

Gambling Relapse Prevention Plan – Things to Consider

You may choose to use a separate sheet of paper, notebook, or your own journal for some or all of these items. You will also need a calendar.

Triggers/Coping Skills:

List **Internal Triggers** (negative emotions, thoughts, shame, grief, etc.)

List **External Triggers** (too much money, not enough money, people, places, things, pain, trauma, TV ads, mail adds, others talking about gambling, etc.)

List at least two **coping skills** you can use for each trigger, so you have written at least twice as many solutions as problems.

Support Network:

Safe/Supportive: those who are clean/sober/gambling-free/not a trigger AND are supportive of your recovery/treatment, your way.

Safe/Unsupportive: those who are clean/sober/gambling-free/not a trigger but NOT encouraging/supportive of your recovery/treatment, or not supportive of you doing it your own way.

Unsafe/Supportive: Those who are supportive of your recovery/treatment your way but may be easily manipulated or fooled if you wanted to gamble again or relapsed. Or those who are supportive of your recovery, but are not clean/sober/gambling-free themselves and therefore still present some risk.

Unsafe/Unsupportive: People who are neither clean/sober/gambling-free themselves AND ARE NOT supportive. Or those who are a trigger for you or are an unhealthy relationship that adds much negativity to your life and could lead to you wanting to gamble again.

Support meetings: Where will you go? When? What time? What do you hope to get out of it? What will you put into it? You are there for *you*, no judgment, no comparisons!

Healthy relationships and boundaries:

Who are your **healthy relationships**? _____

Who are your **unhealthy relationships**? _____

What kind of **boundary issues** are in your relationships? _____

How will you set **healthy boundaries**? _____

What steps do you need to take to **eliminate the unhealthy relationships** and the unsafe/unsupportive people? _____

How do you increase the **safe/supportive/healthy** people in your life? _____

Plan for coping with emotions:

Which emotions cause you **problems**? (i.e. anger, anxiety, boredom, sadness, fatigue, fear, frustration, loneliness, indifference, self-pity, shame, depression, other) _____

How will you **cope** with them? (i.e. talk it out with _____, discuss it in group, discuss it in therapy, journal, creative writing, medication, meditation, deep breathing, exercise, hobby, look at a photo of _____, pros vs. cons lists, apologize, offer forgiveness, etc.) _____

Plan for coping with unhelpful thinking:

What thoughts cause you **problems** or are just not helpful to your progress? (i.e. blaming others, I do/don't deserve _____, the "system" is at fault, justifications/excuses to gamble, thoughts that have led to previous relapses, thoughts that have led to other issues, etc.) _____

How will you **cope** with them? (i.e. educate myself on _____, do some research on _____, talk to so-and-so about _____, make a list of the things that are showing me that the thought is not helpful, why change it?, etc.) _____

Goals:

Make them SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time Oriented)

Consider goals for: Physical health, emotional health, education, career, family, legal, transportation, spiritual, sober support, overcoming obstacles, learning something new, self-care, etc.

(Use a separate sheet of paper, journal, or calendar.)

Barriers/Obstacles:

What barriers are there to you achieving your goals? _____

What obstacles are there to your recovery? _____

How will you handle negativity from others? _____

New Daily Routine:

Write out a new daily routine for work days, weekends, etc.

Things to put on your schedule: groups, support meetings, time with sponsor, work, sleep, meals, alone-time, exercise, hobbies, time with family/friends, religious/community activities, chores/errands, projects, treatment homework, treatment goals, etc.

Self-Care:

What medical appointments do you need to make appointments for? _____

Consider how to take care of yourself with regards to: adequate sleep, down-time, eating/drinking enough, nutrition, coping with emotions, healthy ways to release anger/frustration, dealing with stress, etc.

(Use your calendar to put self-care time in your schedule)

Making Amends:

Is making amends with people part of your recovery? Whom will you seek to make amends, and how will you approach it? _____

Do you need to seek closure for something? _____

Are you in need of asking for forgiveness or extending it, and with whom? _____

Emergency Plan:

Make a plan to deal with **short-term emergencies**, such as facing triggers, being around users, or events that cause mild-moderate anxiety/feeling overwhelmed. _____

Also make a plan for **long-term and worst-case scenario emergencies**. What is your plan of action if you suddenly lose a job, a relationship, or if someone you care about is suddenly not in your life any more due to death, illness, or moving away? Using/drinking again will never bring back what is lost, and grieving from a jail cell or alone in a room brings only more tragedy to yourself and others who care about you and who are experiencing the loss as well.

Discuss your emergency plans with anyone who would be involved in it. Should an emergency happen, you will be better prepared to handle it without jeopardizing your recovery, and those who care about you will have the peace of mind to know that you have a plan.

Relapse Flags:

What are your Red Flags, Orange Flags, and Yellow Flags of relapse? Who needs to know your flags?

Red Flags (Look out, I'm about to gamble!) _____

Orange Flags (If I'm not careful, a relapse is around the corner) _____

Yellow Flags (I'm not in my healthiest state of mind and body, it puts me in a vulnerable state to triggers and cravings) _____

Who needs to know these signs? Do them a favor, and just tell them plainly, they are not a mind reader.

Other areas to consider:

Pain Management: How will you deal with pain? Do you need a referral to pain management? What do you need to tell your doctor about your pain/addiction/recovery/treatment?

Mental Health diagnosis/treatment: What coping skills to deal with mental health/emotional triggers are effective or worth trying?

Would seeking MH/emotional counseling be beneficial?

Where will it go on your schedule?

What do you want to get out of counseling?

Are you compliant with medications?

What do you need to tell your therapist about your emotions/struggles/addiction/recovery/treatment?
