

Relapse Management Tools

1. Recognizing early signs of relapse

Early warning signs are changes in your behavior that may indicate a possible relapse. These early warning signs are not usually changes in symptoms (such as hearing voices or having hallucinations). Instead, they are less obvious changes, like having trouble sleeping. Every person will have early warning signs that are individual to them, however, it is important to know that usually, a person is likely to have the same early warning signs before every relapse. By knowing what the signs are for you, you can take measures early to minimize, even possibly avoid a relapse.

Use the following checklist to become aware of feelings or behaviors you typically have before experiencing a relapse. Share this with your recovery team.

- I have difficulty sleeping
- I spend more time in bed
- I have difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly
- I feel cranky or irritable
- I feel more tired
- I feel nervous or anxious
- I tend to isolate myself from other people
- I stop doing activities (going to class, work, seeing friends)
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

2. Persistent symptoms

Sometimes, as a relapse progresses, your usual or persistent symptoms – like hearing voices, feelings of paranoia or visual hallucinations – may become more of a problem. Sometimes the intensity of these symptoms increase and they last longer. At the onset of relapse, it's important to be aware of your persistent symptoms and to talk to your recovery team about them as soon as possible. Together, you can find a solution that can make you feel better. **Ask yourself these questions:**

What persistent symptoms do you have more often than usual when you are experiencing a relapse?

Which persistent symptoms get stronger and more difficult to ignore when you are experiencing a relapse?

What persistent symptoms do you have that last longer than usual when you relapse?

Relapse Management Tools Worksheet

continued

3. Identifying causes of stress

Stress is a common cause of relapse. Bad stress, like an illness or losing a family member, can be stressful. But it is important to know that even good stress – like getting a new job or starting a new relationship – can also be causes of tension. Having awareness of things that cause you stress will help you create strategies to manage the stress and can possibly help you avoid a relapse.

My previous relapses have been connected to the following stresses:

Good Stresses

- Moving to a new apartment/house
- Starting a new job
- Starting a new relationship
- Making a new friend
- Being invited to a party
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____
- I don't think my relapses are linked to good stresses

Bad Stresses

- I had money problems
- I had to move
- Someone close to me became ill/died
- I was fired from a job
- I had a fight with a friend
- I am bored during the day
- Other _____
- Other _____
- I don't think my relapses are linked to bad stresses

4. Relapse and medication

Many times, relapses are associated with changes in medication such as stopping taking medication or not taking the medicine consistently. An important relapse prevention strategy is to “take your medicine the right way, every day.” If you are experiencing side effects, or having difficulty remembering to take your medication – or if there is another reason why you may have decided to stop – talk to your doctor or recovery team. They can help you develop solutions that work well for you.

Has stopping your medication, or not taking it consistently ever been a reason for a past relapse?

- Yes No

What were some of the reasons you decided to stop taking your medication?

- I was having too many side effects
- I did not believe I needed the medication any longer
- I was using drugs or alcohol
- I felt pressured into taking the medication in the first place
- I did not believe the medication was helping me
- I could not remember to take medication
- Other _____

