

# 7 Signs a Recovering Addict may be headed for a Relapse



Recovering from drug or alcohol addiction is no easy task, and everyone is going to hit a few bumps along the way. The key to a successful recovery, however, is recognizing changes in attitude or behaviour that may lead to relapse – before it's too late.

Watch for the following signs in yourself or in a loved one who is recovering from drug or alcohol addiction, and intervene before these behaviours cause a relapse.

## Believing You're Completely Cured

1

After completing treatment, many addicts are very proud of their ability to kick their habit – and so they should be. However, they also need to understand that a month or two of sobriety does not mean they are completely cured. When addicts are too confident in their success, they may begin to call up old friends they used to party with or plan to spend an evening at a bar they used to hang out in. Although they have no intention of using again, the temptations are almost always too much for the recovering addict and their recovery is in serious danger.

## Refusal to Ask for Help

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The recovery process is long and hard. There will be many times that you feel alone, scared or even depressed, and these feelings are not limited only to the beginning of the recovery process. These feelings can even come about years after your last drug or alcohol use. Letting your support groups, friends and family members understand how you're feeling will take some of the weight off your shoulders. As well, your friends and family can play a key role in keeping you on track to reach your goal.

## Experiencing Social Disconnect

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Asking for help, however, is not always easy. It's not uncommon for recovering addicts to feel frequent social anxiety. This means that any interaction with other people creates intense anxiety, often causing the addict to withdraw from any type of social situation, including support meetings or therapy sessions. This is incredibly harmful to the recovery process, since the more alienated the addict becomes, the more likely they are to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol.

## Glorification of Drug or Alcohol Abuse

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As the addict spends more days sober, they may get a clouded view of what it was like when they were using. They may begin talking fondly of 'the good ol' days' when they were using. If you or your loved one is allowing these 'good' memories back in, remind yourself or your friend of the bad times too. Having family and friends write journal entries about how the addict made them feel during the addiction is a great way for the recovering addict to remember that while some of the times may have been good, there was a lot of bad too.

## Excusing Unhealthy Behaviour

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It's far too easy to replace one addiction with another. In recovery, it's common for addicts to use food, sexual relationships, shopping or even gambling to give them the 'rush' they're looking for in place of the drugs or alcohol. Recovery is a difficult and emotional process, and these 'band-aids' are only going to cover up the problem, not fix it. Focus on therapy, exercise, hobbies and other positive lifestyle changes to get you through the tough times.

## Elevated Stress or Anxiety

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In the early stages of recovery, stress, anxiety and sleeplessness come as regular withdrawal symptoms, but tend to decrease over time. It doesn't mean they can't reoccur later on, however, and the addict needs to handle them appropriately since these symptoms can be a major trigger for a relapse. Keeping a low-stress lifestyle isn't easy, but it should be attempted. High stress and anxiety levels will often encourage the recovering addict to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol. Do some yoga, go for a run, or call up a friend to watch a movie. It's important to de-stress and get yourself out of the danger zone.

## Living Pessimistically

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Simply put – if you think you're going to fail, you probably will. Support systems are a very important part of recovery, but if your own heart isn't in it, how will the recovery process succeed? Every recovering addict will be hit with minor and major obstacles along the road to recovery, but when you're sober, healthy and living a rewarding life – you'll realize that it was all worth it. Don't let the bad days get you down and always do your best to stay optimistic about your recovery and what life has in store for you.