

MAINTAINING BEHAVIOR CHANGE

July, 2021

Maintaining the progress you have been making is one of the greatest challenges you will face when making behavior changes. There are two keys to maintaining the gains you have made and continuing to make progress.

Controlling Response to Slips

Even though many slips are preventable, **you cannot prevent them all** (e.g., some high-risk situations are not predictable or were not known to be high risk). You will always have some periods when you are not doing as well as you would like.

In other words, you *will* have slips.

The most important thing is to respond to these slips in a manner that gets you back on track as quickly as possible.

How you think about the slip is the most important factor. If you view the slip as a total return to old habits you are more likely to give up. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between a *slip* (a.k.a., a lapse) and a *relapse*.

A ***SLIP*** is a first instance of backsliding. A ***RELAPSE*** occurs when slips string together and you **return to your former behaviors**. Since a relapse is made up of multiple slips, there are many opportunities to stop it and turn it back around before it reaches the relapse stage. However, even once it reaches this stage, you can still turn it around again (that's what you did originally).

When you find yourself having a relapse, you need to:

- **Identify** that you have slipped,
- **Recall** what you were doing that had been helping, and
- **Resume** it.

These actions will get you moving back in the right direction. The measure of success is not whether there are ups or down in your progress, but whether over all you are progressing toward your goal(s) in spite of occasional slips. If you find you have relapsed, get out the education materials you used to help you learn more effective coping skills and remind yourself what you can do to get back on track.

Primary Care Behavioral Health

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Personalized Relapse Prevention Plan

I. What situations are you likely to relapse in?

II. What do you plan to do in these situations to avoid relapse?

What specifically will you do in these situations? What will you tell people to help you? How will you alter the situation so you won't fall back into your hold maladaptive habits?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

III. What are some of the negative thoughts that you are likely to experience in these relapse situations?

IV. What truthful and realistic things will you say to yourself to counteract negative thoughts in these high-risk situations?

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