

RELAPSE PREVENTION GUIDE

A Practical Handbook for Sustaining Recovery

1. Understanding Relapse

Relapse is not a single event. It is a process that occurs in stages. Recognizing these stages early can help you intervene before a full relapse happens.

Stages of Relapse

1. Emotional Relapse

You are not thinking about using, but your emotions and behaviors set the stage for relapse.

- Bottling up feelings
- Isolating
- Poor self-care
- Anxiety, irritability
- Not going to support meetings

2. Mental Relapse

There's a war inside your mind.

- Thinking about using
- Glamorizing old habits
- Cravings
- Lying
- Bargaining ("Just once...")

3. Physical Relapse

The act of using the substance or engaging in the addictive behavior.

2. Your Personal Warning Signs

Write the signs that tell you you're slipping:

Emotional warning signs

Behavioral warning signs

Thought-based warning signs

3. High-Risk Situations

Relapse often occurs in predictable situations. Understanding them helps you stay ahead.

Common High-Risk Situations

- Stressful days
- Loneliness or isolation
- Unresolved anger
- Celebrations or parties
- Being around certain people
- Relationship conflict
- Fatigue or sickness
- Boredom

- Access to money

Your personal high-risk situations:

4. Your Relapse Prevention Plan

Use this structured plan to stay grounded and protected.

A. Daily Recovery Actions

- Practice daily self-care
- Sleep at least 7–8 hours
- Eat nutritious meals
- Stay hydrated
- Use coping strategies
- Attend support meetings
- Stay connected with safe people

Today's daily commitment:

B. Emergency Coping Steps (When Craving Hits)

Use the **5-Minute Rule**: cravings pass like a wave.

1. **Pause** – Do not react or act on impulse.
2. **Breathe slowly** – Deep breathing lowers panic.
3. **Ground yourself** – Look around and name 5 things you see.

4. **Delay the urge for 5 minutes.**
 5. **Distract yourself** – Walk, journal, talk to someone.
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5. Coping Strategies That Work

Choose at least three for your daily plan.

Healthy Coping Tools

- Deep breathing
- Prayer or meditation
- Journaling
- 10–20 minute walks
- Exercise
- Listening to calm music
- Calling a trusted person
- Attending a support group
- Taking a warm shower
- Practicing gratitude
- Reading something uplifting
- Engaging in a hobby

Which ones work best for you?

6. Building a Support Network

Identify people you can reach out to during difficult moments.

Trusted friend: _____

Family member: _____

Sponsor/mentor: _____

Therapist/Counselor: _____

Helpline number: _____

7. Handling Setbacks

A setback is NOT a failure.

It is a signal to adjust your plan and continue your recovery journey.

When you slip:

1. **Be honest with yourself.**
2. **Talk to your support person.**
3. **Analyze what happened.**
4. **Identify what triggered the slip.**
5. **Update your prevention plan.**

My reflection on setbacks:

8. Preventing Future Relapse

Use these long-term strategies:

- Maintain a structured daily routine
- Avoid complacency

- Practice emotional awareness
 - Celebrate milestones
 - Keep your environment safe
 - Avoid people and places that trigger cravings
 - Strengthen your purpose and goals
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9. Relapse Recovery Script

Read this whenever you feel you're losing control:

**"I have come too far to give up. This craving will pass.
I am stronger than this moment.
My future is more important than a temporary feeling."**

10. Your Recovery Vision

Describe what your life will look like if you stay committed:

My vision:

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