

## RELAPSE PREVENTION

Clients who enter treatment and are serious about recovery are naturally concerned with whether or not they will return to substance usage after treatment. From 20 to 80 percent of the clients in primary treatment have had some type of prior treatment for their substance usage. Research indicates that a high percentage of people relapse within the first three months of recovery regardless of their drug of choice; therefore, it seems healthy to address clients' concerns about relapse. This section will address relapse by having you complete various exercises which come from diverse perspectives and theories about recovery, relapse, and relapse prevention. The goal of this section is relapse **prevention**.

The exercises within this section are designed to help prevent relapse before the point of substance usage. Relapse does not have to be part of your recovery process. However, if you have relapsed or do relapse in the future, then the goal is to help you **learn** from the experience so as to prevent a future occurrence. One lesson to be learned from a relapse episode is not to give up and to use the event as a learning experience and a milestone to your recovery. We are defining recovery not simply as abstinence but a return to wholesome and productive living. Abstinence, then, is seen as a **prerequisite** for recovery. Later we will address the subject of dealing with substance thoughts to help you achieve abstinence.

### Relapse History

If you have attempted recovery in the past but have relapsed, it may be helpful for you to complete a relapse history in order to identify your relapse dynamics and patterns. The lessons learned from this exercise may help you to prevent relapse in the future if you take appropriate corrective actions.

List periods of time you have had in recovery prior to substance usage. Be specific. (Example: January 2013 – June 2014.)

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For each of the time periods listed above, describe what happened. Be specific. Be sure to include what things you were doing in your recovery program, along with what you stopped doing or didn't do.

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