marge, we haven't really heard the reactions we need to hear from you today. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Marge: Well, I didn't think I was supposed to say anything in particular. I thought this was Ken's turn to do the talking so he could let all his feelings about me out.

Question #5

Option A:

Counselor: Marge and Ken, I think we've had a productive session today. We've identified some of your family's problems and talked about some actions you can take to address them. Before we end, I'd like you to tell each other where you want to start to address these problems.

Marge: I want to complete treatment here and return home. I will go to AA and do whatever else I need to do to stay sober. Without that, we can't do anything. I see that my drinking is the source of all the issues in our family, and it's up to me to make changes to help get our family back on track.

Ken: You aren't the only one who needs to make changes, Marge. I plan to find an Al-Anon group to go to, and maybe all of us, children included, can start family counseling somewhere. You may feel alone, Marge, but you aren't. We just haven't known how to help in the right way until now.

Option B:

Counselor: Ken and Marge, let's not dwell on all your family's problems; that won't help a thing. Put them behind you so you can move on. Can you both do that?

Marge and Ken: (together) Yes.

Final Text:

Congratulations. You have now completed your counseling session with Marge.