

## The STAR Matrix: Assessment Tool and Clinical Guide

The STAR Matrix is a clinician-facing framework from the Natural Pathways of Recovery model that helps assess key factors influencing the severity and complexity of a client's substance use disorder. It is not a diagnostic tool, but rather a way to recognize and organize the client's unique recovery landscape.

### The Five STAR Domains

#### 1. 1. Genetic Predisposition

- Family history of addiction, mental illness, or trauma
- Consider intergenerational patterns of coping, attachment, or dysregulation

#### 2. 2. FID: Frequency, Intensity, Duration of Use

- How often does the client use?
- How intense is the high, risk, or binge pattern?
- How long has this pattern been occurring?

#### 3. 3. Trauma and/or Consequences

- Developmental or acute trauma histories
- Legal, relational, financial, or occupational consequences
- Safety concerns or dissociation from traumatic memories

#### 4. 4. Other Mental Health Issues

- Depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar, psychosis, etc.
- How does this affect emotional regulation or motivation?
- Diagnosed or undiagnosed?

#### 5. 5. Physical Issues

- Chronic pain, illness, disability, neurodivergence
- Physical barriers to recovery work (energy, sleep, mobility)
- Any medical concerns impacting use or treatment?

### Clinical Use

You may use the STAR Matrix as part of intake, case formulation, supervision, or multidisciplinary consultation. It invites a compassionate, whole-person perspective that honors complexity without reducing the individual to a label.

## Clinician Reflection

For each domain, consider:

- Is this domain a major influence in the client's current struggle?
- How might this shape their motivation, insight, or capacity?
- What supports or accommodations might be needed?