Understanding Mental Health Relapse

Use this worksheet to take control of your recovery journey. By preparing when you are feeling well, you may be able reduce the possibility of a relapse. Share this with your treatment team and support network and create a relapse plan together.

Monitoring Symptoms
Sometimes, your regular symptoms may become more severe, increase in frequency, or last longer. This can be the beginning of a relapse.

Ask yourself these questions:
What symptoms do I have more often than usual when experiencing a relapse?
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Which symptoms get stronger and more difficult to ignore when I am experiencing a relapse?
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What symptoms last longer than usual when I am experiencing a relapse?
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Recognizing Early Signs of Relapse
Many relapses occur gradually, with changes in behavior called warning signs. By learning to recognize your warning signs, you can get help early and avoid a more serious setback.

Check off signs that you have experienced before a relapse:

☐ Too much or too little sleep
☐ Feeling tense, nervous, hostile
☐ Increase in paranoia, hallucinations, hearing voices, or risk-taking behaviors (spending money, using alcohol/drugs)
☐ Confusing or nonsensical speech
☐ Other _________________________________________

☐ Stopping medication or not taking it regularly
☐ Social withdrawal or isolation
☐ False beliefs or delusions (people are against you, overconfident in your abilities)
☐ Change in personal hygiene
☐ Other _________________________________________

If you notice any warning signs of relapse or any changes in your symptoms, talk to your doctor and treatment team right away.

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**Identifying Triggers**
Triggers are situations or behaviors that can lead to a relapse and are different for everyone. A common cause of relapse is stopping medication; however, relapses can happen even when a person is taking his or her medication as prescribed.

Difficult life events, like losing a family member, can be stressful. But it is important to know that even positive life events—like getting a new job or starting a new relationship—can also be stressful.

**Check the situations that may be triggers for you:**
- Moving to a new apartment/house
- Having money problems
- Starting a new job or relationship
- Using drugs and alcohol
- Being fired from a job
- Having an illness or death in the family
- Fighting with a friend or family member
- Being invited to a party
- Being bored during the day
- Stopping medication altogether
- Having difficulty taking medication, as prescribed
- Other __________________________
- Other __________________________

**Strategies to Reduce Relapse**
During periods of stress or change, you may stop doing things that help you stay healthy. Make a list of activities that help you stay well.

**Check the activities that can help you stay healthy.**
- Find activities that reduce stress (listening to music, breathing exercises, meditation)
- Use supportive treatments and services (psychotherapy or peer counseling)
- Go to my appointments regularly
- Get support from my family, friends, or treatment team
- Be involved in making decisions about my medications and supportive treatments
- Eat healthy and nutritious food
- Take medication regularly, as prescribed
- Exercise (walking, gym, yoga)
- Other __________________________
- Other __________________________

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