

# Preventing Mental Health Relapse

Managing or recovering from mental health conditions, such as anxiety- or depression-related symptoms, is not always easy.

While coping strategies, medications, and therapy can help greatly, it's important to understand how to prevent mental health relapses.

During such difficult times, it's not unusual for one's symptoms to feel worse.

This resource can help you to:

- **Track your own symptoms;**
- **Identify early relapse warning signs;**
- **Recognize triggers; and**
- **Develop coping mechanisms.**

All these can help you take better preventative care of your mental health.

## Tracking Relapse Symptoms

Ongoing symptoms of mental disorders can sometimes grow more frequent, serious, or persistent. These may signify the onset of a relapse.

### **Frequency**

*When a relapse occurs, what symptoms do you experience on a more frequent basis?*

### **Intensity**

*When a relapse occurs, are there any symptoms that become more intense, or noticeable? Which ones?*

### Duration

*When you're going through a relapse, are there any particular symptoms that take longer to pass than usual? Which?*

### Early Relapse Warning Sign Checklist

Sometimes, relapse onset can be gradual. In these instances, noticing your behavioral changes can help you seek help in a timely manner to prevent a more severe relapse.

Tick any behavioral changes you typically display before a relapse so that you can recognize when to speak to a medical professional.

Heightened feelings of stress, tension, or agitation	
Increased or decreased sleep duration; difficulty falling asleep or waking up	
Slurred, confused, or difficult speech	
Heightened risk-taking behavior, paranoia, delusions, or hallucinations	
Loss of interest in social activities	
Irregular or stopped medication	
Lack of interest in general hygiene	
Increased substance abuse	
Appetite changes; eating more or less than usual	
Heightened tiredness or fatigue	
Other	

## Recognize Relapse Triggers

Mental health relapse triggers are events or circumstances that can precipitate a relapse, and vary between individuals.

Frequently, relapse can be triggered when medication is stopped or during especially challenging periods in one's life.

Change in general is a common trigger for relapse, even when it seems mostly positive e.g. being promoted at work, or spending more time with friends or family.

Tick any triggers you feel are relevant to you, so that you can be more aware of avoiding or carefully handling such situations when they arise.

Ceasing, reducing, or tapering off medication	
Being laid off, fired, demoted at work	
Stopping therapy or treatment early	
Conflict in relationships	
Financial difficulties	
Sickness or death of a loved/close one	
Beginning a new romantic relationship	
Difficult workplace relationships	
Using or misusing intoxicating substances	
Being invited to social events	
Other	

## Develop Coping Mechanisms

Practicing proper self-care can be an effective way to help prevent mental health relapse.

Tick any activities that you typically find helpful to your well-being.

Attending regular appointments (e.g. therapy, counseling, check-ups)	
Using support groups, complementary treatments (e.g. online therapy, peer counseling)	
Talking with close social supports (e.g. friends, family, religious figures)	
Regularly taking prescribed medication	
Exercising regularly	
Getting involved in your mental health treatment plan (e.g. conducting research, making decisions)	
Spending time on pleasant activities (e.g. hobbies, outdoor time in nature, meditation, writing, reading)	
Eating a healthy diet	
Getting sufficient sleep	
Practicing calming techniques (e.g. yoga, mindfulness, meditation, long hot baths)	
Other	