

Relapse Warning Signs

Relapse Warning Signs Threatening Family Emotional Sobriety

Everyone experiences emotional relapse warning signs from time to time. Check off the items in this list that could apply to you. Note that you do not have to be currently experiencing these warning signs. If you know you have experienced them in the past, you know what to watch for – and what you’re asking your team to watch for. Honesty is the key.

- I allow my daily activities to interrupt my recovery schedule (my Twelve Step meetings, daily readings, time with my sponsor).
- Temporary issues, such as an illness, keep me away from recovery activities, and I do not resume them.
- I’ve stopped enjoying or doing the little things I do for myself.
- I have an inability to set appropriate limits with others. I’m either too lenient or too rigid.
- I’m obsessive in needing to take on all responsibility and still feel I’m not doing enough.
- I mentally ruminate over old resentments.
- I’ve returned to old controlling behaviors, trying to control people, places, and things.
- When anyone points out the unhealthiness of my behaviors, I become defensive.
- I fall in to self-pity, complaining to others about all that is wrong in my life.
- I engage in the blame game, avoiding responsibility and making others the scapegoat for all my problems.
- I’m nervous or worry chronically. I may not know the source of my worries and feel a free-floating anxiety.
- I’ve lost faith in my understanding of a Higher Power.
- My attendance at Al-Anon or other family Twelve Step groups is sporadic; I always come up with excuses not to go.

- I'm overly emotional (crying or raging or manic) with no understanding of why.
- I lose control over my temper with my spouse, children, or other family members.
- I have extreme mood swings without warnings. My feelings are exaggerated.
- I have deep feelings of loneliness or isolation. I've stopped reaching out to friends or family.
- I use dishonesty to manage my world. I create lots of little lies to control others or hide what's going on with me or my addicted loved one.
- I medicate with alcohol, other drugs, food, or overspending.
- I feel hopeless and helpless. I don't believe anyone can understand or help me.
- I have an apathetic, "whatever" attitude.
- I believe everything must be perfect at all times, and, as a result, no one meets my standards.
- I don't make time to read recovery literature, such as *Courage to Change* or other daily readers.

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Relapse warning signs are often subtle and easy to miss. As an addict, you may discount their importance and rationalize them away. But dismissing warning signs is one of the biggest warning signs of all. Making an exhaustive list now is good preparation for a day when you might be feeling unstable. Check off every item that could possibly apply to you, being excruciatingly honest. Share this list with your sponsor.

- I doubt my ability to stay sober but keep this a secret.
- I think I can be abstinent without working a program of recovery.
- I am overconfident.
- I avoid talking about problems.

- I am secretive about my recovery activities with my family.
- My life is out of balance. I work too much or too little. I exercise too much or too little.
- I overreact to stressful situations.
- I am isolating physically or emotionally. I don't connect with my Twelve Step sponsor.
- I am making unrealistic plans.
- I never do anything to have fun.
- I can't relate to people in my Twelve Step meetings.
- I am easily angered or irritated.
- I am blaming others for my problems or the past.
- I lack structure in my days.
- I live with people who drink or use other drugs.
- I spend time with "wet faces in wet places," setting me up for a relapse.
- I've lost faith in my understanding of a Higher Power.
- I don't make time to read recovery literature.