

Substance Use Disorder: Warning Signs of Relapse

Relapse is not a single event, but a gradual process with three categories of warning signs. The goal of relapse prevention is for clients to regularly monitor themselves so that they can recognize that they are experiencing the warning signs of relapse early. Acting on the warning signs quickly can prevent relapse from progressing into a loss of control over substance use.

Below are warning signs of relapse:

Signs of Emotional Relapse	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bottling up emotions• Isolating• Not going to meetings• Going to meetings, but not sharing• Focusing on other people's problems• Poor eating habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor sleeping habits• Poor self-care (neglected appearance, lack of interest in clothing, grooming, or looks)• Irritability/negativity• Anxiety or depression

Signs of Mental Relapse	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cravings for the substance• Thinking about people, places, and things associated with past use• Minimizing consequences of past use or glamorizing past use• Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thinking of schemes to better control using• Looking for physical relapse opportunities• Planning a physical relapse

Signs of Mental Relapse
<p>Physical relapse is the act of using the substance again.</p> <p>If someone is experiencing the emotional and mental warning signs and they do not address it, they may experience a physical relapse. When physical relapse occurs, there is a chance that it may quickly lead to uncontrolled substance use.</p>