

4 part recovery plan instructions

Read all of part 1.

then take part 2 quiz.

then write out part 3 and part 4, showing that you've reviewed part 1 and 2 with your answers.

Be sure to chat through with sponsor, mentor, peers and loved ones as they may have insight into your indirect signs of emotional, mental or behavioral relapse. We want it to be as authentic and real as possible.

Now, when you do this RP plan, it is important to consider substances, but please don't stop there. When you do this project, you want to think about triggers as situations that put you at risk to NOT be your best self, not just an urge to use or drink. When you think about relapse behaviors, don't just consider drugs and alcohol---think about sex, work, finances, parenthood, personal character, decision making, structure, routine, goals, self care, saying no, saying yes, personal hobbies and passions, etc. Don't just be limited to substance abuse. We abuse our existence in so many ways and we want to consider the ones that we know can threaten the life we want.

The best way to identify risk areas for behaviors other than drugs or alcohol is to sit down and think about your personal "brand."

Your values, your mission, your desires, your best self, your best characteristics and have an idea of who that is. This will help you begin to identify the people, places, things and situations which seem to "hijack" your best self and that's how we get clarity on thoughts, feelings, and actions that just don't match who you want to truly be and can begin a downward spiral.

For instance, part of my ideal "brand" for myself is being solution-focused and action-oriented. my husband notices that if I focus on where blame lies for an issue and either blame myself immediately (savior complex) or rigorously figure out whose fault it is instead of mine (defensiveness), this is a sign that I'm slipping out of my brand and something isn't quite right. I've identified that f-ups and problems that pop up with like no warning are my personal "hijackers."

What is Relapse?

Someone on the road to recovery can be faced with a battle of thoughts, feelings, and temptations.

A person trying to stop using substances can make mistakes, feel negative emotions over the situation, and begin using again. When someone returns to old addictive behaviors or patterns, this is called relapse. A complete relapse is when the individual has given up on all areas of recovery.

The severity of relapse can be defined on a spectrum from low concern to high concern, and people recovering from addiction will often have more than one relapse. It's difficult to completely change your day-to-day habits to adhere to life without drugs.

For those trying to understand addiction without having experienced it, it's akin to attempting to diet and lose weight. After living a certain way for an extended amount of time, it's challenging to learn how to do things differently.

The critical thing to remember is that even if someone slips up and returns to old behaviors, **they can always try again**. An individual that has experienced a form of relapse can return to **treatment** or receive other professional support as many times as they need until it's effective, and supporting them throughout can make all the difference.

If you are a loved one, it is okay to feel feelings of frustration and disappointment when someone you care for experiences relapse. However, it is important that we respond with compassion and empathy. Increasing shame can increase the relapse, and alternatively, by decreasing shame you can decrease the relapse.

Stages of Relapse

Recovery is a difficult journey that takes significant determination and willpower. Understanding the stages of relapse can play a valuable role in helping your loved ones through recovery.

The **stages of relapse** are:

- Emotional relapse
- Mental relapse
- Physical relapse

Emotional Relapse

When someone goes through the emotional stage of relapse, they're not thinking about using – but their emotions are setting them up for a possible relapse.

Symptoms of emotional relapse are often synonymous with **post-acute withdrawal**. Understanding these signs and symptoms can help play a part in relapse prevention, as it's the easiest stage to pull back from.

Signs of emotional relapse include:

- Anxiety
- Intolerance
- Anger
- Defensiveness
- Mood swings
- Isolation
- Not asking for help
- Not attending meetings
- Poor eating habits
- Poor sleep habits

Mental Relapse

Mental relapse becomes increasingly challenging for a person in recovery. Their mind is often at war between wanting to use and wanting to stay clean.

Mental relapse creates active thoughts about using, making it difficult to make the right choices.

Signs of mental relapse include:

- Thinking about people, places, and things you used with
- Glamorizing past use
- Lying and being secretive
- Hanging out with friends that still use
- Active thoughts or conversations about using

Physical Relapse

The transition from the mental to the physical stages of relapse is often rapid. It's difficult to resist the pull of addiction once active thoughts have entered someone's mind who is currently in recovery.

Physical relapse involves using substances again. If someone you know has physically relapsed, it's essential to focus your efforts on helping them **seek treatment** or professional support as soon as possible.

Triggers & Warning Signs

Preventing a relapse cannot always be done, but knowing the early warning signs and triggers can help.

Triggers

Relapses can happen suddenly and are often brought on by triggers – an event, person, or interaction – that causes someone to justify using again. Typically, triggers are based on something that reminds them of using and how it made them feel.

Common triggers are:

- Negative emotions (stress, anger, fear, guilt, loneliness, etc.)
- Reminders of using (people, places, events)
- Exposure to substance use
- Seeing or sensing an object of addiction (seeing a syringe or alcohol commercial)
- Social pressures to use
- Overly positive emotional states (having fun at a party and wanting to feel even better)
- Using other substances (recovering from drug use but still drinking alcohol)

Warning Signs

Keeping an eye on a loved one in recovery is important to helping them **through their journey**. Certain situations can make a relapse more likely, such as major changes or hardships, so being there for your loved ones can help minimize the chances of a relapse.

Some **warning signs** to look out for are:

- Overconfidence or cockiness
- Self-pitying attitude
- Dishonesty
- Hanging out with old friends from substance use days
- Changes in personal hygiene, sleep, or appetite
- Sudden changes in routine
- Irresponsible behaviour (skipping school, work, or appointments)
- Missing meetings or treatment programs

Recovery and Relapse Prevention Inventory Diagnostic (RAPID)

The RAPID score indicates how well you are doing in recovery and if you are at risk of relapse. The questions are based on the “five rules of recovery.” These questions apply to the last month or the time since your last counseling session.	Always or Yes = 4	More than half the time = 3	Less than half the time = 1	Never or No = 0
1. Recovery involves creating a new life where it is easier to not use.				
How often do you avoid high-risk situations, such as HALT (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) and high-risk people and places?				
How often do you “play the tape through” when you have cravings?				
How often do you do something to distract yourself when you have cravings?				
How often do you challenge your negative thinking and look for healthier ways of thinking?				
How often are you able to set healthy boundaries and say “no” to unreasonable requests?				
How often are you able to resolve uncomfortable feelings instead of bottling them up?				
Have you gotten rid of <u>all</u> the people and things that you used with?		yes or no		
Do you have at least 3 strategies for dealing with social settings where drinking or using is involved?		yes or no		
2. Ask for help and develop a recovery circle of close family, friends, health professionals, and recovery groups.				
How many times in the last month, have you gone to a self-help recovery group at least twice a week?				
How many days a week do you communicate with a recovery sponsor?				
How many days a week do you do step work?				
How often do you reach out and ask for help when you have cravings?				
When a situation arises that can affect your recovery, how often do you ask for advice <u>before</u> you take action?				
Have you made any new recovery friends?		yes or no		
3. Be completely honest with yourself and everyone in your recovery circle.				
How much of the time do you feel you are capable of handling any challenge to your recovery?				
How often are you completely honest with everyone in your recovery circle?				
During the last month, were you ever so honest, when you were sharing, that you felt a little uncomfortable?		yes or no		

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Recovery and Relapse Prevention Inventory Diagnostic (RAPID)

These questions apply to the last month or the time since your last counseling session.	Always or Yes = 4	More than half the time = 3	Less than half the time = 1	Never or No = 0
4. Practice self-care.				
How often do you practice healthy eating and sleeping habits?				
How many days a week do you practice some form of mind-body relaxation?				
How often do you celebrate your small victories?				
How many days a week do you have some fun in a clean and sober environment?				
How many days a week do you write a gratitude list about your recovery, your life, and the people in it?				
How much of the time do you feel that you are a good person and feel that you like yourself?				
5. Don't try to negotiate your recovery.				
How much of the time do you fully accept that you can't always control your substance use?				
How much of the time are you free of "using fantasies" and "using dreams?"				
Total				

Your Score (0 – 100)

- < 50. If you have a low score that does not mean you will relapse, but you are at higher risk for relapse, and you should think about changing your recovery strategy.
- 50 – 75. If you have a medium score, that is normal in the early stages of recovery. Don't be hard on yourself. Recovery is a series of improvements. It is about progress not perfection.
- > 75. If you have a high score, congratulations. Continue to be mindful of recovery, because addiction is cunning and it can sneak up on you if you're not careful.

Reference

Melemis, S. M., Relapse Prevention and the Five Rules of Recovery. *Yale J Biol Med*, 2015. **88**(3): p. 325-32. PMC4553654.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4553654/>.

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN

Preventing relapse requires a commitment to recovery. It also requires a plan of action. Relapse is not an event, but a process. Before the physical act of relapse, there are changes in feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Cravings also play a role in relapse. By developing and following a written plan, you can halt the relapse process.

What is your drug of choice?

Write down at least three (3) reasons you are ready to stop drinking/using.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some feelings that may trigger a relapse?

- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Grief
- ☐ Jealousy
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Embarrassment
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☐ Joy
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

For each feeling you checked on the left, write down a healthy way to cope with the feeling.

What are some thoughts that may lead to relapse? (Examples: Thinking about the good times or thinking you are cured.) Be as specific as possible.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN: WARNING SIGNS & TRIGGERS

What are some behaviors that may lead to relapse? (Examples: Not attending meetings, not calling your sponsor, eating too much junk food, being in an unhealthy relationship.) Be as specific as possible.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Who are the people you are most likely to use with?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Write down the names of five (5) people you can call when tempted to use:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Where are the places you are mostly likely to use?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What other situations or events are triggers for you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN: CRAVINGS & 12-STEP MEETINGS

Cravings: Remember that cravings will pass. However, there are different techniques to help with intense cravings. You can talk about it with your sponsor or with a friend in recovery. Or you can distract yourself by journaling, watching a comedy, listening to loud music, running, doing a crossword puzzle, cleaning house, working on a project, etc.

Write down ten (10) ways you can cope with cravings.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

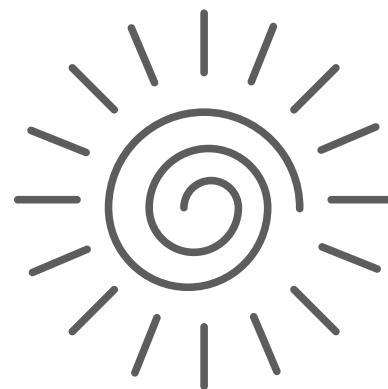
How many 12-step meetings will you attend each week?



Use the blank weekly schedule below to fill in meeting names, when they meet, and the places they meet.

[illegible]

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN: 12-STEP MEETINGS, SPONSORSHIP, & CONSEQUENCES OF RELAPSE/BENEFITS OF RECOVERY



How will you get to meetings?



—————→ How often will you call your sponsor? _____
How often will you meet with your sponsor? _____

List five (5) consequences of a relapse. (Examples: Failing a drug screen, calling in to work, missing an appointment, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List five (5) benefits of working a recovery program:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN: GOALS

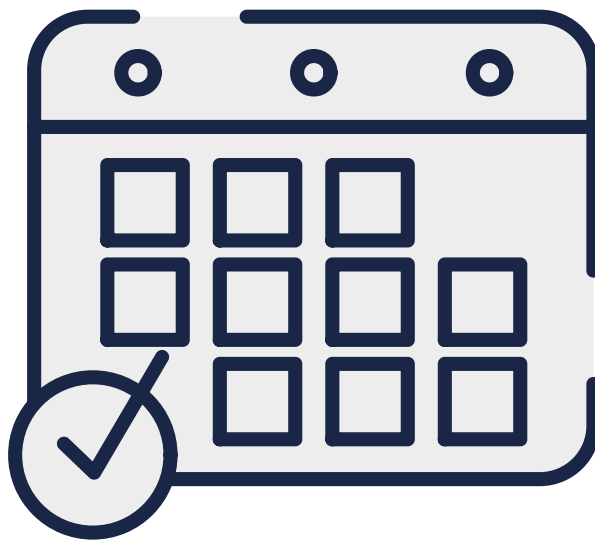
Write down five (5) short-term goals (1-12 months) that you can only achieve through sobriety.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Write down five (5) long-term goals (1-3 years) that you can only achieve through sobriety.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

REVIEW THIS PLAN ON A REGULAR BASIS AND UPDATE AS NEEDED!



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Checklist of Relapse Symptoms

I	Symptom
	Preoccupation: thinking a lot bout drinking/using.
	Irritability
	Impatience and restlessness
	Defensiveness
	Loneliness/isolation/avoidance
	Self-pity
	Dishonesty
	Neglecting recovery activities
	Resentment
	Anxiety/agitation
	Grandiosity/Intolerance
	Self-righteousness
	Criticizing others
	Boredom
	Depression
	Poor diet
	Poor sleep
	Compulsiveness (spending, gambling, working, shopping, etc.)

Risky Situations

Identify your top three Highly risky situations that you may face in the coming weeks that could cause you to feel like using.

# 1	Situation name:
Describe this situation:	
How likely is this situation to cause you to relapse?	
♣ Very high risk	♣ High risk
♣ Low risk	♣ Very low risk
Describe how you handled this in the past and how that increased the likelihood you would use.	
Describe how you could choose to handle it now to reduce the risk of using.	
Describe the thoughts you have about this situation that could lead to use.	
Describe other ways of thinking about this situation that would support staying	

clean and sober.

# 2	Situation name:		
Describe this situation:			
How likely is this situation to cause you to relapse?			
♣ Very high risk	♣ High risk	♣ Low risk	♣ Very low risk
Describe how you handled this in the past and how that <i>increased</i> the likelihood you would use.			
Describe how you could choose to handle it now to <i>reduce</i> the risk of using.			
Describe the thoughts you have about this situation that could lead to use.			
Describe other ways of thinking about this situation that would support staying clean and sober.			

#3	Situation name:		
Describe this situation:			
How likely is this situation to cause you to relapse?			
♣ Very high risk	♣ High risk	♣ Low risk	♣ Very low risk
Describe how you handled this in the past and how that increased the likelihood you would use.			

Describe how you could choose to handle it now to reduce the risk of using.
Describe the thoughts you have about this situation that could lead to use.
Describe other ways of thinking about this situation that would support staying clean and sober.

Recovery Sabotage Sign Identification

Relapse does not begin with the drink, line, joint, rock, etc. Relapse begins long before the actual use. As you read the list, some you will immediately identify with and some you may not. Others you may not understand.

Put a ✓ next to the Sabotage Signs that you believe you may encounter:

✓	Warning Signs
1	Thinking Flaws: "This isn't working. I can handle this now. Things are great now; I don't need as many (or any) meetings. "
2	Mood Swings: I may go from the "Pink Cloud," feeling good and good about my recovery to feeling sad or depressed either due to dwelling on all of the negatives from the past or due to the belief that recovery is not working
3	Actions Change: I cut back or stop my AA program; do not call my sponsor and do not work the steps. I still keep up a front of recovery but know inside that it is a false front.
4	Stress: due to the first three warning signs, I experience an increase in the amount of stress that causes you to feel out of control. This may be a very obvious situation or very small irritations that pile up.
5-a	Denial: I worry that the changes in my thoughts, feelings and behavior will lead to using; I feel afraid I won't be able to stay clean and sober but I do not want to face it.
5-b	Denial: I deny the worry. I am not aware that I shove it deep inside; tell myself I will be fine or cover it up. I'm still not good at doing feelings.
6	Defenses: I do not know how to deal with the fear-based denial so I put up my defenses. The fear and anger I feel when others point out that I am slipping backward just reinforces my defensiveness.
7	Never: I am convinced that I will never use again so I do not need to work a vigorous recovery program. I keep this belief secret.
8	Defocus: I find myself taking the other person's inventory. I keep my private judgments about the quality of other's use and or recoveries.
9	Hypersensitivity: I become afraid and angry when I think others want to criticize or confront me.
10	Distraction: I deliberately give the impression that I am a model of recovery or a leader in my therapy group. This convinces me I can control and so my self-defeating thinking continues. I avoid relationships that I cannot control. I do not want to reveal my real feelings and problems.
11	Bob and Weave: I create problems but blame others.
12	Isolation: I begin to stay by myself. I begin to suspect that I really cannot control others so

	they become unsafe.
13	Pity Party: I feel sorry for myself because I am alone and others do not understand. I usually focus on only the bad things in my life. I can no longer see the whole cloth of my life, only single threads and they are fraying!
14	Party's Over: the pity party did not work. I begin to show signs and symptoms of depression. I begin to feel numb, empty, down. Eating, sleeping and other habits may change. I can still cover it up by distracting myself.

What do these ✓ mean?

If you checked numbers 1 thru 4; old thoughts and feelings are returning.

If you checked numbers 5-a and 5-b and 6; old thinking/feeling lead to acts of denial.

If you checked numbers 7 thru 12; old defensive behaviors are needed to support the denial.

If you checked numbers 13 and 14; my thinking, feeling, defensive behaviors lead to growing recovery crisis. The only way I see to feel better is to drink, take a pill, a toke, a rock, a line . . .