

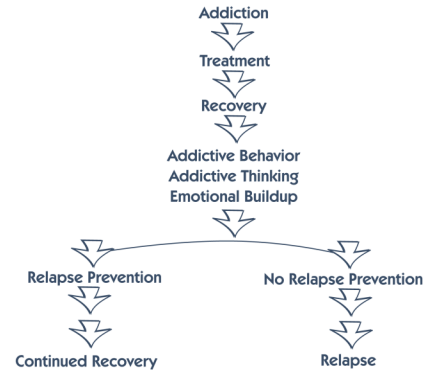
Anticipating and Preventing Relapse

Why Is Relapse Prevention Important?

Recovery is more than not using drugs and alcohol. The first step in treatment is stopping drug and alcohol use. The next step is not starting again. This is very important. The process for doing it is called *relapse prevention*.

What Is Relapse?

Relapse is going back to substance use and to all the behaviors and patterns that come with it. Often the behaviors and patterns return before the substance use. Learning to recognize the beginning of a relapse can help people in recovery stop the process before they start using again.



What Are Addictive Behaviors?

The things people do as part of abusing drugs or alcohol are called addictive behaviors. Often these are things that addicted people do to get drugs or alcohol, to cover up substance abuse, or as part of abusing. Lying, stealing, being unreliable, and acting compulsively are types of addictive behaviors. When these behaviors reappear, people in recovery should be alerted that relapse will soon follow if they do not intervene.

What are your addictive behaviors? _____

What Is Addictive Thinking?

Addictive thinking means having thoughts that make substance use seem OK. (In 12-Step programs this is known as “stinking thinking.”) Some examples follow:

- I can handle just one drink.
- If they think I’m using, I might as well.
- I have worked hard. I need a break.

How have you tried to find excuses to use substances? _____

What Is Emotional Buildup?

Feelings that don’t seem to go away and just keep getting stronger cause emotional buildup. Sometimes the feelings seem unbearable. Some feelings that can build are boredom, anxiety, sexual frustration, irritability, and depression.

Have you experienced a buildup of any of these emotions? _____

The important step is to *take action* as soon as you recognize the danger signs.

Which actions might help you prevent relapse?

- Going to a 12-Step or outside
- Mutual-help support meeting