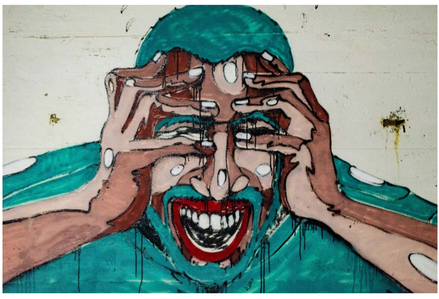
Relapse Prevention Strategies For A Successful Long Term Addiction Recovery In Kentucky

Like in many other parts of the country, Kentucky has lots of people struggling with substance abuse. For these people, maintaining sobriety is an everyday struggle and the potential for relapse is ever-present.

If your loved one has an addiction, knowing the warning signs of relapse can help avoid it. It's also important for the family and friends of an addict in recovery to understand how relapse works and the triggers behind it. This way, they can know what to watch for as well as ensure that the individual gets the right support and assistance to keep them on the path to recovery.



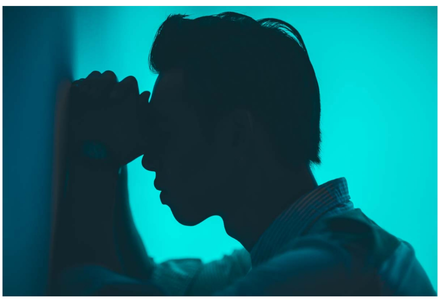
The Stages of Addiction Relapse

In order to understand relapse, you have to understand that it is a process, not an event. It happens gradually in stages and it starts weeks or months before an individual starts using or drinking again. There are 3 stages of relapse – emotional, mental and physical.

Emotional relapse is usually the 1st stage and it comes before an addict in recovery even considers using again. In this stage, the individual's desire for recovery starts to fade due to a lack of support systems. They also experience negative emotions and may start rationalizing their previous drug or alcohol use while doubting their ability to maintain sobriety.

The next stage is mental relapse. This is usually a time when the individual in recovery struggles internally with remaining on the road to recovery vs. going back to using. In this stage, the person gets direct thoughts about using again and they subconsciously decide to go back to their addiction. Once this happens, it's just a matter of time before they progress to the last relapse stage.

The final stage in the process is physical relapse when the individual breaks their sobriety and starts using again. This is what most people commonly think of when they hear the term relapse. Relapse can be especially dangerous for those who have been in recovery for a long time. Since their tolerance for their drug of choice isn't what it used to be, taking the amount they were used to could lead to severe consequences including overdoses and death.



Effective Addiction Relapse Prevention Strategies

Addiction recovery experts estimate that those recovering from any kind of addiction often experience at least one relapse. It's therefore crucial that those in addiction recovery learn how to prevent relapse using the following strategies:

- ### Recognizing your addiction relapse triggers.

Starting a new life free from addiction can be difficult. It's often easy to stay on the path of recovery in rehab because you're not exposed to the negative environment that drove you to using in the first place.

For you to continue maintaining sobriety, you need to identify the factors that can potentially trigger relapse and learn how to avoid or eliminate them. Some of the common triggers for relapse include former friends you used to take drugs with, old places and things that remind you of using, stressful relationships and situations, isolation and poor self-care.

To deal with these, you might have to make some hard choices and changes in your life e.g. cutting off old friends and getting rid of some of your stuff. This might be difficult but your recovery is worth it.

- ### Finding healthy ways of dealing with your emotions.

Most addicts usually turn to drugs and alcohol to hide from negative emotions and to amplify positive ones. This unhealthy relationship with emotions can be a major cause of relapse. This is the reason why most addiction treatment programs spend some time teaching individuals to manage their emotions, whether positive or negative. You need to learn healthy ways of dealing with anger, coping with disappointment and conflict as well as how to handle positive experiences without reaching for that drink or drug you used to enjoy.

- ### Taking it one step at a time.

Addiction can take you to a dark place and you might have done things that you're not proud of. Instead of wallowing in guilt, shame, and self-pity, which will only increase your chances of relapsing, you need to deal with your past. Accept that you were an addict and remind yourself that you're now focusing on your recovery. Learn to be kind and patient with yourself, especially when you have bad days. Realize that recovery is a life-long process and you have to stay focused on your goals, taking it one day at a time.

- ### Creating a supportive addiction rehab network.

Another great way to keep relapse at bay is by building your support network. Participating in self-help or support groups helps you feel that you're not alone. Interacting with others who've been in similar situations helps you learn how others have coped with recovery and what coping skills have been successful. You also get a safe place to go where others understand you and you can share your experiences without being judged.

- ### Practicing self-care.

Finally, developing healthy habits and taking time for yourself can help keep away stress and anxiety and prevent relapse. Activities such as listening to or playing music, drawing, keeping a journal, cooking or any other hobbies you enjoy contribute to personal development and lead to high self-confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, and practicing mindfulness keep you grounded and should be incorporated into a healthy lifestyle along with healthy eating and getting enough rest.

Talk to Us Today for Long Term Addiction Recovery

You don't have to fear relapsing if you're armed with the right knowledge and coping strategies. Here at the Robert Alexander Treatment Center, our qualified staff of therapists, counselors, and physicians are all trained to give you the support you need to overcome addiction as well as understand and avoid relapse.

Contact us today to learn more about our treatment programs and how we can help you learn relapse strategies for a successful long-term recovery. Our lines are open 24/7 and we'll be glad to help you get started on your journey toward a new life.

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