

Relapse Prevention Workbook Planning for Sobriety

Very important note as you begin the process of addressing Relapse Prevention in your life ... the word that is so important is HONESTY, if you can not be honest about the past and future relapse prevention is something to only be hoped for.

Relapse refers to the process of returning to the use of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine or other drugs after a period of abstinence. Relapse is a possibility regardless of how long you have been clean. Part of your recovery plan should include learning about the relapse process and devising a plan to help prevent you from relapsing should early warning signs occur.

Unfortunately, a relapse happens long before you pick up the substance. Generally you build up to a relapse over a period of hours, days, weeks, or even months. Many who have reviewed their relapse experiences have been able to identify clues that preceded their substance abuse. Generally, these clues were present long before these individuals used cocaine or other drugs.

Relapse clues, or warning signs, relate to changes in your behavior, attitudes, feelings, thoughts, or a combination of these. This does not necessarily mean that changes that you experience are an indication that you may be in a relapse. It simply means that you should be on the alert when changes occur and examine whether these indicate that you are headed for a relapse. The following are examples of relapse clues that people in recovery have experienced before they relapse.

1. **Behavior Changes:** having an increasing number of episodes of arguing with others for no apparent reasons, attending fewer or no longer going to AA, NA, or other self-help meetings, stopping at a bar to socialize and drink soda, displaying increased stress symptoms such as smoking more cigarettes or eating more food than usual.

2. **Attitude Changes:** not caring about sobriety, not caring what happens, becoming too negative about life and how things are going.

3. **Thought Changes:** thinking drugs are deserved as a reward for being clean 6 months, thinking it wouldn't be harmful to substitute one drug for another (for example, giving up cocaine, but continuing to smoke marijuana, abstaining from alcohol but continuing to use uppers), thinking the drug problem was "cured" because no substances were used for a period of weeks or months.