**Helping Hand Contract**

**Client Name:**   **Date:**

This is an exercise to help you identify what the warning signs of your relapse might be by planning your own relapse. In planning your relapse you will gain insight into how it can happen to you and more importantly, how you can prevent it. If you have relapsed in the past, use the information here and add to it what you have learned in your recovery about your warning signs. THESE MUST BE PERSONALIZED, SPECIFIC, OBSERVABLE, MEASUREABLE.

Five thoughts or thinking patterns that could lead me to relapse: (I start thinking that I could probably use in a controlled way since I have been abstinent for so long.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Five feelings that could lead me to relapse: (I become more irritable or depressed)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Five behaviors that could lead me to relapse: (I stop going to meetings or change my recovery routine suddenly)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relapses do not occur “out of the blue” and there are several warning signs. Many people think that a relapse starts with one drink or drugging, when actually it is the last step. In planning your relapse, think of it in 10 Steps, with the 10th Step being using. For example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *1. I become restless or antsy.*  |  | *6. I become more isolated.*  |
| *2. I become irritable or grouchy.*  |  | *7. I get depressed.*  |
| *3. I start to think negatively about AA or NA.*  |  | *8. I start having sleep problems.*  |
| *4. I start withdrawing from people in recovery.*  |  | *9. I decide drinking or drugging would help my problems.*  |
| *5. I skip meetings.*  |  | *10. I use.*  |

**Relapse Prevention Plan – Page 2**

**Client Name: Date:**

My relapse in ten steps or warning signs:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10

Some questions to ask yourself:

1. At what step do I call my therapist or get back into a group therapy?
2. At what step do I go on Antabuse or Naltrexone or Suboxone?
3. At what step do I start working the 12 Steps again with my sponsor?
4. At what step do I need to set up external monitoring of my recovery program?
5. What step is it “too far gone?” or when do I loose the chance to intervene?
6. When does it become “a train running without brakes?”

Beside the people in your group, who will you share this Relapse Prevention Plan with to help you be aware when the warning signs are happening? (Your spouse?, your sponsor?, your therapist?, a friend?)

List 5 things that you will do when the warning signs are happening? (behaviors not thoughts)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Relapse Prevention Plan – Page 3**

**Client Name: Date:**

List the things that you will do that involve other people: (call to go back on drug screens, re-work a step with your sponsor, come back to group)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please list the actions that you do daily for your recovery: (I meditate or pray)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please list the actions that you do weekly for your recovery: (I write a gratitude list)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please list the actions that you do monthly for your recovery: (I read my plan and do a self check or ask someone if they have seen any of my warning signs)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Triggers All recovering people have certain people, places, emotions, and things that are somehow associated with drinking alcohol or using drugs. These people, places, things, and feelings are so closely associated with substance use that they can trigger thoughts about using. These high-risk people, places, things, and feelings are called triggers. How do triggers lead to relapse? • Triggers automatically lead to thoughts about substance use. • Thoughts about alcohol or other drugs lead to craving. • Craving can lead to relapse. Remember that using alcohol or other drugs causes chemical changes in the brain. These changes may make you more vulnerable to relapse. These changes may be memories or associations that connect feelings, people, places, and things with the urge to use substances. These are actual physical changes in the brain that make you more likely to relapse. Therefore, it is critical to put into place strategies to prevent relapse. All recovering people have certain people, places, emotions, and things that are somehow associated with substance use.

Please answer the following questions: 1. In your words, describe (1) how triggers lead to thoughts about substance use, (2) how these thoughts lead to cravings, and (3) how cravings lead to relapse.

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2. What do you think are some ways that you can interrupt this cycle?

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An internal trigger is an emotional state that you might experience before, during, or after substance use. You may have felt very happy, depressed, anxious, or sexually aroused while you were using. Later, these feelings can remind you of substance use. Please answer the following question: What is one of your strong internal triggers?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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External triggers include events, places, things, or specific times that you associate with substance use. For instance, these triggers might include the neighborhood where you drank alcohol or bought drugs, a bar, a dealer’s apartment, a payday, or weekend evenings. Items connected to substance use, such as a smoky room, injection equipment, or a crack pipe, are often strong triggers for substance thoughts and cravings. External triggers also include specific people who were involved in your substance use. Please answer the following question: What is one of your strong external triggers?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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External triggers include events, places, things, or specific times that you associate with substance use. Internal triggers are emotional states that you might experience before, during, or after substance use.

Sensory triggers are related to the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. These are sensations that remind you of drug use. Sensory triggers may include the look of white powders, a specific type of music, and certain smells and tastes. Please answer the following question: What is one of your strong sensory triggers?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 Please answer the following questions: 1. What are some triggers that have been especially difficult for you to deal with in the past?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. What are some triggers that are especially difficult for you to deal with now?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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To maintain your sobriety, you need to be able to recognize and identify your personal triggers for drug use. Defusing Triggers Triggers automatically lead to drug thoughts, drug thoughts lead to drug cravings, and cravings lead to relapse. However, there are steps you can take to stop this chain of events. Identify triggers. To maintain your sobriety, you need to be able to recognize and identify your personal triggers for drug use. You should be aware of what people, places, and things trigger thoughts of drugs and understand when these triggers occur and what makes them worse. Please do the following: Quickly list one internal, one external, and one sensory trigger.

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Avoid triggers. Triggers are signs of danger. Whenever possible, avoid all high-risk situations, high-risk people, and other triggers. Please do the following: 1. Name three situations you can simply avoid.

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Name three people you can simply avoid.

 1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Interrupt triggers. Some triggers, such as specific days of the week, certain times of the day, or specific feelings, cannot be avoided. These triggers can be interrupted, however, by engaging in a healthy activity to counter the effect of the trigger. For example, you can attend a self-help meeting on Fridays because that day is associated with using drugs. Please do the following: Name three healthy activities you can engage in.

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Talk about triggers. If you want to be able to stop triggers from causing a drug craving, you need to be able to talk about them. By talking about them, you can better understand what’s going on and reduce their power. Triggers will remain powerful if you don’t talk about them. Triggers will remain powerful if you don’t talk about them.

 Please do the following: Name three people you can talk to when you have cravings.

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Thought-stopping. A trigger leads you to think about drugs. These thoughts will lead to craving and relapse if you continue to obsess about drugs. The good news is that these thoughts can be interrupted using relaxation and visualization exercises. Please answer the following questions: 1. What are some techniques that have helped you to avoid triggers? What are some techniques that did not work?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Effective Communication

Please identify which style of communication you use most:

-Passive - Assertive

-Passive-Aggressive - Aggressive

Please identify which style of communication your identified support would say you use most: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please list emotional red flags and warning signs for ineffective communication:

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Please list the most common defense mechanisms you use on a daily basis:

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Please list the most common defense mechanisms your identified support would say you use on a daily basis:

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Please list emotional and verbal boundaries you can establish with identified support for more effective communication:

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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5.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_