

PERSONAL RECOVERY PLANNING

There are many ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle free of self-defeating behavior. Your recovery plan will be your own creation and will be different from anyone else's. This exercise is meant to give you a starting point and a framework to design your own program. It won't be a finished product when you are done—there will be more questions. It will provide you with a method you can fall back on when things get difficult and confusing.

When you think about your recovery, what do you want to accomplish? Above and beyond staying clean and sober, some things many people want to work toward include control over their actions; self-respect and dignity; peace of mind; the ability to enjoy life; the respect of others; more satisfying relationships; improved health; career progress; and improved financial status. There are many others.

1. List the five most important things you want to work on.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. For each of these items, describe how a return to substance abuse would affect your chances of getting what you want.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

3. For each of the things you want to work on, list specifically what you want to accomplish—in other words, how you will know when you've achieved your goals.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

4. Have you ever tried to cut back or completely quit drinking or using before? ____
What methods were effective for you, if any?

What methods were ineffective?

5. Staying away from using/drinking has two parts: finding *things to do* that work to help you remain abstinent and figuring out which *things not to do* because they may result in returning to use. Drawing on all you have learned so far in your recovery and on the experiences of others, fill out the following:

a. *Support group activities*: What meeting(s) will you attend during the week? When and where?

When will you meet with your sponsor each week? _____

b. *Creating a daily structure and routine:* What things will you do as part of your routine each day, and when will you do them?

Each week? _____

Each month? _____

c. *Basic self-care:* When living compulsively, people often neglect the basics, such as eating a healthy diet, attending to medical needs, getting enough rest, and getting healthy exercise. Incorporating these into your life will increase your ability to cope with stress and relieve stress when it occurs. What are some things you can do in each of the following areas to take care of yourself physically?

Diet: _____

Medical care: _____

Rest: _____

Exercise: _____

d. *Relationships and support systems:* Relationships with loved ones and friends can have a tremendous effect on recovery. You will probably need to assess past and current associations, keep some of these associations in your life, end others, and develop some new relationships that support recovery.

Old relationships: What relationships are likely to support your recovery, and what will you do to strengthen them?

What relationships will probably undermine your efforts, and how will you end or distance yourself from them?

New relationships: Where can you meet people to start some new, healthy, supportive relationships, and how will you go about finding them?

How you can get support from relationships: Please use this space to list names of people you feel you can talk to if you are feeling troubled, confused, or discouraged, and to write about how you will approach each of them to ask for this support.

Name

How I will ask for support

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e. *Spirituality*: Whether you are religious or not, recovery involves making changes in your values and your goals in life; and people who have spiritual resources to support them are usually more successful in staying clean and sober.

How will you address this component of your recovery?

What questions do you have about this and who can you ask for assistance?

f. *Work:* Your job can be a major source of satisfaction, self-esteem, and security, but also a source of great stress, and recovering people are more likely than average to become workaholics, going overboard on responsibility and burning themselves out.

What will you do to keep your work within healthy, moderate limits? _____

How will you deal with it if you find your work is posing a risk to your recovery?

How do you plan on dealing with stress related to work?

g. *Legal issues:* Dealing with the consequences of using and drinking is important in order to avoid undue stress and to gain self-respect.

What are you doing to get any unfinished legal matters settled?

What is one step you can take toward resolving these legal issues today (people to contact; appointments to make; resources needed)?

h. *Finances:* This is also an area that has great impact on self-esteem and stress levels. Many recovering people are intimidated by the financial problems they have when they first quit drinking or using, but find that with determined effort they are able to clear these difficulties up faster than expected.

What financial problems do you have and what are you doing to resolve them?

What is your long-term plan for financial stability?

What is one step you can take today toward resolving these difficulties?

- i. *Recreation:* Beginning recovery is a time to renew your involvement in activities you enjoyed in the past or start new activities that you always wanted to try. This will help you cope with stress and increase your enjoyment of life.

List activities you will try or are interested in learning more about:

What steps will you take to incorporate this into your weekly schedule?

What is one step you will take today to work toward having fun?

j. *Other areas of life:* What other things do you see that you should focus on?

What will you do to address these issues?

What is one step you can take today to make progress on one of these issues?

6. *Crisis management:* Your plan needs to include steps to handle any crisis that might trigger a tendency to relapse. Please use this space to list the actions you will take to handle an unexpected (or expected) crisis without relapsing into addictive behavior.

7. *Things not to do because they may lead to drinking or using:* Finally, use this space to list any activities you know you should carefully avoid. This may include going to certain places, seeing some people, or engaging in particular work or recreational activities.

NAME _____

DATE _____