Mindful Relapse Prevention Skills for a Healthier Life

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HUNGRY GHOST OVERVIEW

I. Alcohol/Drug Recovery & Relapse Prevention
II. Core Relapse Issues
III. Mindfulness & Compassion Overview
IV. Anger, Criticism/Blame, Impatience
V. Mindful & Compassionate Tools for Relapse Prevention
Alcohol / Drug Recovery & Relapse Prevention

CAUSES OF RELAPSE

PHYSIOLOGICAL
SPIRITUAL
ENVIRONMENT
COGNITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS

AFFECTIVE
BEHAVIORAL
TREATMENT RELATED
PSYCHOLOGICAL
RELAPSE RATES

- Relapse Rate Estimates – 60-80%
- Heroin, Smoking, and Alcohol – high rates of relapse – 2/3 within the first 90 days CONNORS ET. AL 2013
- 95% relapse rates – depression, anxiety, personality disorders
- 12 Month Relapse Rates – range 80-95% BRANDEN, VIDRIN, LITVIN 2007; MILLER, WESTERBERG, HARRIS TONIGAN, 1996
- 2/3 of relapses – negative emotional states, interpersonal conflict/social pressure CUMMINGS ET. AL., 1980

RELAPSE PREVENTION (RP)
A cognitive-behavioral approach designed to help individuals anticipate and cope with setbacks during the behavior change process.

Marlatt
TWO BASIC GOALS OF RP:

1. Awareness and building coping skills

2. Limiting relapse proneness by promoting a healthy and balanced lifestyle

Henderson, Witkiewitz, George, Marlatt, 2011

2 PERSPECTIVES OF RELAPSE

1. Actual event

2. Falling back to unhealthy habits
TYPES OF RELAPSE

LAPSE

THERAPEUTIC RELAPSE
awareness & adjustments

FATAL RELAPSE
ends in death

WHAT TO DO IF RELAPSE OCCURS?

1. Use the relapse as a learning experience
2. See the relapse as a specific, unique event
3. Examine the relapse openly (to reduce guilt, shame, feelings of hopelessness)
4. Analyze the triggers for the relapse
5. Expectations – What would drinking/using accomplish?
6. Plan for dealing with the aftermath/consequences of the relapse
7. Tell yourself – “Control is only a moment away.”
8. Renew your commitment to abstinence
9. Make immediate plans for recovery – don’t hesitate – do it now!
10. Contact your support system and discuss slips.

Source: Substance Abuse Treatment & the Stages of Change, Connors, DiClemente Velasquez, Donovan, 2013
WHEN TREATMENT ISN’T RIGHT

“I heard sad tales of repeated visits to rehab with the implication that the client had somehow failed, when it seemed apparent that something about the treatment had very likely failed the individual.”

PROBLEMS WITH RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT

• One Size Does Not Fit All
• Cookie Cutter Approaches
• My Way or the Highway
3 C’S OF ADDICTION

Compulsion/Obsession

Inability to Control

Continued use despite “significant” negative Consequences

ALCOHOL/DRUG RELAPSE

Negative Emotional States – Reactivity
Abstinence Violation Effects
Shame - Disconnection
### STAGES OF RECOVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>(0-15 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honeymoon</td>
<td>(15-45 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wall</td>
<td>(45-120 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
<td>(120-180 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution Stage</td>
<td>(180-360 days)</td>
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</tbody>
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### MOST RESEARCHED AREAS

- Tension & Stress Reduction
*SELF-MEDICATION MOTIVE*

Khantzian, Edward (1985)

ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- **NARCOTICS** – painkillers, numb out
- **CNS DEPRESSANTS** – sedation, loss of inhibitions
- **STIMULANTS** – increase in energy, motivation, sense of power
- **HALLUCINOGENS** – distortion of reality, different perspective, escape reality
HOPE IS NOWHERE

HOPE IS NOW HERE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pessimists</th>
<th>Optimists</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pervasive</td>
<td>Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>External</td>
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**BOREDOM**

- Interpersonal
- Leisure Time
- Life
- Existential
PROBLEMS IN ATTACHMENT

“The worst fate, however, is not the suffering, the worst fate is suffering alone.”


CRAVING & ATTACHMENT

Root Causes of Suffering
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AA</th>
<th>Dharma</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Delusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Day at a Time</td>
<td>Being in the Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Serenity Prayer</td>
<td>Issues of Control, Surrender, Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress not Perfection</td>
<td>Letting go of Attachment to Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shit Happens</td>
<td>Life includes Suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Go &amp; Let God</td>
<td>Forgiveness &amp; Loving Kindness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Clinical Psychology</th>
<th>Psychology of Buddhism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on pathology</td>
<td>Focus on living and freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 states of depression</td>
<td>25 states of rapture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A list of anxiety disorders</td>
<td>A list of states of extreme trust and contentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on independence</td>
<td>Emphasis on interdependence</td>
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Jack Kornfield, Ph.D., *The Wise Heart*
God grant me the serenity to **ACCEPT** the things I cannot change, **COURAGE** to change the things I can, and the **WISDOM** to know the difference.

Grant me the serenity to accept the **PEOPLE** I cannot change,
Courage to change the **ONE** I can,
And the wisdom to know it’s **ME**.
“You must be the change you wish to see in the World”

Mahatma Gandhi

“Wherever you are that is the entry point.”

Kabir, 15th Century Indian Poet
MINDFULNESS

The Big Three:
  • Anger
  • Criticism (Blame)
  • Impatience

Delusion, Grasping, Resistance

THE BIG THREE

Anger  Criticism  Impatience
ANGRY

“If you get angry easily, it may be because the seed of anger in you has been watered frequently over many years, and unfortunately you have allowed it or even encouraged it to be watered.”

Thich Nhat Hanh,
_Taming the Tiger Within_,
(Riverhead Books, 2004)

“The thought manifests as the word;
The word manifests as the deed;
The deed develops into habit;
And habit hardens into character.

So watch the thought and its ways with care;
And let it spring from love,
Born out of concern for all beings.”

The Buddha
HALTS

HUNGRY – feed the hunger
ANGRY – quiet anger & regain compassion
LONELY – “cool” loneliness
TIRED – rest, relax, recreate, renew
SICK – heal and nurture back to wellness

FEAR

F – False
E – Evidence
A – Appears
R – Real

F – Frequent
E – Exaggerations
A – About
R – Reality
CRITICAL OF OTHERS

“Paying attention to another’s faults is just a distraction from paying attention to what is happening right here and now.”

*Healing Zen*, Ellen Birx, 2002

“...a barrier called blame that keeps us from communicating genuinely with others, and we fortify it with our concepts of who’s right and who’s wrong.”

Pema Chodron
WOULD YOU RATHER BE

RIGHT OR HAPPY?

Tireless Debate

Alcoholics Anonymous

RAIN

R ecognize
A ccept
I nvestigate
N ot identify/personalize
“Your fondest dreams will be transformed into fruitful realities if you just know the secret of growing the patience-tree in your heart.”


“The courageous act of starting to address one’s anger and developing greater patience is, to me a sacred art.”

PATIENCE: THE ART OF PEACEFUL LIVING
by Allen Lokos, 2012

“For a home to be a refuge it needs to be a place where love, compassion and patience prevail.”

Delusion
Grasping
Resisting
“I am the cause of most of my suffering because of the habits of my own mind.”

His Holiness The Dalai Lama

“Your mind is all stories.”
Delusion

Awareness

Clarity

Wisdom

Source: Jack Kornfield, *The Wise Heart*

“The essence of bravery is being without self-deception.”

Pema Chodron
Grasping

Letting Go

Kindness

Flexibility

Source: Jack Kornfield, *The Wise Heart*

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.”

Helen Keller, *We Bereaved*, 1929
Resisting

[Diagram showing arrows from Resisting to Open-Heartedness and from Resisting to Loving-Kindness]

Source: Jack Kornfield, *The Wise Heart*

Compassion
“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries, without them humanity cannot survive.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek & find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.

Rumi
COMPASSION RESISTANCE

FEARS of RECEIVING COMPASSION

I wonder if displays of warmth and kindness from others are genuine.

When people are kind and compassionate towards me I feel anxious or embarrassed.

I’m fearful of becoming dependent on others, because they might not be available or willing to give compassion.

Gilbert, et. al, 2011

FEARS OF COMPASSION FOR OTHERS

I worry that if I am compassionate and vulnerable people will drain my emotional resources.

People will take advantage of me if they see me as too compassionate.

There are some people in life who don’t deserve compassion.

Being compassionate towards people who have done bad things is letting them off the hook.
The door to the human heart can only be opened from the inside.

Spanish Proverb

SELF–COMPASSION

“The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change.”

Carl Rogers (1961)
“Caring for others requires caring for oneself.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama (2000)

HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE

“In this world hate never yet dispelled hate.

Only love dispels hate.

This is the law, ancient and inexhaustible.”

The Buddha
FLOW

“When consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and you pursue what you are doing for the sheer sake of doing it.”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

“May all beings, omitting none, feel safe, and content and happy, and live with ease.”

Metta Sutta