

**THE MATRIX MODEL FOR
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SETTINGS**



Relapse Prevention Group Handouts

**INTENSIVE ALCOHOL & DRUG
TREATMENT PROGRAM**

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Relapse Prevention Group Handouts

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Relapse Prevention Group Handouts

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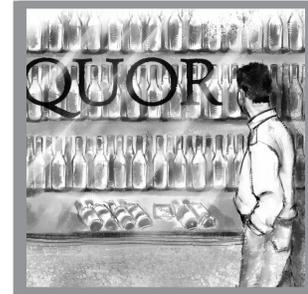
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Alcohol, Marijuana, and Prescription Medicines

Many recovering offenders have trouble giving up *all* substances when they enter treatment. Why? Here are some of the reasons:

1. Triggers for alcohol use are everywhere. It is sometimes hard to do anything social without facing people who are drinking.

Do you have friends who get together without drinking? If so, write their names here.

2. Many people use alcohol or marijuana in response to internal or emotional triggers. They seem to ease depression and anxiety. But it's a short term "solution." While the initial effects may be mood elevating, continued use often leads to more anxiety and depression.

Does feeling a certain way make you want to have a drink or use pot? Explain.

3. Alcohol or marijuana use may not be viewed as serious problems compared to other drug problems. But when a person tries to stop and finds it very hard, it may be time to reevaluate the level of the problem.

Have you been able to stop drinking or using pot since you entered treatment? Please explain.

ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES | *continued*

4. Alcohol and marijuana affect the rational, thinking part of the brain. It is hard to think reasonably about a drug that undermines clear thinking.

Have you ever been sober at a party and watched people drink or get high and “get stupid”? If so, describe the experience.

5. Because alcohol and marijuana dull the rational brain, they lower inhibitions. This often results in people becoming more sexually active, less self-conscious, and more social.

Do you depend on alcohol or marijuana for sexual or social reasons? Explain.

6. Many of us grow up using alcohol to mark special occasions. It is hard to learn how to celebrate those times without drinking.

What special occasions did your family or friends celebrate with alcohol?

How do you celebrate now?

ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES | *continued*

7. In many families and social groups, drinking is a sign of strength, of “fitting in,” or of being sophisticated. Our culture encourages drinking.

Are there some social settings where you feel you don’t “fit in” without drinking? Explain.

8. The habit of drinking gets to be part of certain activities. It seems difficult, at first, to eat certain foods, go to sporting events, or relax without a beer or other drink.

What activities seem to go with drinking for you?

9. Some people feel having a prescription for a medicine puts it in a category different from drugs of abuse. This may be so—up to a point. For example, some people need medications for pain, anxiety, sleeplessness, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These can be used appropriately under close physician supervision, but they can also be abused.

Do you get the same prescription from more than one physician?

Yes ____ No ____ Explain:

ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES | *continued*

Have you changed the amount of medication taken without your physician's direction?

Yes ____ **No** ____ **Explain.**

Does taking prescription medications ever lead to taking drugs of abuse or drinking alcohol?

Yes ____ **No** ____ **Explain.**

• • •

It is important to realize that continuing to use alcohol and marijuana makes working a healthy recovery program more difficult. Using prescription medications in ways that have not been prescribed can also do this.



Triggers for alcohol use are everywhere. It is sometimes hard to do anything social without facing people who are drinking.



Alcohol and Criminal Behavior

Use of alcohol can be a major trigger for criminal behaviors.

Many serious crimes are committed while the offender is intoxicated from alcohol. And it impacts other areas of life, too: in addition to DUIs, alcohol is significantly related to car accidents and injuries, domestic violence, other abuse and violence, thefts, burglaries, and crimes of public order.

Have you ever been charged with a criminal offense while under the influence of alcohol? Explain.

Have you ever committed an offense while under the influence of alcohol, but you weren't caught and charged? Explain.

How often was your drinking influenced by people involved in criminal behavior?

ALCOHOL AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR | *continued*

How did your use of alcohol contribute to your arrest and involvement with the criminal justice system?

What will you do differently when you encounter a trigger related to alcohol or to your criminal behavior?

• • •

Understanding the triggers for your alcohol use and the resulting criminal behaviors may help you realize that these activities are related. Alcohol dulls the brain so you don't think logically or have good judgment. Drinking can lead you back to acting on your criminal behaviors.



Boredom

Often, recovering offenders who've given up substance use and their criminal lifestyle say life feels boring.

Some of the reasons for this feeling might be:

1. A structured, routine life feels different from an actively using or criminal lifestyle.
2. Brain chemical changes during recovery can make people feel flat (or bored).
3. Alcohol and other drug users often have huge emotional swings (high to low and back to high). Normal emotions can feel flat by comparison. These mood swings can also affect criminal thinking.

Recovering offenders with longer sobriety rarely complain of continual boredom, so these feelings do change. Meanwhile, there are some ways to help reduce this feeling. Check those that might work for you.

- _____ 1. Review your recreational activity list. Have you started doing things that you enjoyed before using alcohol and other drugs? Have you begun new activities that interest you?
- _____ 2. Can you plan something to look forward to? How long has it been since you've done something fun that didn't involve alcohol or other drugs?
- _____ 3. Talk about this feeling with your significant other or close friend. Does he or she feel bored too? What suggestions might that person have?
- _____ 4. Keep working on your daily scheduling. It helps you see where you can schedule in more interesting experiences, and it helps you keep your higher, "thinking brain" in control of your behaviors.
- _____ 5. Do something challenging that will further your personal growth. Sometimes boredom results from not challenging yourself enough in your daily living.

BOREDOM | *continued*

One common trigger is thinking about the excitement of planning and committing a crime. A non-criminal lifestyle may seem boring at first. Is (or was) this an issue for you? Explain.

...

*It is important to try new ways of fighting the bored feeling.
Untreated, it can be a trigger and move you toward relapse.*





What Works for Me—and What Doesn't?

Many recovering offenders have been in treatment before, maybe several times, either while incarcerated or as a condition of probation or parole supervision.

If this is true for you, maybe you were more successful in some treatment settings than others. Think back to those times. You probably noticed that when you did certain things that were beneficial to your recovery, you were less drawn to criminal activity.

1. How many times were you in treatment, and where?

2. Were you successful in prior treatments? What do you think worked for you?

3. What do you think was *not* helpful?

WHAT WORKS FOR ME—AND WHAT DOESN'T? | *continued*

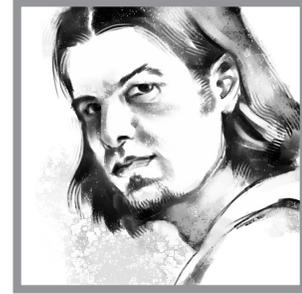
4. What would be helpful to you in this treatment program, based on your past experiences?

5. What do you think were your biggest successes while in treatment?

6. What is the longest time you've been able to stay substance free and avoid criminal activity?

• • •

*What worked for you in the past may work again now.
Use these experiences to build on your current success!*



Avoiding Relapse Drift

How It Happens

Relapse to substance use and criminal thinking does not suddenly occur. It does not happen without warning, and it does not happen quickly.

The gradual movement toward relapse, however, can be so subtle and so easily explained away or denied that often a relapse feels like it happened suddenly. This slow movement away from sobriety can be compared to a ship gradually drifting away from where it was moored (anchored). The drifting movement can be so slow you don't even notice it.

Interrupting the Process

During recovery, each person does specific things that work to keep him or her sober. These "mooring lines" need to be clearly stated and listed in a very specific way so they are understandable and measurable. These are the ropes that hold your recovery in place and prevent the relapse drift from happening without being noticed.

Maintaining Recovery

Use the Mooring Lines Recovery Chart (handout 6) to list and track the things that are holding your recovery in place. Follow these guidelines when filling out the form:

1. Identify four or five *specific, measurable* things that are now helping you stay sober (for example, working out for twenty minutes, three times per week).
2. Include items such as exercise, therapist and group appointments, scheduling, spiritually based or community recovery meetings, and eating patterns.
3. Do not list attitudes. They are not as easy to measure as behaviors.
4. Note specific people or places that are known triggers and need to be avoided during recovery.

The checklist should be completed regularly (probably weekly). When two or more items cannot be checked, it means relapse drift is happening. Sometimes things loosen your mooring lines and support systems. A change in your schedule, illnesses, and holidays sometimes cannot be controlled. The mooring lines disappear. Many people relapse during these times. Use the chart to recognize when you are more likely to relapse and decide what to do to keep this from happening.

• • •

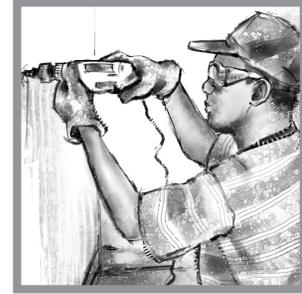
Mooring Lines Recovery Chart

In becoming sober and giving up criminal thinking and activity, you’ve learned to adopt certain new behaviors—behaviors that work to keep you sober and promote a prosocial lifestyle.

It is too easy to accidentally drop one or more of these “mooring lines” and allow your recovery to drift toward relapse. Charting your new behaviors, and occasionally checking to make sure the lines are secure, can be very useful.

Use the chart below to list those activities that are very important to your continuing recovery. List any specific people or things you need to avoid. Then look back at your list regularly and check those items you are continuing to follow to stay anchored in your recovery.

Mooring Line Behaviors	Date (✓)				
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
I Am Avoiding	Date (✓)				
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					



Work and Recovery

Check which of the following statements describe your situation:

- _____ 1. I am employed in a satisfying job that is supportive of my recovery.
- _____ 2. I am working in an unsatisfactory job and thinking of making a change.
- _____ 3. I am working in a situation in which recovery will be difficult.
- _____ 4. My work schedule has to be changed to make treatment work.
- _____ 5. I am unemployed and need to find a job.
- _____ 6. I am self-employed, which gives me the freedom to come and go as I want.
- _____ 7. I am retired.
- _____ 8. I'm having trouble finding a job because of my criminal background.

Recovering offenders in many of the above situations have to deal with certain problems that can make treatment more difficult. Some of the problems are outlined below; the numbers correspond to the list above.

1. This is the ideal situation.
2. It is a generally accepted fact that during recovery, major changes (in jobs, relationships, and other areas) should be delayed for six months to one year whenever possible. There are many reasons for this:
 - a. People in recovery go through large changes psychologically and physically and sometimes change their views on personal situations.
 - b. Any change is stressful, particularly life changes. Major changes should be avoided as much as possible during early recovery.
3. Some jobs lend themselves to recovery more easily than others. Jobs that *don't* mix well with outpatient treatment include the following:
 - a. Situations in which it is necessary to be with other people who are drinking or using
 - b. Jobs that make large sums of cash available at unpredictable times.
4. Some jobs require long or unusual hours. Often, the very nature of the schedule has contributed to the substance use problem in the first place. The first task, if

WORK AND RECOVERY | *continued*

you have such a job, is to work with your therapist (and your boss or someone else at your job) to make your schedule work for your recovery. Without this initial intervention, your recovery may be at risk. Recovery is tough: it must be your number one priority while you are in treatment.

5. When people are out of work, treatment becomes more difficult:
 - a. Looking for work is often a necessary priority.
 - b. Without blocks of time spent at work, there is so much free time that it is difficult to fill it and provide the structure that make treatment effective.
 - c. Money may be scarce, making factors like transportation and child care more of a problem.

6. Establishing accountability may be necessary.
 - a. A therapist, sponsor, or family member may help.
 - b. It may be necessary to work harder at scheduling.

7. Blocks of downtime can be triggering.
 - a. Finding meaning and purpose is important.
 - b. Volunteering is an option.
 - c. It may be necessary to work harder at scheduling, to start hobbies, or to go to more meetings.

8. If you're being turned down for jobs because of your criminal record, you may feel discouraged or angry. Use your support system at this time.

Does your work situation present any challenges to your recovery? ___ Yes ___ No If so, what changes can you make?

• • •



Work and Criminal Behavior

Many recovering offenders don't have much work experience: they preferred the criminal lifestyle to working a traditional job.

And their criminal history might have made it hard to find a job, too. To move out of a criminal lifestyle, you have to change how you think! You can build on the skills you have. You can find satisfying work as part of a stable, prosocial, substance-free lifestyle. But first, let's identify your past ideas about employment and start from there.

Which of the items below reflect attitudes or beliefs you've had about work and traditional employment? Check all that apply.

- Why should I work a job making minimum wage when I can sell drugs and make more money?
- All of my friends took things or sold drugs, so I did too.
- Stealing and selling things was easy money.
- I'd like to work, but I don't have transportation.
- I liked the rush of doing something and getting away with it.
- Normal work is boring.
- I don't have child care.
- I've never been able to hold down a regular job.
- People who work regular jobs are boring.
- My parents worked hard and never had anything. Why should I work like that when I can take the easy way out?
- If you want to have things in life, you have to take what you want.
- Work won't get me what I want.
- I don't think I can work a normal job.

WORK AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR | *continued*

_____ I really want to work, but I'm not sure I can.

_____ Other (explain):

How has your thinking about work changed since you've been in treatment?

Which of those past thoughts about work still come to your mind sometimes?

In what situations are they most likely to come to mind?

Identify some things you like to do, then think about the related job options. For example, if you like to build things, you might enjoy a job in construction. If you like to cook and serve food, restaurant work might be a good choice. Finding pleasure in working hard and paying bills may be new to you, but keep an open mind. Developing these traits can lead to greater self-esteem, pride, and accomplishment. And that leads to a sense of safety, pro-social friendships, and a rewarding lifestyle.

• • •



Why Do I Think This Way?

“Errors in thinking” are our automatic ways of thinking that influence how we feel and act. Some thinking errors can lead to continued criminal behaviors.

Check the thinking errors you have had in the past.

- _____ I’m a victim.
- _____ I’m better than everybody else.
- _____ I need to have power and control.
- _____ I’m not like everybody else.
- _____ I can’t change.
- _____ I’m not accountable for anything.
- _____ Things are either black or white. Nothing is in between.
- _____ I made a mistake therefore I am a loser.
- _____ I’m boring or stupid.
- _____ I’m entitled to whatever I want.
- _____ I need to conceal who I really am.
- _____ Cheating can get me ahead quicker.
- _____ Others:

You can learn to interrupt and change these thoughts by:

- Stopping and taking a moment to consider your feelings and thoughts and the consequences of your actions.

WHY DO I THINK THIS WAY? | *continued*

- Being mindful about your feelings and physical sensations; learning to be open about your feelings.
- Reflecting and thinking about your actions. Ask yourself:
 - What am I doing?
 - What are the consequences of my actions if I continue to think this way?
 - What is important to me?
 - What are my options and alternatives to these actions?

• • •

Challenge your thoughts and change your thinking.





Guilt and Shame

Guilt is feeling bad about what you have done.

“I am sorry I spent so much time using/drinking, breaking the law, and not taking care of my family.”

• • •

Shame is feeling bad about who you are.

“I am hopeless and worthless.”

Guilt

What are some things you have done in the past that you feel guilty about? Think about both substance use and criminal behavior.

Feeling guilty is a healthy reaction. It often means you have done something that doesn't agree with your values and morals. It is not unusual for people to get into situations where they do things they feel guilty about. What is important is making peace with yourself. Sometimes that means making up for things you've said and done (making amends). Sometimes it means realizing you are feeling guilty unnecessarily.

Remember:

1. It's all right to make mistakes.
2. It's all right to say, “I don't know,” “I don't understand,” or “I'll get back to you later on that.”
3. If you are acting responsibly, you might not feel guilty and may not need to explain yourself.

What can you do to decrease your guilt?

GUILT AND SHAME | *continued*

Shame

Check the statements that apply to you:

- _____ I feel ashamed of using substances and/or my past criminal behavior.
- _____ I feel weak because I couldn't or can't stop drinking or using.
- _____ I feel embarrassed and ashamed because of things I did while using.
- _____ I feel like I am a bad person because I got involved with alcohol and/or other drugs in the first place.

• • •

No one knows all the reasons some people can stop using once they decide to and other people cannot. Research shows some of the reasons have to do with family histories, genes, and individual physical differences in people. They do not have to do with some people being bad, stupid, or weak. Using substances excessively or inappropriately affects people differently. Thinking errors that lead to criminal activity can be changed, just as decisions about substance use can be changed.

What we do know is that it is difficult and often impossible to recover by just:

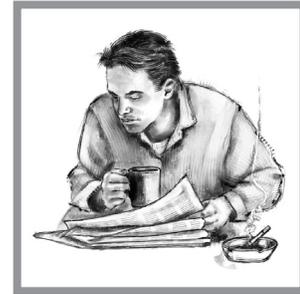
1. Trying to use only willpower
2. Trying to be strong
3. Trying to be good

It takes three main things to make recovery work:

1. Being smart
2. Working hard
3. Recognizing the thoughts that have caused you problems in the past.

• • •

*Most who are successful at recovery will tell you, "It was the hardest thing I ever did."
No one can do it for you, and it will not just happen to you. But it will
almost certainly be the best thing you ever did for yourself.*



Staying Busy

Learning to schedule and to provide a structure of activities to support your recovery and prosocial lifestyle is an important first step in outpatient treatment. Staying busy doing things is important for several reasons:

1. Often, relapses and criminal impulses begin in the mind of a person who has nothing to do and nowhere to go. The addicted brain triggers the mind to begin thinking about past using or law-breaking. These thoughts can start the craving process.

Has free time ever been a trigger for you? Explain.

How could you respond to prevent relapse or criminal impulses if the trigger occurred again?

2. When alcohol and other drug use gets severe enough, the user will often begin to isolate. Being around other people may feel uncomfortable and annoying. Being alone results in fewer hassles. When people are thinking about criminal behavior, they may also isolate so others won't recognize the pattern of thinking and action.

Did you isolate yourself when you used or thought about criminal activity? Explain.

Does being alone now remind you of that experience? Explain.

STAYING BUSY | *continued*

3. Being involved with other people and doing things keep life more interesting. Living a “substance-free” noncriminal lifestyle can sometimes feel pretty tame. You begin to think being sober is boring, and using is exciting and desirable. People have to work at finding ways to make sobriety fun.

What have you done lately to have fun?

4. When people are involved in a using lifestyle, many of the healthy things they used to do and people they used to do them with get left behind. Beginning to reconnect or to build a life around substance-free activities and pro-social people is critical to a successful recovery.

How have you reconnected or built new activities and people into your life?

• • •



Beginning to build a life around substance-free activities and prosocial people is critical to a successful recovery.



What's Important to Me

What's important to you?

Think back especially to your life *before* your substance use and criminal lifestyle changed your priorities. What did you value, spend time on, and look forward to? You might think of family, friends, work, sports, and hobbies. These are some of the things that motivate us—things we think about often.



Inside this picture of a head, write down some of the things that are important to you.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME | *continued*

Of the things you listed, what has your substance use damaged or taken away from you?

Of the things you listed, what has your criminal behavior damaged or taken away from you?

Of the things you listed, what do you want back in your life?

What progress are you making getting these back?

What more do you need to do?

Remember, you can change your life. It all starts with sobriety.

Motivation for Recovery

Ask any offenders starting recovery *why* they want to stop substance use and criminal behavior right now, and you will get many different answers:

“I was arrested, and it’s either this or jail.”

...

“My wife says if I don’t stop, we are finished.”

...

“Last time I used, I thought I was going to die; I know I will if I use again.”

...

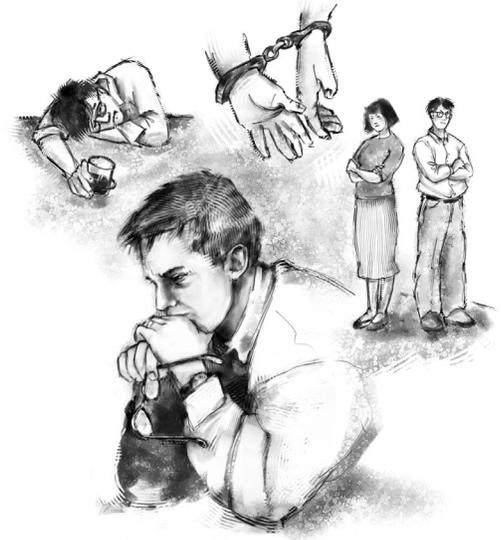
“They are going to take my children from me unless I stop.”

...

“My probation/parole officer said I have to come here or go to jail.”

...

“I’ve been drinking for twenty years now; it’s time to change.”



Which of the people quoted above are most likely to be successful in recovery? It seems logical to think that people who want to change for themselves, and not because someone else wants them to, are more likely to do well in treatment. However, that may not be true. Research shows that the reasons people stop using have little bearing on whether they will be able to successfully maintain a lifestyle free of substances and criminal activity.

What does make a difference is whether they can stay free of alcohol and other drugs long enough to appreciate the benefits of a different lifestyle. Over time, most people’s lives start to improve in recovery. When debts are not overwhelming, when relationships are rewarding, when work is going well, and when health is good, the recovering person *wants* to stay substance-free.

**Fear may get people into treatment,
but fear alone is not enough to keep them in recovery.**

MOTIVATION FOR RECOVERY | *continued*

1. List some of the specific reasons you first entered treatment (medical problems, family pressure, job problems, depression, and so on).

2. List some of the specific reasons you are continuing to work on the recovery process today.

3. Do you feel your original reasons for stopping substance use and criminal activity are the same as they are today? Explain.

• • •



Commitment

Making a commitment means being accountable.

And that can be a struggle for those of us with thinking errors, substance use problems, and maybe even experience with incarceration. But making a commitment can be a powerful act. In recovery, we need a commitment to the process that allows change to occur.

Have you ever fully committed to anything in your life? If so, what?

If so, how successful are you/were you in your commitment?

What are some other examples of commitment in your life, either now or in the past?

COMMITMENT | *continued*

Do any of the statements listed below reflect your current level of commitment to treatment? Check any that apply.

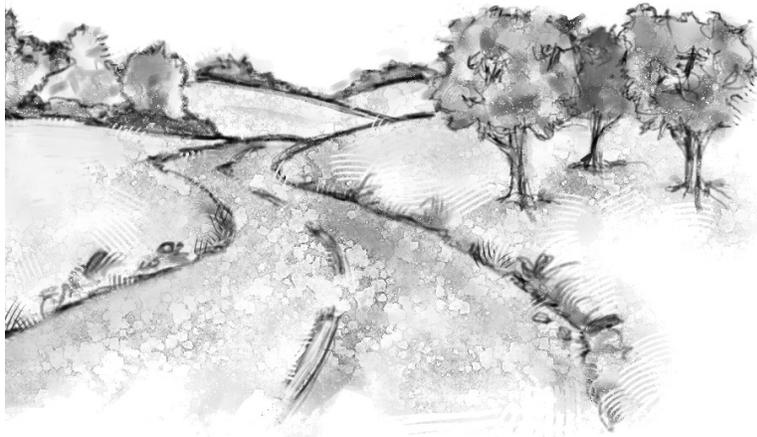
- _____ 1. I will see if I can get to group on time.
- _____ 2. I will give treatment a try and see what happens.
- _____ 3. I will do my best to get to treatment.
- _____ 4. I will do whatever it takes to get to treatment and actively participate.
- _____ 5. Other: _____

Do you think you need to change your commitment to treatment?

Yes _____ No _____

If so, describe your new commitment:

...





Truthfulness

During Addiction

Not being truthful is almost always part of addiction and criminal behavior. It may be very hard to meet the demands of daily living (in relationships, in families, in jobs, and so on) and also use substances regularly. And criminal behavior also makes it impossible to be truthful. As the substance use disorder progresses, so does the time spent getting the substance, using, and covering up for it. It gets harder and harder to keep everything going smoothly, and people with substance use disorders often find themselves doing and saying whatever is necessary to avoid problems. Truthfulness is not always a consideration.

In what ways were you less than truthful when you were using substances and involved in a criminal lifestyle?

During Recovery

Being honest with yourself and with others during the recovery process is critically important. Sometimes being truthful is very difficult:

- You may not seem to be a “nice” person if you tell people what you’ve done.
- Your therapist or group members may be unhappy with your behavior.
- You may be embarrassed.
- Other people’s feelings may be hurt.

Trying to be in recovery without being truthful can make you feel crazy. It can make everything you are doing seem like a waste of time.

Has truthfulness been difficult for you in recovery? Explain.

TRUTHFULNESS | *continued*

Being partly honest is not being truthful. Do you ever

- Decide to let someone believe a partial truth?
- Tell people what they want to hear?
- Tell people what you wish were true?
- Tell less than the whole truth?

Lying and deceit are part of living a life built around criminal behaviors.

Have you ever told your family, friends, or even yourself that you would never commit another crime, and yet you did? (Give an example.)

Have you ever told others what they wanted to hear and not the whole truth? (Give an example.)

Have you ever omitted the truth or distorted it to make it work for you? (Give an example.)





Total Abstinence

Have you ever found yourself saying any of the following?

“Having one beer (or glass of wine) is not really drinking.”

“I am just going to take this one drug one time. No one will ever notice.”

“I only drink when I choose to—my drinking is not out of control.”

“I don’t really care about alcohol. I only drink to be sociable.”

“My problem is my drug use. Alcohol (or pot) is not really a problem for me.”

If you entered this treatment program to stop using one specific drug, you may have wondered why you were asked to sign an agreement stating your willingness to also stop using other substances too. There are many reasons total abstinence is a necessary goal for recovering people. Here are a few of them:

- Follow-up studies show that stimulant users are eight times more likely to relapse to stimulants if they continue using alcohol and three times more likely to relapse if they use marijuana. This applies to even moderate use of alcohol. You can greatly reduce your chances of relapsing by maintaining total abstinence.
- Places and people associated with drinking are often the very same places and people that are triggers for drug use.
- When you’re learning to handle problems without resorting to alcohol or other drug use, the learning process as you develop new coping skills may initially feel uncomfortable. But using substances to ease this discomfort may:
 1. Block your chance to practice coping without running away.
 2. Put you at risk for becoming addicted to alcohol or secondary drugs.
 3. Set back the healing of your brain.
- As one patient said, “When I invite one friend over (alcohol), they all want to come to the party.”

• • •

Remember: You are committing to be free of alcohol and other drugs. If it’s more difficult than you expected, maybe you are more addicted than you thought.



Manipulation and Recovery

Those who use substances and are involved in the criminal justice system are typically very skilled at manipulating others.

Manipulation can become a “survival skill.” Even in recovery, some of us may reflexively use those skills to control people and situations, even when it’s not necessary to do so. Let’s look at some of those old manipulative habits and how we can start breaking them.

Which of the following have you used to manipulate those around you? Check all that apply to you.

- Shifting blame when things get uncomfortable
- Using anger to control others
- Making others feel intimidated
- Making others confused so you can cloud the issues at hand
- Deliberately embarrassing others to get the focus off you
- Claiming to not pay attention so you can get someone off track
- Refusing to do something when asked
- Flexing your muscles so others can see how strong you are
- Threatening others
- Staring at people to intimidate them
- Getting others into trouble to avoid getting into trouble yourself
- Saying whatever people want to hear
- Blackmailing someone to get what you want
- Refusing to communicate at all
- Overstating something about yourself, trying to make others see you differently than you really are

MANIPULATION AND RECOVERY | *continued*

Why did you feel you had to resort to manipulation?

If you continue to manipulate others, they won't trust you and they'll avoid relationships with you. Manipulation is a way to avoid responsibility and accountability. To have a life that is substance free and pro-social, you have to be accountable for your actions. Part of recovery is recognizing when you're trying to manipulate others. Then we can learn to respond in more honest and constructive ways.

...





Sex and Recovery

Sexual activities can be divided into two categories:

Intimate sex involves a significant other. The sex is a part of the relationship. Sometimes the sexual feelings are warm and mellow, sometimes they are wild and passionate, but they result from and add to the feelings each partner has for the other.

Impulsive sex can become a compulsive behavior. It can be used and abused in the same way substances are used and abused. It is possible to become addicted to impulsive sex. In this type of sexual activity the other partner is usually irrelevant. The partner is merely a vehicle for the resulting high. There is often little, if any, relationship involvement. This type of sexual behavior can become damaging to all parties involved. Sometimes there is not another person involved at all. For many people Internet sex is an addiction in and of itself and is often linked to alcohol or other drug use.

1. Are you familiar with these two kinds of sex? Explain.

2. How is (or was) impulsive sex linked to your substance use or criminal activity?

3. Have you ever had a healthy, intimate sexual relationship? Explain.

• • •

Impulsive sex is typically not part of a healthy recovering lifestyle. It can be the first step in the relapse process. Like secondary alcohol or other drug use, impulsive sex can trigger a relapse and result in the continued use of substances.



The Rush of Risky Behaviors

For many substance-using offenders, criminal activity isn't just a way to get valuables or money. It also provides the gratification, rush, and excitement of taking a risk and getting away with something.

List the crimes you've been convicted of:

List the crimes you got away with:

What were your emotions while you committed those crimes? And afterward?

Just as you have triggers for substance use, there are feelings that can also be triggers for criminal behaviors. When a person commits a crime and gets a rush, the brain is responding as it would to alcohol or another drug: it gives an intense feeling of reward. It's a similar feeling to a drug rush, but in the end, it's a false reward. That's why avoiding criminal behavior triggers is just as important as avoiding substance-use triggers.

What is your plan to avoid these triggers?

...



Relapse Prevention

Why Is Relapse Prevention Important?

Recovery is more than not using substances.

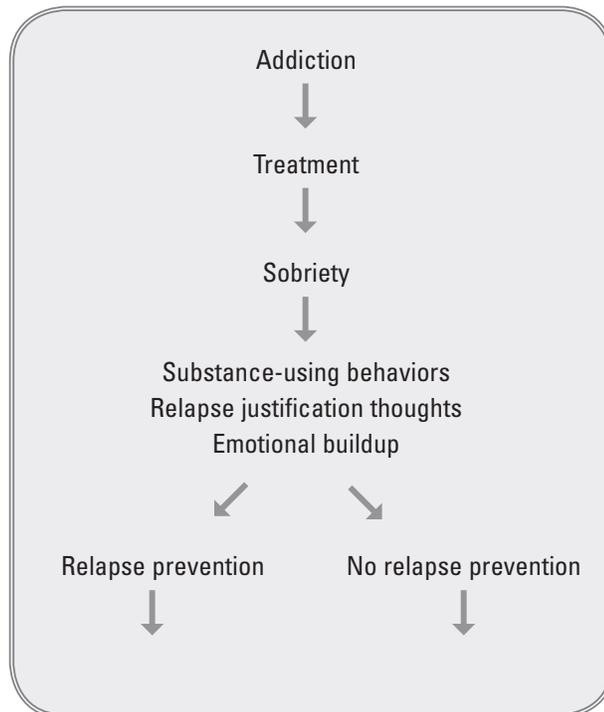
The first major step in treatment is stopping alcohol and other drug use.

The next step is not starting again. This is very important, and the process for doing this step is called relapse prevention. A significant goal of treatment in the Matrix Model is learning relapse prevention skills.

What Is Relapse?

Relapse is going back to alcohol or other drug use and to all the behaviors and patterns that go with that. **Often the behaviors and patterns return before the actual substance use.** Learning to recognize the beginning of a relapse can help the recovering person stop the process before actual use begins.

The choice is explained in the chart on the right.



What Are Substance Using Behaviors?

The things people do as part of alcohol or other drug use are often called using behaviors. Often, these are things the actively using person does to get alcohol or other drugs, to cover up drinking or using, or as part of the use. Lying, stealing, being unreliable, and acting compulsively are some of the types of using behaviors. Describe what your using behaviors were:

RELAPSE PREVENTION | *continued*

What Are Some Relapse Justification Thoughts to Be Aware of During the Recovery Process?

In Twelve Step and other community support programs, these kinds of thoughts are sometimes called “stinking thinking.” They are thoughts that make using or drinking seem okay. These thoughts trick your brain into believing alcohol or other drug use is all right. Some examples are “I can handle just one drink,” “If they think I’m using, I might as well use,” or “I have worked hard. I need a break.” What else might your addicted brain say to convince you using or drinking is all right?

What Is Emotional Buildup?

Feelings that don’t seem to go away and just keep getting stronger cause emotional buildup: for example, boredom, anxiety, frustration, irritability, anger, guilt, and depression. Are any of these familiar to you now, or were they in the past? How were they tied in to your using or to a relapse? Explain.

The important thing is to *take action* as soon as you recognize the danger signs. Check the following actions that might work for you:

- _____ Calling a therapist
- _____ Calling a sober friend in recovery
- _____ Going to a Twelve Step or other recovery support meeting
- _____ Beginning to exercise
- _____ Having sober fun
- _____ Talking to your spouse or other supportive, sober family member
- _____ Scheduling your time
- _____ Other _____



Trust

1. Have alcohol or other drugs affected the trust between you and people you care about? Explain.

2. Has your criminal activity affected the trust between you and the people you care about? Explain.

3. Does someone's mistrust ever make you feel like using? ("If you are going to treat me like I'm using, I might as well use.") Explain.

Actively using, addicted people often have trouble keeping open, honest, relationships—even with people important to them. Things are said and done that destroy the trust and damage relationships. The alcohol or other drug use can become as important or more important to the user than other people.

When the use stops, the trust usually does not return right away. One or both people may want the trust back, but trust is a feeling, and people cannot make feelings happen. It takes time for feelings to change. To trust means to feel certain you can rely on someone or something. People cannot be certain just because they want to be. Only time and continued sobriety can make the difference.

• • •

Recovery is a long process. Learning to trust again is part of that process. It may be one of the last changes to occur.

TRUST | *continued*

4. How do you deal with suspicions others have about your substance use and criminal lifestyle?

5. How do you feel when you are not trusted?

6. What can you do to help the process of reestablishing trust with people who are important to you?





Be Smart, Not Strong

“I can be around alcohol or other drugs. I am certain I don’t want to use, and once I make up my mind, I’m very strong.”

...

“It’s all right to steal just this once. I deserve it.”

...

“I have been doing well, and I think it’s time to test myself and see if I can be around friends who are using. It’s just a matter of willpower.”

...

“I can use, and it won’t make me think about criminal activity.”

...

“I think I can have a drink and not use drugs. I never had a problem with alcohol anyway.”

Staying free of alcohol and other drugs takes more than just strength or will power. People who maintain abstinence do it by being smart. They know the key is to keep far away from relapse situations. The closer you get to substances, the more likely a relapse becomes. If alcohol or other drugs appear unexpectedly and you are close to them and/or to friends who are drinking and using, your chances of using are much greater than if you weren’t in that situation. Smart people stay sober by avoiding triggers.

DON’T BE STRONG. BE SMART.

How smart are you being? Rate how well you are doing in avoiding relapse:

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
1. Practicing thought stopping	1	2	3	4
2. Scheduling	1	2	3	4
3. Keeping appointments	1	2	3	4
4. Avoiding triggers for substance use	1	2	3	4
5. Not using alcohol	1	2	3	4
6. Not using other drugs	1	2	3	4
7. Avoiding alcohol and other drug users	1	2	3	4
8. Avoiding places with alcohol and other drugs	1	2	3	4
9. Exercising	1	2	3	4
10. Choosing healthy eating habits	1	2	3	4
11. Being truthful	1	2	3	4
12. Going to Twelve Step or other recovery support meetings	1	2	3	4

Total Recovery IQ _____

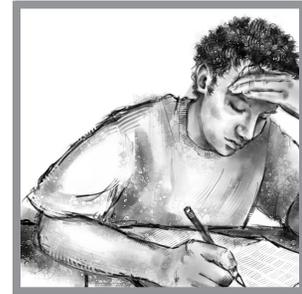
BE SMART, NOT STRONG | *continued*

Is there an area you want to improve?

How do you plan to do that?

...





Participant Status Review

Participant name: _____

Date: _____

Rate how satisfied you are with the following areas of your life:

	VERY DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED
1. Career/work	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
2. Friends	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
3. Family	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
4. Primary relationships	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
5. Alcohol use/cravings	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
6. Other drug use/cravings	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
7. Self-esteem	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
8. Physical health	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
9. Psychological well-being	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
10. Sexual fulfillment	-10	-5	0	+5	+10
11. Spiritual well-being	-10	-5	0	+5	+10

Answer the following questions and then discuss one of these issues with your therapist:

1. Which of the above areas have improved the most since you entered treatment?

2. What are your weakest areas and how are you planning to improve them?

3. What would need to change for you to be satisfied with the neutral or dissatisfied areas?



Taking Care of Business and Managing Money

Maintaining an actively using criminal lifestyle usually takes lots of time and energy. There may be very little time or thought given to normal responsibilities during a period of substance use and crime.

Taking Care of Business

When recovery begins, forgotten and neglected responsibilities may come flooding back. It is sometimes overwhelming to think about all the things that need to be done. It can also feel frustrating and time-consuming to catch up on so many responsibilities. It's even harder with a criminal history, often related to stealing, dealing drugs, or finding other ways to gain financially.

Where do you stand with regard to taking care of your business? Think about these questions:

1. Do you have outstanding traffic tickets?
2. Have you filed all your tax returns to date?
3. Are there unpaid bills you need to make arrangements to pay?
4. What repair and maintenance needs of your house or apartment are necessary?
5. Does your car need to be serviced or repaired?
6. Do you have adequate insurance—health, home, and car?
7. Do you have a checking account or some way to manage your finances?
8. Are you handling daily living chores (such as grocery shopping, laundry, and cleaning)?
9. Do you have probation or parole fees?
10. Do you have court fees?

If you try to do all this at once, you may feel overwhelmed and hopeless—and that can lead to relapse. Choose one or two items each week and focus on clearing up one area at a time. Dealing with these issues will help you regain a sense of control over your life.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGING MONEY | *continued*

1. The first item of business I need to take care of is:

2. I will start by (define what and when):

3. The second item of business I need to take care of is:

4. I will start by (define what and when):

Managing Money

Being in control of your finances will help you feel in control of your life.

5. When most people with substance use disorders are actively using, their out-of-control lifestyle is often reflected in their money habits. Check any of the following that have been true for you (now or in the past):

_____ Any money over _____ is a trigger to buy alcohol or other drugs.

_____ I have used money secretly to buy alcohol or other drugs.

_____ I have to deal with large outstanding debts.

_____ I owe court fees or probation/parole fees.

_____ I have been negligent in paying taxes.

_____ I owe money on traffic warrants.

_____ I gamble with my money.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGING MONEY | *continued*

- _____ I spend compulsively when I feel bad.
- _____ I frequently argue about money with family members.
- _____ I have stolen things when I didn't have the money to buy them.
- _____ I have stolen money.
- _____ I owe money to bad people.

Often, when people first enter treatment, they choose to give control of their money to someone they trust. Having another person handle your money will not work unless it is done at your request. In making the decision to ask for help in this area, you are controlling your own finances and asking a trusted person to act as your banker.

When you and your therapist decide you can safely handle money again, you can begin working toward gaining financial security. You may choose to have some of the following goals:

- Arrange to pay off large debts in small, regular payments.
- Budget your money, just as you schedule your time.
- Make spending agreements with anyone who shares your finances.
- Use bank accounts to help manage your money.
- Live within your means.
- Eventually, have a savings plan.

6. List any other financial goals you have.

• • •



Relapse Justification I

When a recovering offender starts using again, and returns to criminal activity, how does it happen? Is it completely by accident, or is there some way of avoiding the relapse?

Relapse justification is a process that happens in people's minds. If a decision has been made to stop using and to stop criminal activities, the game gets tricky if the addictive process in the brain still has strength. The addicted brain may invent excuses that move the person close enough to relapse situations so that accidents can and do happen. You may remember times when you were planning to stay substance-free and crime-free, but you let that justification process take hold in your brain. And soon you were relapsing.

Use the questions below to help you identify some justifications your brain might use. You can then interrupt the relapse process.

Accidents or Other People's Influence

Does your addicted brain ever try to convince you that you have no choice or that an unexpected situation caught you off guard? Have you ever said one of the following statements to yourself?

- It was offered to me. What could I do?
- An old friend called, and we decided to get together and then...
- I was cleaning my apartment and found drugs I'd forgotten about.
- I had friends come for dinner, and they brought alcohol with them.
- I was in a bar, and someone offered me a beer.
- I needed to steal just this one time to pay off my bills.
- Other _____

Catastrophic Events

Is there one unlikely, major event that is the *only* reason you would use? What might such an event be for you? How would using substances or re-offending improve the situation?

- My spouse left me. There's no reason to stay sober now.
- I just got injured. It's ruined all of my plans. I might as well use.
- I just lost my job. Why not use?
- Other _____

RELAPSE JUSTIFICATION I | *continued*

Specific Purposes

Has your addicted brain ever suggested that using alcohol or a certain other drug is the only way to accomplish something?

- I'm gaining weight and need stimulants to control how much I eat.
- I'm out of energy. I'll function better if I'm using.
- I need alcohol or other drugs to meet people more easily.
- I can't enjoy sex without using.
- Other _____

Depression, Anger, Loneliness, Anxiety, and Fear

Does feeling depressed, angry, lonely, anxious, or afraid make using seem like the answer? Is it really?

- I'm depressed. What difference does it make if I use or not? It usually makes me feel better.
- When I get mad enough, I can't control what I do.
- When I get mad, I steal something and feel better.
- I'm scared. I know how to make those feelings go away.
- If he or she thinks I've used, I might as well use.
- Other _____

What might you do when your lower, addicted brain tries to make drinking and/or using all right?

...



Taking Care of Yourself

People struggling with substance use disorders often do not take care of themselves. You may not have enough time or energy to attend to health and grooming when you are using. How you look becomes unimportant. Health is secondary to alcohol and other drug use. Not caring for oneself is a major factor in loss of self-esteem among people with a substance use disorder. To “esteem” something means one values it. One acknowledges its importance. Self-esteem is valuing yourself and acknowledging your own importance. Recovering people need to learn to recognize their own value. In recovery, your own health and appearance usually becomes more important as you develop self-esteem. This is the beginning of starting to like and even respect yourself.

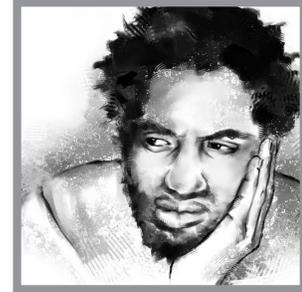
If you’ve been incarcerated, you may have had your medical needs taken care of. In the free world, that’s your own responsibility. Ask yourself these questions. Attending to these areas will likely strengthen your image of yourself as a healthy, substance-free, recovering person:

1. Have you seen a doctor for a thorough checkup?
2. When is the last time you went to the dentist?
3. Have you considered getting a “new look” the next time you cut your hair?
4. Are you paying attention to what you are eating? Is it too much, too little, or of adequate nutritional value?
5. Do you still wear the same clothes you wore during your using episodes?
6. Do you need to have your vision or hearing checked?
7. What exercise do you do regularly?
8. Is your caffeine or nicotine intake out of control?

If addressing all these things at once is too overwhelming, work on one or two items each week. Decide which are the most important and do them first. As you look and feel better, the strength and the pleasure of your recovery will grow.

The first thing I need to do to take care of myself is:

• • •



Dangerous Emotions

For many people, certain emotional states (internal triggers) are “red flag” feelings. They’re often viewed by people in recovery as “the reason I use.”

Many people—including recovering offenders—feel they’d never relapse if they never felt lonely, angry, anxious, or deprived. These emotional triggers often lead to automatic use or criminal activity. However it is not realistic or even healthy for human beings to suppress strong emotions. We are, after all, emotional creatures by nature. So the challenge for many in recovery becomes when we have strong emotions, how do we cope with them in healthy, appropriate ways, to avoid relapsing?



The most common negative emotional (internal) triggers are the following:

Loneliness: It is difficult to give up friends and activities that are or were part of a using or criminal lifestyle. It is often necessary for people in recovery to avoid certain using friends or relatives at least temporarily. Adding to this, often, nonusing friends and family members are not ready to get together again with the recovering person. Too much damage has been done as a result of the using and they are not ready to risk getting back into the relationship just yet. The resulting feelings of loneliness can become a driving force that moves the person in recovery back to using.

Anger: The intense irritability experienced in the early stages of recovery can result in floods of anger that are, for many people, instantly triggering. The rage comes directly from the limbic area—the lower, more primitive brain. Once a person is in that frame of mind, it can be a short trip to alcohol or other drug use and probably a longer trip back to a rational, thinking state of mind.

Deprivation: Becoming substance free with a prosocial lifestyle is a real accomplishment. Usually, recovering people feel very good and proud about what they have been able to do. Recovery is a positive thing. But in some situations, recovering people might feel they’re giving up “good times and good things.” Recovery can begin to feel like a negative thing. It can become a life sentence, something to be endured, instead of a positive thing. These types of feelings can quickly lead to relapse.

Other Emotions: Other common emotions that can threaten recovery are anxiety, self-loathing, depression, and even exuberance and elation.

It is important to be aware of these “red flag” (warning) emotions. Being flooded with these powerful emotions may cause you to be swept rapidly toward relapsing.

DANGEROUS EMOTIONS | *continued*

1. Have any of these emotional states been a problem for you in the past? If so, how might you deal with them in the future?

2. Are there any other negative emotional states that may be dangerous for you? Explain.

Journaling: Another Tool

Many people find writing to be a good tool for recognizing and understanding how they feel and why they feel that way. You don't have to be a good writer. You don't have to like writing. Maybe you've never written much at all. It doesn't matter. Follow these simple instructions and try a new way of getting to know yourself:

- Find a private, comfortable, quiet place just for writing, and try to write a little each day.
- Begin by taking several deep breaths and relaxing.
- Write in response to a question that you have asked yourself about your feelings. ("What am I feeling right now?" "Why am I angry?" "Why am I sad?")
- If something is bothering you and you can't get started writing, ask yourself:
 - What is going on?
 - Is there really a problem, or am I making the situation bigger than it is?
 - How do I really feel about this?
 - What can I do about this?
- Allow the words to flow; forget spelling or punctuating correctly.
- Plan to destroy or erase what you've written. That way, you can write your true feelings without fear.

Writing your feelings can help keep you from blaming other people and things for how you feel. When you write about feelings or problems, they often become much clearer to you. Writing can also help you avoid the emotional buildup that often leads to relapse.

• • •



Illness

Getting sick is often a setup for relapse. “How can that be?” you might wonder. “It’s not my fault that I got sick. I don’t have absolute control over getting the flu or getting colds. How is it a setup?”

There are a number of ways that people can be less than healthy:

- Getting a cold, the flu, or some other infection
- Having serious dental work done
- Having surgery
- Experiencing severe PMS or premenstrual cramping

These situations and others like them may make you weaker than normal. When you are physically weaker, you also have less mental strength. Recovering from a substance use disorder and avoiding criminal thinking require a good deal of mental energy.

What are some of the things that happen when you are ill and have less energy?

- Treatment sessions may be canceled.
- AA, CA, or NA meetings, or other community support group meetings may be missed.
- Exercising may stop or it may become more difficult to do.
- You may start taking a medication, and abusing it is possible.

Imagine if all these things happened at once for any length of time, even if you were feeling strong.

As a result of the above, many people report that when they are ill:

- It is difficult to cope with hours or days of free time now that the illness has interrupted many familiar recovery habits (or “mooring lines”).
- The lack of structure during the illness may become a trigger.
- Being in bed and not feeling well reminds them of “after-using time,” or feeling “hung over.”
- Being alone and feeling lonely and isolated for long periods of time may be a trigger.

ILLNESS | *continued*

During a period of illness, you can reduce the risk of relapse by raising your level of accountability to a therapist, physician, family member, or sponsor.

To keep all the negative effects of illness from interfering with your recovery, allow yourself as little “sick time” as possible. If you push to restart recovery behaviors (mooring lines) as soon as possible after an illness or difficult medical condition, you may feel stronger and your recovery will be stronger.

• • •





Recognizing and Dealing with Stress

Stress is what a person experiences as the result of difficult or upsetting events, particularly those that continue for a period of time and feel like they will never end.

Stress is the experience people have when the demands they make of themselves or those placed upon them are greater than what they feel they can handle. Sometimes we are unaware of this emotional state until the stress causes us to experience physical symptoms. Severe stress that feels constant is dangerous for all human beings and can cause physical and psychological damage. For people in recovery this can be a major relapse factor.

Check any of the following problems you have experienced in the past thirty days:

- _____ Sleep problems
 - Difficulty falling asleep
 - Waking up off and on during the night
 - Having nightmares
 - Waking up early and being unable to fall back to sleep

- _____ Headaches

- _____ Stomach problems

- _____ Chronic illness

- _____ Fatigue

- _____ Moodiness

- _____ Irritability

- _____ Difficulty concentrating

- _____ General dissatisfaction with life

- _____ Feeling overwhelmed

If you have checked two or more of these items, you need to think about reducing stress immediately.

RECOGNIZING AND DEALING WITH STRESS | *continued*

What are some healthy ways you might reduce stress?

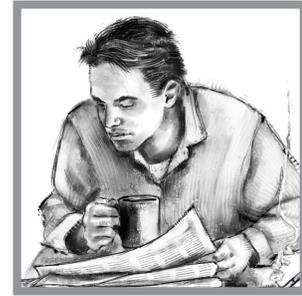
- _____ Exercise more
- _____ Talk to someone about the things that are bothering you
- _____ Take small steps to deal with a big problem
- _____ Get more sleep
- _____ Eat responsibly
- _____ Do something nice for yourself
- _____ Have fun in a healthy way

Which of these suggestions might work for you, and how might you begin to do these things to reduce your stress?

What are some other ways you might reduce stress for yourself?

• • •

By becoming more aware of stress and learning ways to deal with stressful situations, you can further ensure your continuing recovery.



Relapse Justification II

When a recovering offender starts using again, and returns to criminal activity, how does it happen? Is it completely by accident, or is there some way of avoiding the relapse?

Relapse justification is a process that happens in people's minds. If a decision has been made to stop using and to stop criminal activities, the game gets tricky if the addictive process in the brain still has strength. The addicted brain may invent excuses that move the person close enough to relapse situations so that accidents can and do happen. You may remember times when you were planning to stay substance-free and crime-free, but you let that justification process take hold in your brain. And soon you were relapsing.

Use the questions below to help you identify some justifications the addicted brain might use. You can then interrupt the relapse process.

Addiction Is Cured

Does your lower, addicted brain ever try to convince you that you can use just once or use just a little?

- I'm back in control. I'll be able to stop when I want to.
- I've learned I'll only use small amounts and only once in a while.
- Alcohol or this particular other drug was not my problem—so I can safely use it and not relapse.
- Other _____

Testing Yourself

Would your addicted brain like to prove you can be stronger than alcohol or other drugs? It's very easy to forget that being smart, not being strong, is the key to staying sober. Have you ever had any of the following thoughts?

- I'm strong enough to be around alcohol and other drugs now.
- I want to see if I can say no to drinking and using.
- I want to see if I can be around my old using friends.
- I want to see if I can be around my criminal buddies and not go back to committing offenses.
- I want to see how alcohol or other drugs feel now that I've stopped.
- Other _____

RELAPSE JUSTIFICATION II | *continued*

Celebrating

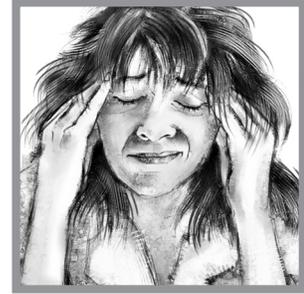
Both the lower, addicted brain and other people may encourage you to fall for the following:

- I'm feeling really good. Using once won't hurt.
- I'm doing so well. Things are going great. I owe myself a reward.
- This is such a special event that I want to celebrate.
- Other _____

...



**Does your lower brain ever try to convince you that
you can use just once or use just a little?**



Living a Less Stressful Life

The following questions should be answered as honestly as possible to help identify which parts of your daily living are most stressful. Take steps to correct these problems, and you may be able to reduce much of the stress in your life.

1. Your time, energy, and money are all extremely important in having a balanced life. Are you investing them in ways that you enjoy and that satisfy you?
Yes _____ No _____
2. Focusing on the present means giving your attention to the task at hand without past and future fears crippling you. Are you usually able to stay in the here and now (the present)?
Yes _____ No _____
3. Do you appreciate things like music, reading, nature, and personal relationships? (Instead of being overly focused on having money and things?)
Yes _____ No _____
4. Are you trying to do things that increase your self-confidence?
Yes _____ No _____
5. Do you tackle large goals by breaking them into smaller, more manageable tasks?
Yes _____ No _____
6. Are you making your environment as peaceful as possible?
Yes _____ No _____
7. Can you and do you say “no” when that is how you really feel?
Yes _____ No _____
8. Do you know how to use self-relaxation techniques to relax your body, and do you allow time in your day to do them?
Yes _____ No _____

LIVING A LESS STRESSFUL LIFE | *continued*

9. Are you careful to avoid large swings in body energy caused by too much sugar and caffeine?

Yes _____ No _____

10. Are there specific ways you deal with anger to get it out of your system physically?

Yes _____ No _____

11. Are you trying to get enough sleep and to have a healthy, balanced diet to keep your body and mind as strong as possible?

Yes _____ No _____

...



Learn how to use self-relaxation techniques to relax your body, and allow time in your day to do them.



Managing Anger

Anger is an emotion that leads many recovering offenders to relapse and re-engage in criminal activity.

This is particularly true early in treatment. Anger is often felt as a slow, building process during which you may think about the people and events that produced the anger. Sometimes it feels like the issues causing the anger are the only important things in life. Often, a sense of victimization accompanies the anger. “Why do I get all the bad breaks?” “How come she doesn’t understand my needs?” “Why won’t he just do what I want him to do?”

1. Does any of this seem familiar to you? Explain.

2. How do you recognize when you get angry? (How or where do you feel or notice it?)

3. How do you express anger?

- Do you hold it in and eventually explode?
- Do you become sarcastic or passive-aggressive?
- Do you act out with criminal behavior?

MANAGING ANGER | *continued*

There are positive ways to deal with anger. Consider these methods:

- Talk to the person you are angry with (unless this is dangerous or might make the situation worse).
- Talk to a therapist, a Twelve Step sponsor, or another trusted, rational person who can give you guidance.
- Talk about the anger in a Twelve Step or community support group meeting.
- Don't lose sight of where you are in your recovery. Are you in the Wall phase?
- Write about your feelings of anger.
- Take a break to change your frame of mind.
- Exercise.
- Other (Remember things that might have worked for you in the past):

• • •



Anger and My Criminal Behavior

Anger itself can be a normal, appropriate emotion.

The question is, how do we deal with it? Learning how to deal with anger in a healthy way is the challenge. Anger often factors into a person's substance use, and it's also a big factor in criminal behavior. Many offenders who use substances have been charged with offenses like domestic violence, battery, assault, and others.

Which of the following reflects your feelings, beliefs, or attitudes now or in the past?

- _____ I was treated unfairly, and I had to stand up for myself.
- _____ I'm different from other people. They just don't understand me.
- _____ I tried to talk it out, but they wouldn't listen to me.
- _____ I served my time and still can't catch a break. Why should I try?
- _____ Every time I try to talk to others when I get mad, they cut me off. But I can get their attention when I use force and aggression.
- _____ When I am using substances I have anger outbursts.
- _____ The system is out to get me.
- _____ I never thought I would get caught.
- _____ I never intended to hurt anybody. I just saw red and couldn't help it.

A person can feel angry in any of these situations—and might even feel like returning to criminal activity.

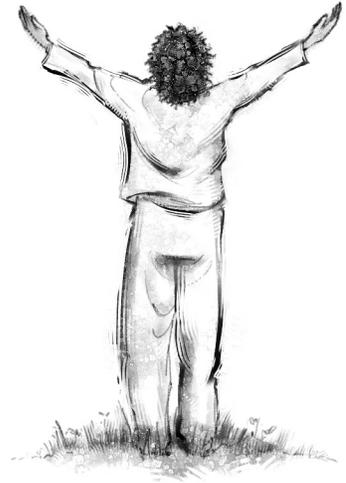
When you try to talk to others about your anger, do you feel they understand what you're saying? Explain.

ANGER AND MY CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR | *continued*

From the previous group topic on “Managing Anger,” what solutions do you think will help in addressing the anger that leads you to act on your criminal thinking? Place a check mark next to the solutions below that you think will work.

- Talk to the person you are angry with (unless this is dangerous or might make the situation worse).
- Talk to a therapist, a Twelve Step sponsor, or another trusted, rational person who can give you guidance.
- Talk about the anger in a Twelve Step or other recovery support meeting.
- Don't lose sight of where you are in your recovery. Are you in the Wall phase?
- Write about your feelings of anger.
- Take a break to change your frame of mind.
- Exercise.
- Other:

How might you begin to use these strategies to deal with your anger? What specific steps might you take?



Acceptance

Overcoming addiction and criminal behavior requires that you recognize the power of addiction, see how it has affected your criminal thinking, and accept the personal limitations that occur as a result of it. Many people feel such acceptance when they enter treatment. But entering treatment is just the *first* act of acceptance. It cannot be the *only* one.

One of the biggest problems in staying substance free, and one of the major reasons for what is called “white-knuckle sobriety,” is the refusal to “let go” and accept that a human being has limits. Accepting a substance use disorder is not a statement of weakness. Does having diabetes or a heart condition mean you are a weak person?

Accepting the idea that you are an offender with a substance use disorder does not mean you cannot control your life. It means there are some things you cannot control, and one of them is the use of alcohol and other drugs. If you keep trying to control the addiction, you give it more power.

There is a paradox in this recovery process. People who accept the reality of addiction to the greatest degree benefit the most in recovery. Those who don’t fight with the idea of quitting are the ones who win the fight. The only way to win this fight is to surrender. If you continue to fight, the addiction will bring you to your knees. The longer you fight, the further you get brought down. Most professionals who work in the field of substance use disorders and most people with long-term recovery agree that the route of total abstinence is the safest road to take.

**You do not need to “hit bottom” to begin recovery.
Some “bottoms” cause issues that may never be resolved.
Don’t wait to “hit bottom” before you really try to stop.**

1. I have a substance use disorder. Yes _____ No _____
2. I hope someday I can use and drink again. Yes _____ No _____
3. I need to work on:

• • •



Learning to Like Yourself

Self-identity is shaped in a number of ways, for better and for worse.

For instance, have you ever heard a message like “You’ll never amount to anything”—perhaps from family, friends, or people you know in the criminal justice system? If enough people treat you like a failure, you could begin to think of yourself that way. That’s a problem for many of us.

But in recovery, as you leave criminal behavior and substance use behind, you can start to see yourself in a more positive way—as a person with good qualities, skills, and other assets. Learning to like yourself will help in your recovery and your new pro-social lifestyle. Taking a personal inventory is part of the process. You can build on your strengths and start to work on your weaknesses. But you can’t change what you don’t know about. Below are some ways to help identify possible self-identity issues:

Who are you?

1. Before you were involved in criminal behaviors and substance use, how did you feel about yourself?

2. How did other offenders view you (in jail, prison, or other criminal justice settings)?

3. How do you view yourself now?

4. Did you engage in criminal activity to try to belong and have friends?

LEARNING TO LIKE YOURSELF | *continued*

5. What would you like to change about how you saw yourself in the past?

Who do you want to be?

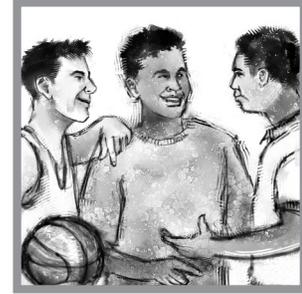
Take a personal self-esteem inventory. You can't fix what you don't know about yourself. Make a list of your strengths and your weaknesses. Nobody changes overnight, so these will be areas you can work on over time.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

What are two realistic goals for self-improvement? (Make sure you set realistic goals. Too-high expectations can set you up for failure.)

List three of your biggest accomplishments. In what ways were you successful?

You can't change the past, but you can change the future!



Making New Friends

*A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend,
one human soul whom we can trust utterly,
who knows the best and worst of us,
and who loves us in spite of our faults.*

— Anonymous

Healthy relationships are extremely important to the recovery process. Friends and family are mirrors that may reflect who we are. It has been said, “You will become like those people with whom you spend your time.” Use the following questions to help you think about your friendships:

1. Do you have any friends like the one described in the poem above? If yes, who are they?

2. Have you become like the people around you? Explain.

3. What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance?

4. Where can you make some new acquaintances that might become friends?

MAKING NEW FRIENDS | *continued*

5. To whom are you a friend?

6. What behaviors do you need to change to be able to have more healthy friendships?

...





Challenges in My Living Situation

It can be challenging to find yourself back in an environment with past using friends and criminal partners nearby.

For example, some recovering offenders may have to return to situations that involve unavoidable contact with gangs. Often there are no immediate alternatives to living in these risky situations, so it's critical to be aware of the risk and have an "escape plan" just in case. Think ahead to identify problems, plan how you'll handle them, and use your supports.

1. In your current living situation, are there challenges or triggers related to alcohol or other drug use? What are they?

2. What people are in or around your living situation who could cause you problems with substance use or your criminal behaviors?

3. Is your current living situation the site of some of your past criminal behavior or substance use?

CHALLENGES IN MY LIVING SITUATION | *continued*

Below is a list of strategies for safety in your current living situation. Place a check by each one you plan to use:

- _____ Getting or keeping a job to keep me busy and responsible
- _____ Having a plan for avoiding the people who may cause me problems
- _____ Writing out my schedule and keeping on track with it
- _____ Attending Twelve Step or other recovery support meetings
- _____ Talking to my sponsor, therapist, probation/parole officer, or pro-social friends about any living situation problems

In case things become too risky, check which of the following things you can do:

- _____ Look for other living situations.
- _____ Get a list of safe places to go, such as shelters or sober living homes (short-term living arrangements if you feel you need to leave), and make a specific plan for leaving.
- _____ Ask for help. Use your supports.

• • •



Repairing Relationships

During the course of criminal activity and an untreated substance use disorder, it is not unusual for other people to get hurt. Because actively using people often can't take care of themselves, they usually can't take care of others, either.

In recovery, it is often helpful to think about who you have hurt during your substance use and whether you need to do anything or say anything to repair the relationships that are most important to you. In Twelve Step programs, this process is called "making amends" and is usually not attempted until a person is stable in recovery.

1. What are some of the past behaviors you might want to make amends for?

2. Are there things you neglected to do or say that need amending?

3. How are you planning to go about making these amends?

REPAIRING RELATIONSHIPS | *continued*

4. Do you feel that being in recovery and stopping substance use and criminal behavior is enough so you don't have to make other amends? Explain.

These repair actions do not have to be complicated. If you acknowledge the hurt that your criminal lifestyle and substance use have caused, that can go a long way to reduce conflict in your relationships. Not everyone will be ready to forgive, but an important part of this process is beginning to forgive yourself. And you can start forgiving others for things that happened to you—including while you were using and/or offending.

5. Who do you need to forgive?

6. What resentments do you need to let go of?

• • •

Serenity Prayer

*God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.*



Whether you view this as a prayer or simply advice, it conveys a useful message.

1. What does it mean to you?

2. What do you know you cannot change?

3. What have you changed already?

4. What things have you tried to change that may be unchangeable?

• • •



Compulsive Behavior

Most offenders enter treatment because they were mandated to do so. They are told recovery requires making other changes in the way they are living their lives, besides stopping their use and criminal activity. These recommended lifestyle changes are focused on getting the recovering offender back in control of his or her life. However, control in some areas of life can result in compulsive behaviors in other areas. It's sort of like patching a leak in one place only to find it springing up somewhere else.

1. Have you noticed yourself behaving compulsively in any of the following ways? Check all that apply to you.

- Working all the time
- Using prescription medications inappropriately
- Abusing other illicit drugs
- Drinking too much caffeine
- Smoking
- Stealing things
- Excessively eating foods high in sugar
- Exercising to the point of physical injury or complete depletion
- Gambling
- Spending too much money
- Spending too much time on the Internet
- Playing video/computer games excessively
- Engaging in compulsive sexual activities with others or oneself
- Other _____

COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR | *continued*

2. What changes have you tried to make so far? What changes do you still need to make?

3. Is it uncomfortable to make these changes?

Yes _____ No _____

4. Are you avoiding being uncomfortable by switching to other compulsive behaviors? Explain.



Does the following sound familiar? “I stopped smoking, drinking, and drug use. It was hard. Then one day I gave in and had a cigarette. I felt so bad that I had messed up, I ended up using.” This behavior is called the “abstinence violation syndrome.”

5. Do you have a similar story from the past? Explain.

COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR | *continued*

6. What are some other things you could do to prevent a relapse?

7. What do you plan to do the next time you're aware of being in a relapse situation?

**How to prevent a relapse:
Avoid triggers, use thought-stopping,
schedule your time, or do something else.**

• • •



Dealing with Feelings and Depression

Feelings

Can you recognize your feelings?

Sometimes people don't allow themselves to have certain emotions (for example, they think feeling angry is not all right, or feeling good means trouble is coming). When you mislabel emotions (saying "I am upset" but meaning "I am depressed" or "I am afraid"), it gets harder to cope with the uncomfortable feelings.

Are you aware of outward signs of certain feelings?

Maybe you get an upset stomach when you are anxious, or you bite your fingernails when you are stressed, or you yell when you are angry. Think about several emotions that trouble you. Identify how they show physically, what you say to yourself when you're expressing them, and how you behave in response to them.

Can you identify the cause of the feelings?

Emotions can be caused by external events. They can also be caused by internal (emotional) messages. If you believe you should not feel angry, for instance, you might deny the anger, and the feeling will build up inside you. If you find yourself blaming others for how you feel, you need to recognize that *you* decide what you allow yourself to feel, and others cannot make you feel any certain way. Be aware of feelings that might be primarily physiological, such as PMS, biological depression, or the Wall.

How do you cope with your feelings now?

Another way of determining how you cope is to look at how your feelings affect you and others around you. For instance, do your constant feelings of anger or depression interfere with your relationships with others? Do people avoid dealing with you, try to keep you from getting upset, or try to make you feel better? Focus on one or two emotions you need to learn to cope with better.



DEALING WITH FEELINGS AND DEPRESSION | *continued*

Describe one or two emotions you need to learn to cope with better:

What are some new coping strategies?

Once you have identified what you feel, you may want to consider expressing it. You can talk about your feelings to another person (to a trusted group, friend, or therapist), or you can express feelings directly (and appropriately) to the people about whom you have the feelings. You will need to learn when direct expression is appropriate and when it is not. You can also make changes in your thinking that can help diminish the feelings. You can change the thought, “I am so angry she doesn’t agree with me, I feel like using or drinking” to “It’s all right for someone not to agree with me, and using will not make anything better.” Changing behavior and doing something different are other ways of coping with feelings.

The idea here is not to let out-of-control feelings drive you back to using. Learning to deal (cope) with emotions means allowing yourself to feel and live your life with the right balance of thinking and feeling, which then determines your behavior.

Depression

One feeling that typically needs to be dealt with in recovery is depression.

Most people report having problems with depression from time to time during recovery. For some people this depression, left untreated, can result in relapse. Therefore, it is important to be aware of signs of depression and to be prepared to cope with the feelings.

1. Symptoms of depression include the following (check all that apply to you):

- Having low energy
- Overeating or not eating
- Having sad thoughts
- Losing interest in your work or hobbies
- Sleeping more than usual

DEALING WITH FEELINGS AND DEPRESSION | *continued*

- _____ Having a decreased sex drive
- _____ Having increased thoughts of drinking or using
- _____ Having insomnia
- _____ Stopping Twelve Step or other community support group attendance
- _____ Stopping an exercise program
- _____ Avoiding social activities
- _____ Having feelings of boredom, irritability, or anger
- _____ Having crying spells
- _____ Having suicidal thoughts or actions
- _____ Stopping normal activities such as work or cleaning house

2. List any other signs that you recognize as signaling the beginning of depression.

3. Healthy responses to depression may include the following:

- _____ Increasing exercise
- _____ Talking to a spouse
- _____ Planning some new activities
- _____ Talking to a friend
- _____ Talking to a therapist
- _____ Considering an evaluation for medication

4. List any other ways you have of effectively coping with depression.



Twelve Step Programs (or Other Spiritual Groups)

What is AA?

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a worldwide organization that has been in existence since 1935. AA holds free, open meetings throughout the day and evening, seven days per week, to help people who want to stop being controlled by a substance use disorder. In rural settings there may be fewer meetings available than in large urban areas. In some countries, there are very few or no AA meetings. In these cases, you may want to look for online groups.

Are these meetings like treatment?

No. They are groups of recovering people helping each other stay sober.

Does a person need to enroll or make an appointment?

No, just show up. Times and places of meetings may be available in your treatment program, by looking up AA online, or by calling your local AA service office directly.

What are CA and NA?

CA stands for Cocaine Anonymous and NA for Narcotics Anonymous. There are also Gamblers Anonymous, Pills Anonymous, Marijuana Anonymous, Crystal Meth Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, and more. These groups are similar, although the specific focus may differ.

Spin-off support groups that use the Twelve Steps include Al-Anon (for people who are in a relationship with someone who has a substance use disorder), Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA), Codependents Anonymous (CODA), and Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families. Often people go to more than one type of group. Most people “shop around” for the type of group and the specific meetings they find most comfortable, relevant, and useful.

What are the Twelve Steps?

The basis of the self-help groups are the Twelve Steps. These are beliefs and activities designed to provide a program for sobriety. There is a strong spiritual aspect to both the Steps and Twelve Step programs.

What if a person is not particularly religious?

One can benefit from Twelve Step programs without being religious or without working the Twelve Steps, and many people in Twelve Step programs fall into the nonreligious category. These people think of the Higher Power in the Steps as a bigger frame of reference or a bigger source of knowledge, and not necessarily as “God.”

TWELVE STEP PROGRAMS (OR OTHER SPIRITUAL GROUPS) | *continued*

What do Twelve Step programs offer?

They offer the following benefits:

- A safe place to go during recovery
- A place to meet other people who don't use alcohol or other drugs
- A spiritual component to recovery, if desired
- Emotional support
- Exposure to people who have achieved long-term abstinence
- A worldwide network of support that is always available

• • •

It is strongly recommended that you attend AA, CA, NA, or other community support meetings while you are in treatment. Ask other participants for help in choosing the best meeting for you, and sample several different meetings. Try to be open to what you can get out of them. These groups can offer social, emotional, or spiritual support. At the very least they offer a safe place to go and a chance to meet new, sober friends.

Other Options

For some a spiritually-based program or a Twelve Step program does not seem like an option. If that is the case, try a meeting or two or go back again if you attended in the past. You may be in a different place now in your stage of readiness for change. Also, some communities offer secular or non-spiritual programs such as SMART Recovery. SMART stands for Self Management and Recovery Training. It is based on cognitive behavioral themes similar to the Matrix Model. Some people find their churches or other places of worship offer recovery support groups. In places or countries without Twelve Step programs, people have found other ways to add a spiritual support component to the recovery process. There is research that indicates that people in treatment for substance use disorders who participate in community recovery activities along with treatment have better outcomes.

TWELVE STEP PROGRAMS (OR OTHER SPIRITUAL GROUPS) | *continued*

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



Looking Forward: Dealing with Downtime

Structure is important. Scheduling is important.

Balance is important. Downtime is important.

So you're making it work. Recovery is working because you're working at it. Now what? Do you feel like something is missing? Do you feel like you need to take a break from the routine and get excited about something?

If you are in the Wall stage, you may not be able to feel much excitement about anything. Some of the flat feeling in recovery may be a result of one of the following factors:

- The body's recovery process prevents you from feeling strong feelings of any kind. This usually passes over time but it's tough while it lasts.
- Normal life feels less exciting than the using, criminal lifestyle.

There is a strategy people use to put a sense of anticipation and excitement into their lives. It is possible to plan certain things and to look forward to them. Some people think of this as building islands—*islands of rest, recreation, or fun*; islands to look forward to so the future doesn't seem so endless and routine. The islands don't need to be big, extravagant things. They can be things like:

- Going someplace you really want to see
- Taking a day off work
- Attending a baseball game
- Visiting relatives
- Going out to eat
- Renewing a safe friendship

The islands do need to be things you really look forward to doing. They also need to be spaced closely enough so that you don't get too stressed, tired, or bored in between, thereby threatening your recovery.

List some past islands:

What are some possible islands for you now?

LOOKING FORWARD: DEALING WITH DOWNTIME | *continued*

Downtime

The Problem

Being in recovery means living responsibly. Deciding what to do, acting intelligently, and constantly staying “with it” can be exhausting. It is easy to run out of energy and become tired and negative. Life can become a cycle of sameness: getting up, going to work, coming home, lying on the couch, going to bed, and then doing it again the next day. People in recovery who allow themselves to get to this state of boredom and exhaustion are very vulnerable to relapse. It may be difficult to resist anything or anyone when your energy level is so low.

The Old Answer

Alcohol and other drugs provide quick relief from the above state. Using or drinking is an easy, fast way to get relief. All the reasons for not using are quickly forgotten when the body and mind desperately need refueling.

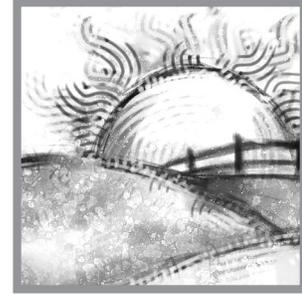
The New Answer

Each person needs to decide what can provide a refreshing, satisfying break from the daily grind. What works for you may not work for someone else. You can choose what to do in your downtime, but it is important to do something to recharge your batteries. The longer you feel tired and physically and mentally exhausted, the more vulnerable you may be to relapse.

Notice how often you are feeling stressed, impatient, angry, or shut down emotionally. These are signs of needing more downtime. Try some of the activities listed below:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Walking | Bicycling | Going to a worship service |
| Taking a class | Watching TV | Cooking or eating |
| Going to the movies | Listening to music | Lying in the sun |
| Reading | Painting or drawing | Talking with non-using friends |
| Playing sports | Fishing | Going to spiritual/self-help support meetings |
| Writing | Playing with a pet | Playing a musical instrument |
| Learning meditation/yoga | Exercising | |
| | Shopping | |

What will you do now on a day when you’re feeling stressed? In the past you might have said, “I really need a drink” or “I need to get high today.” What will your downtime activity be now?



One Day at a Time

Recovering people do not usually relapse because they cannot handle one particular day or one particular situation. Any given day or any single event is usually manageable. Things may become unmanageable when the recovering person allows events from the past or fears of the future to upset the present.

Beating yourself up with the past may make you less able to handle the present. You are allowing the past to make your recovery more difficult when you find your addicted brain saying things like:

"I can never do anything right. I have always blown every opportunity."

"If I try to do something difficult, I will fail. I always do."

"I am always letting people down. I have always disappointed everyone."

"I'll never get sober."

1. Can you think of a recent situation in which you allowed the past to make the present more difficult? Explain.

Allowing what *might* happen to overwhelm you is projecting into the future. You cannot deal with the unknown. You can only deal with what is happening right now, today. You are filling yourself with fear when you begin telling yourself things like:

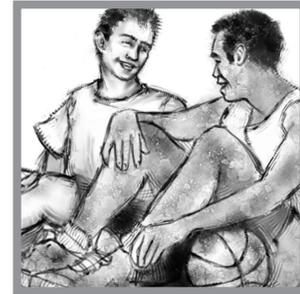
"Tomorrow something will happen to ruin this."

"That person is going to hate me for this."

"I will never be able to make it."

2. What are some things you tell yourself to produce fear of the future?

3. What are some other things you can tell yourself to bring you back to the present?



Recreational Activities

Read this list of suggested activities and interests and circle ones you might explore in the future:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Acting/dramatics | Fishing | Painting/drawing | Go to a gym |
| Art projects | Marksmanship | Volunteer work | Meditation |
| Singing | Photography | Camping | Pets |
| Archery | Flower arranging | Go to the park | Weight lifting |
| Designing clothes | Mechanics | Playing cards | Badminton |
| Jogging | Baseball/softball | Walking | Home decorating |
| Scuba diving/snorkeling | Flying/gliding | Go to lectures | Woodworking |
| Attending auctions | Metalwork | Playing a musical instrument | Scouts, PTA, coaching |
| Dining out | Tennis | Watching sports | Sailing |
| Judo/karate | Basketball | Carpentry | Wrestling |
| Squash/handball | Dancing | Golf | Civic organizations |
| Going to the theater | Model building | Political activities | Sculpture |
| Driving | Traveling | Watching TV | Writing poetry/songs |
| Kite flying | Bicycling | Ceramics/pottery | Collecting coins, antiques, etc. |
| Attending swap meets | Football | Reading | Horseback riding |
| Electronics | Boating | Waterskiing | Sewing |
| Knitting/crocheting | Billiards/pool | Checkers | Writing letters |
| Surfing | Motorcycling | Gymnastics | Staying in touch by email |
| Auto racing | Bird-watching | Religious activities | Cooking/baking |
| Swimming | Gardening | Weaving | Horseshoes |
| Auto repairing | Mountain climbing | Chess | Shuffleboard |
| Fencing | Visiting museums | Hiking | Crossword puzzles |
| Listening to music | Bowling | Roller-skating | Hunting |
| Table tennis/Ping-Pong | Go to garage/yard sales | Working with electronics | Ice-skating |
| Backpacking | Needlework | Yoga | Sightseeing |
| Computer games | Volleyball | Pilates | Jewelry making |
| E-mail | Boxing | | Skiing |
| | Going to movies | | |



Holidays and Recovery

Holiday seasons are often a hard time for people in recovery.

Many things can happen to increase the risk of relapse. Review the list below and check the items that might cause problems for you and your recovery program during the holidays:

- _____ More alcohol and other drugs at parties
- _____ Money stress due to gift buying
- _____ Increased stress due to heavier traffic
- _____ Increased stress due to crowded shopping areas
- _____ Interruption of normal routine
- _____ Stopping exercise
- _____ Stopping self-help, spiritual, or other recovery support meetings
- _____ Stopping therapy or treatment
- _____ Party atmosphere
- _____ More (or no) contact with family
- _____ Remembering past holidays when domestic violence occurred
- _____ Opportunity to get quick money through criminal activities
- _____ Increased emotions from holiday memories
- _____ Increased anxiety regarding triggers and cravings
- _____ Stress from not having time to meet responsibilities
- _____ Dealing with New Year's Eve and other party occasions
- _____ Extra free time with no structure
- _____ Other _____

HOLIDAYS AND RECOVERY | *continued*

Scoring:

Mild: If you checked one to three items, you are fortunate. The holidays produce only a slightly increased risk of relapse.

Moderate: If you checked four to six items, the holidays add lots of stress to your life. Relapse risk is related to how well you cope with increased stress. Your score indicates that you need to plan carefully for your recovery during the holidays.

Severe: Seven or more items checked indicate that the holidays add a major amount of stress to your life. Relapse prevention means learning how to recognize added stress and taking extra care during dangerous periods. Your score indicates the holidays are one of these periods for you.

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No one has to relapse.

No one benefits from a relapse.

What you can do during the holidays to prevent relapse?

- Think about your recovery plan.
- Add some meetings. Schedule your time.
- See your therapist.
- Use the tools and mooring lines that have helped you in recovery to stay substance and crime free through this stressful time.
- Other:
