

The Relapse Prevention Workbook

created by
Debbie Shepard, LSW

Expert-Developed
Worksheets & Templates
to Keep You on Track
with Sobriety

About this Workbook

The Relapse Prevention Workbook is a vital tool for those facing substance use challenges, offering practical strategies for personal growth and recovery understanding. It includes engaging exercises that help individuals navigate their wellness journeys, especially during vulnerable moments in early recovery or setbacks. Incorporating its exercises into daily routines or therapy can enhance coping strategies.

Suitable for both professionals and individuals in recovery, the workbook provides compassionate, evidence-based support to strengthen commitment to sobriety and build resilience.

About the Author



Debbie Shepard, LSW is a licensed clinical social worker and therapist, currently in private practice, with many years of clinical and supervisory experience in the behavioral health field. Her past jobs include a role as Director of Substance Use Treatment for a community agency and supervisory roles at other programs. She taught a substance use treatment course for Fordham's online social work program and was selected as a subject matter expert and helped write questions for the CAADC exam. She has worked in a psychiatric hospital on the substance use treatment unit and in an emergency department. In her previous career, she worked as an attorney in juvenile abuse/neglect court. She co-leads canine assisted therapy groups. She is certified as dual disorder professional by Illinois Certification Board.

Part A

Relapse Prevention Legwork

Part A.1

Define why

Right now, you might feel energized and excited to pursue sobriety and develop a relapse prevention plan. That's fantastic! However, remember that these feelings won't always stay strong. You will encounter challenges and face triggers that tempt you to drink.

Before diving into your relapse prevention plan, take the time to reflect on why you want to get sober and commit to staying that way.

In the following pages, outline your reasons. Get specific. Perhaps you want to stay sober to ease a family member's worries, or to avoid the misery of hangovers.

The more personal and detailed your answers, the easier it will be to maintain motivation and adhere to your long-term relapse prevention plan.

Keep in mind: You may notice some repetition in the prompts. These exercises encourage you to explore your motivations for sobriety from various angles.



Revisit your answers on the following pages whenever you need extra motivation.

Define why

List 10 reasons you want to be sober:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Benefits

List 5 benefits of being sober that you've observed:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Pride points

List 5 things you are proud of, related to your sobriety. Again, get specific!
These could be:

- The number of days you've remained sober so far
- The number of negative breathalyzer test results you've received
- Joining a support group, or the number of meetings you've attended

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

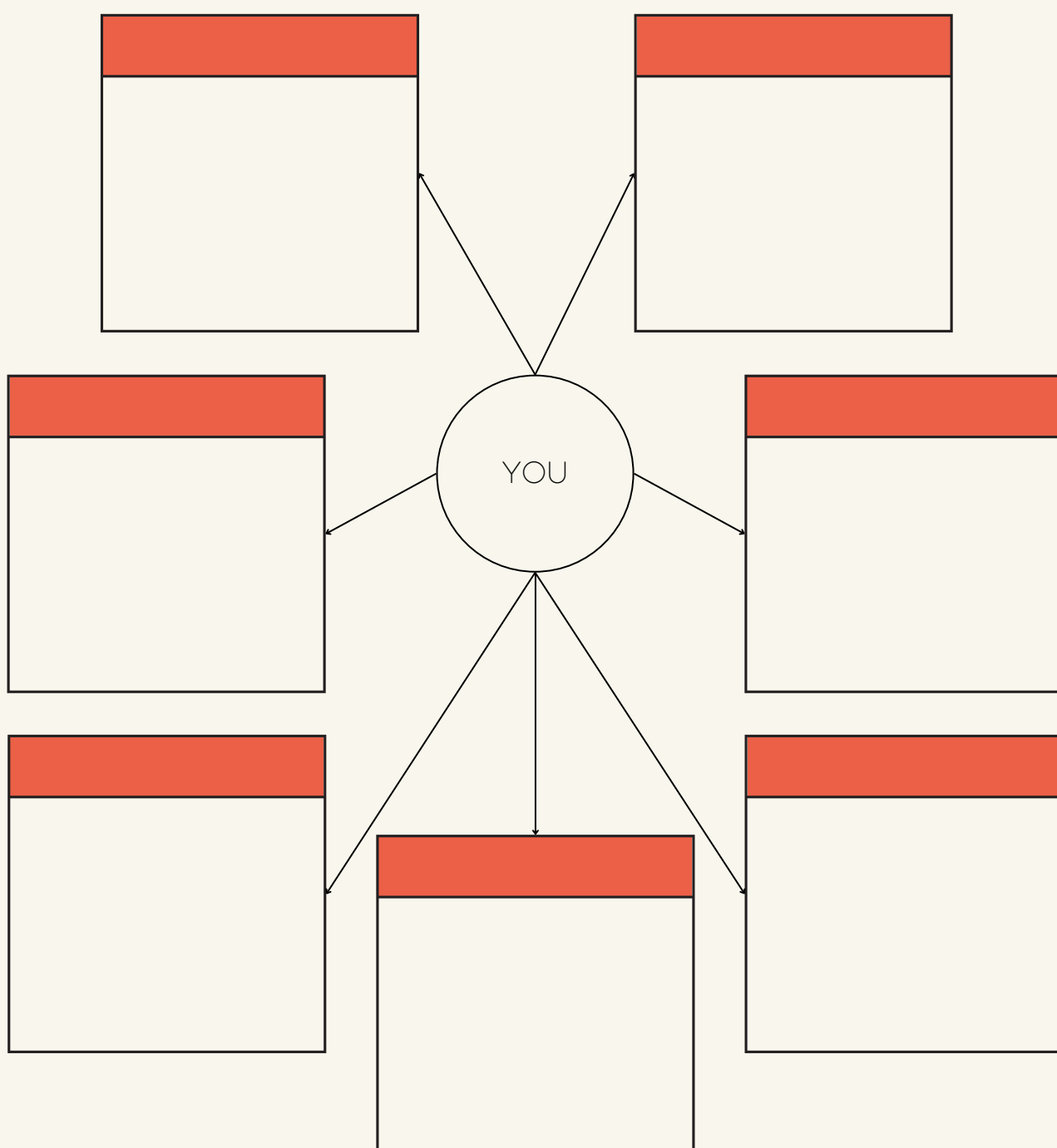
Negatives

If you relapsed right now, what are 10 negative consequences that could result?

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Your impact

Who in your life would be negatively impacted if you relapsed? In each box, write a person's name at the top and ways they may be affected below.



Part A.2

Signs of danger

You will face temptations to drink. That is inevitable.

The only way to prevent relapse is to identify the sources of these urges – the people, places, thoughts, things, and behaviors that might trigger you to relapse.

The following exercises will help you thoroughly understand these triggers. This way, you can begin building healthier routines and craft a comprehensive relapse prevention plan.

Thinking patterns

List 5 thinking patterns or thoughts that are warning signs that you may be in danger of relapse. For example:

- Romanticizing the past: Frequently reminiscing about the "good times" associated with drinking
- Feeling overconfident: Believing that you are completely immune to relapse and that you can handle any situation without support
- Ignoring red flags: Dismissing small warnings or signs that you are getting too close to risky situations or triggers

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Warning behaviors

List 5 behaviors you exhibit that might indicate you're in danger of relapse. A few examples:

- Isolating yourself from your support network or avoiding social interactions
- Neglecting self-care routines such as exercise, healthy eating, or regular sleep
- Experiencing mood swings or irritability that are out of character

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

High-risk situations


List 5 high-risk situations for relapse, such as:

- Parties where alcohol is present
- Highly stressful work environments
- Being in environments
- Having an argument with a particular person (i.e. your spouse)


1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Things to avoid


List 10 people, places or things you should avoid to prevent relapse.




Person Place
 Thing









Person Place
 Thing



Person Place
 Thing



Person Place
 Thing


 Person Place
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 Person Place
 Thing

Relapse triggers

List 10 relapse triggers. These could include things like tight deadlines at work that make you feel overwhelmed, or a certain holiday/milestone event that brings up bad memories.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Learn from the past

If you relapsed in the past, what are some things you learned from the experience and will do differently?

New routines

What are some things you can START doing regularly, right now, to prevent a future relapse? Create your checklist below.

Habits to quit

What are some things you can STOP doing, right now, to decrease your risk of relapse? List them below.

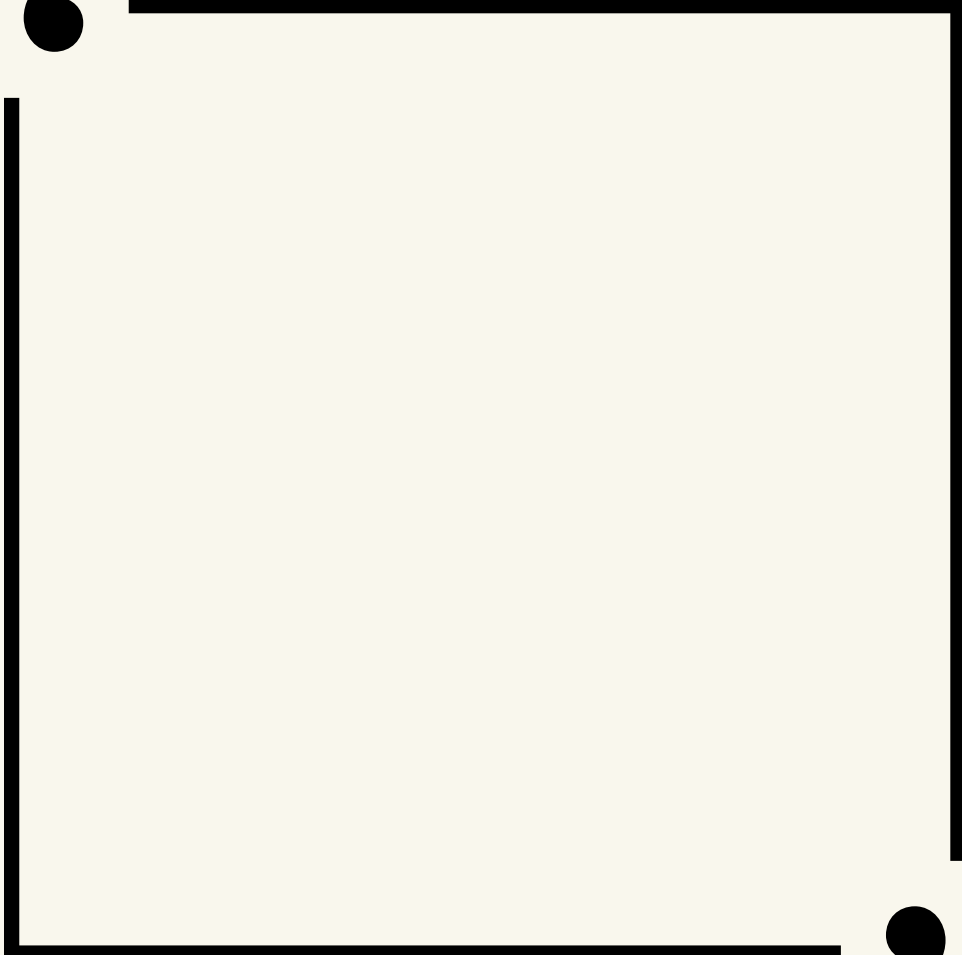


Words to live by

What is your favorite motivational quote, slogan or saying?

Try to think of one that you can connect to your sobriety journey, and that you can think of when your motivation is running low. Write it below.

“



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Part B

Relapse Prevention Planning

Part B

Crafting your plan

Congratulations on completing Part A!

Now that you've completed the Legwork to identify exactly WHY you want to prevent relapses, you can start developing your plan for exactly HOW you're going to do that.



In the following prompts, you'll explore practical strategies and tools that will help you maintain your progress and stay on track. Remember, this is your personalized roadmap, designed to support your journey toward a healthier, more balanced life.



Revisit your answers on the following pages whenever you need extra motivation.

My contacts

List 3 people you will call or text if you have an urge to relapse. Write out their phone numbers.

 Name	 Phone Number



Print this page and place it in an easily accessible spot, like on your fridge or corkboard.

Activity Menu

List 10 things you can do if you're tempted to relapse (i.e. calling a friend).

Think of this list like a menu: Choose an activity based on your mood, what is accessible to you at the time or what feels like it would be most effective. You can select what fits best. Plus, you have the option to try something and if it doesn't work, then go down the list and try something else.

1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

Support networks


List 2 in-person and 2 virtual AA, NA, SMART recovery, or other meetings you could attend regularly.

In-person Support Group Name:	
Usual Meeting Day/Time	
Location	
Group contact information	

In-person Support Group Name:	
Usual Meeting Day/Time	
Location	
Group contact information	

Virtual Support Group Name:	
Usual Meeting Day/Time	
Meeting link (i.e., Zoom link)	
Contact information	

Virtual Support Group Name:	
Usual Meeting Day/Time	
Meeting link (i.e., Zoom link)	
Contact information	

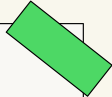
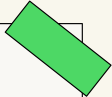
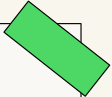
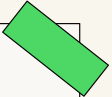
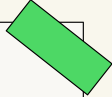
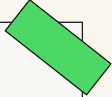
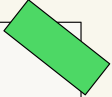
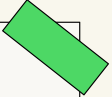
 Print this page & the previous one. Place them in an easily accessible spot, like on your fridge or corkboard.

Build your toolkit

What are some items, if any, you will use to cope with triggers and stay motivated? Write them in the boxes below.

Choose things that resonate with you, personally. For example:

- A photo of a loved one can serve as a powerful reminder of positive relationships and support systems.
- Recovery literature and religious texts can provide guidance and inspiration, and they may help you deal with difficult emotions.
- Soothing scents, like lavender, can have a calming effect and reduce anxiety - which can be especially helpful if stress is a trigger for you.
- A favorite poem or a book can provide an escape, offering new perspectives or relatable stories that remind you of resilience and hope.

A Final Word

You did it.

Congratulations on creating your Relapse Prevention Plan! This is a major milestone in your journey towards sobriety.

A few things to remember:

- Don't hesitate to adjust and improve this plan whenever you feel it's necessary. Add anything you believe will support your progress. After all, sobriety is an ongoing process and a valuable learning experience.
- Every step forward is a victory, no matter how small it may seem.
- Celebrate your achievements. Recognizing your progress boosts motivation and reinforces your commitment to staying sober.

As you continue on this path, know that you absolutely have the strength and resilience to achieve your goals.

We wish you all the best as you build a healthier, happier life.