

**SMART Forward & Backward Steps in Recovery**

Posted by DavidT - 11 Feb 2020 19:59

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**Forward Steps to Recovery**

**Using Constructive Relapse-Preventive Thinking**

1. Thought Stopping: I'm not going to think about that; I've already made my decision.
  
2. Thought Substitution: I'm in danger – I'd better be alert; I think I'll call Bob; I think I'll plan my vacation.
  
3. Debating/Disputing/Challenging Your Negative Self-Talk: Where is the evidence? Is this thought or belief true or valid? How does this thought or belief serve my best interest?
  
4. Coping Statements: This feeling will eventually pass; It's hard, but not too hard; Condemn the behavior, not the person.
  
5. Positive Affirmation: I have said no to myself before – I can do so again; I'm going to treasure my sobriety; Even if I have lapsed, I can accept myself.
  
6. Review of Goals (Desirable Outcomes): I want to stop drinking – it's my goal; I have already decided that I want to keep my relationship with my wife; I want to go home sober.
  
7. Review of Negative Consequences (Undesirable Outcomes): Eventually, I will lose my job; I can't take two drinks without taking several more and getting drunk; My relationships will suffer.
  
8. Do Written Homework (SMART Problem Sheet, ABC Sheet, or Drinking Sheet).

9. Reframing: Look at the situation from another angle or another person's viewpoint. Look at the benefits of choosing not to engage in the addictive behavior.

10. Rational-Emotive Imagery: Imagine yourself behaving or feeling differently about the situation. Close your eyes and practice responding to someone in a different, more rational, more effective manner.

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### **Using Constructive Relapse-Preventive Actions**

1. Get involved in a project or a recreational activity.

2. Walk the other way.

3. If there are any remaining liquor, drugs, sweets, or other addictive substances in the house, throw them out or flush them down the toilet.

4. Call a friend.

5. Fill in a worksheet.

6. Do something intentionally to lift your spirits other than drinking or drugging: e.g., climb a mountain, go for a brisk walk.

7. Have some seltzer or other non-alcoholic beverage.

8. Go to a SMART Recovery meeting.

9. Read a chapter from Ellis and Velten's When AA Doesn't Work for You or another REBT self-help book.

10. Divert/enjoy yourself: Exercise, go for a walk, watch TV, play a game, cook, take a hot bath, have a cup of coffee, read the newspaper, listen to music.

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Re: SMART Forward & Backward Steps in Recovery  
Posted by DavidT - 11 Feb 2020 20:02

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### **Backward Steps to Addictive Behavior**

Just as recovery is a process and not an event, so is relapse. As a part of your relapse prevention plan, cultivate your awareness of these common backward steps toward addictive behavior.

TRIGGERS – External, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Which areas are the riskiest for you?

Which do you have the most difficulty combating?

Rate each category from 0-10 (where 10 is the riskiest or most difficult).

a.\_\_\_\_ Conditioned responses in certain settings

b.\_\_\_\_ Unpleasant emotions

- c.\_\_\_\_ Unpleasant physical sensations
- d.\_\_\_\_ Pleasant emotions
- e.\_\_\_\_ Pressure from others
- f. \_\_\_\_ Conflict with others
- g.\_\_\_\_ Socializing
- h.\_\_\_\_ Testing personal control

IMAGINING/FANTASIZING – Start to imagine what it would be like to... how you would feel, how you would think and act ... then...

UNHELPFUL THINKING – Irrational beliefs, cognitive distortions, and rationalizations that you used to convince yourself to take the backward step.

- a.\_\_\_\_ Negative exaggeration; awfulizing; catastrophizing.
- b.\_\_\_\_ Self-downing / self denigration.
- c.\_\_\_\_ Rationalizations:
  - “It won’t really matter.”
  - “I deserve it.”
  - “I will only have one.”
  - “It’s been a long time.”
- d.\_\_\_\_ Low frustration tolerance (LFT):
  - “I can’t stand it.”
  - “It’s awful.”
- e.\_\_\_\_ The Tyranny of the Shoulds:

“It shouldn’t be so hard.”

“I shouldn’t have this problem.”

“S/he shouldn’t speak to me that way.”

“The world stinks, and it shouldn’t!”

## PLANNING

– “I’ll just go down to the store and buy a bottle.”

– “I’ll finish this project and then go to the bar.”

– “I’ll take some money out of my other account.”

– Others: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTING – Behaviors that lead to UNDESIRABLE OUTCOMES (list them)

Teach yourself how to respond at each step. Even though it gets harder to intervene at each step along the way, it can be done. Practice rehearsing relapse preventive self-talk in SMART Recovery group meetings (role-playing is an excellent exercise), out loud at home, into a tape recorder, or in writing.

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