

Relapse Warning Signals

Relapse is a process rather than an event. A group of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and thoughts develop first. Then these lead to an action - acting out the addiction. One may fall into relapse over a period of hours, days, weeks, and even months. Warning signals to alert you to a possible relapse include:

- Feeling uneasy, afraid, and anxious about staying clean and sober. This begins to increase and serenity decreases.
- Ignoring feelings of fear and anxiety and refusing to talk about them with others.
- Having a low tolerance for frustration.
- Becoming defiant, so that rebelliousness begins to replace what has been love and acceptance. Anger becomes one's ruling emotion.
- The "ISM" (I-Self-Me) attitude grows. Self-centered behavior begins to rule one's attitudes and feelings.
- Increasing dishonesty, whereby small lies begin to surface and deceptive thinking again takes over.
- Increased isolation and withdrawal characterized by missing group meetings and withdrawing from friends, family, and other support.
- Exhibiting a critical, judgmental attitude—a behavior which often is a process of projection—and the person in recovery feels shame and guilt for his or her negative behaviors.
- Lack of self-confidence shown by putting down oneself, overwhelming feeling of failure, a tendency to set oneself for failure.
- Overconfidence demonstrated by statements such as, "I'll never do that again," or by simply believing that one is the "exception" to all rules about recovery.

(From the book "Conquering Chemical Dependency")