

Do you have the skills to prevent a relapse to alcohol and/or drug use? Knowing the dangers and what you can do to plan for these can help you keep things simple and safe.

Phase 1: Early Recovery

In early recovery abstinence from all mood altering substances is the goal.

1. Knowledge of addiction and its overall effects must be learned.
2. Setting limits with yourself and others and coping skills must be learned. The average craving only lasts about 60 seconds. Not coping with stress is a major reason for relapse.
3. A sobriety based support system must be started and developed. How many meetings are you going to? How many recovery contacts do you have? Be honest with the people you trust about your efforts and verbalize your need for their support.

In Phase 1 of recovery the major cause of relapse is failure to develop effective recovery and social skills needed to build an abstinence and recovery based lifestyle.

Phase 2: Middle Recovery

A balanced lifestyle is the major goal of middle recovery. Your work includes:

1. Work on yourself to reestablish self-esteem and self-worth.
2. Do your part in repairing damaged relationships with family and friends.
3. Move back into society in a contributing and productive way.

In Phase 2 of recovery the major cause of relapse is handling relationships and emotions generated by life problems.

Phase 3: Later Recovery

In the later stage of recovery, you try to make changes in ongoing issues that have continued to keep you from feeling satisfied with your life. This is a phase of personal growth and movement forward, working on:

1. Identifying and changing self-sabotaging and self-defeating behaviors.
2. Examining sources of your personality issues.
3. Sorting through family of origin issues.
4. Continuing to practice the coping skills you have developed and learning new ones.
5. Be willing to share your new found skills with others. One of the best ways to prevent a relapse is to help others achieve sobriety!

In Phase 3 of recovery the major cause of relapse is either the lack of ability to cope and process the emotional stress of unresolved childhood issues or avoiding the need to change your lifestyle and personality into one of health and growth.

Remember: Nothing is so bad that a drink or drug can't make it worse!