

Relapse Prevention

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When patients leave recovery, the challenges of returning to life as usual can be daunting. We can especially let fear take over when we buy into the frightening statistics that put the likelihood of relapse anywhere from 50-90%.

It's important to realize that recovery is a long process, not a quick-fix solution. However, relapse is also a process, and with the right preventive techniques and mindful monitoring, we can help prevent relapse and further empower our patients on their road to recovery.

Proper Diagnosis of Underlying Issues

As many as half of drug users in the United States have an underlying (and sometimes undiagnosed) mental disorder. When patients learn to depend on substance abuse in order to self-treat mental illness, it's vital to get control of the mental disorder before addiction recovery is a practical reality.

When patients are able to get a handle on underlying problems like anxiety disorders, trauma, depression, or personality disorders, then they are more able to take charge of their addiction recovery as well and understand that there are options besides substance abuse.

10 Reasons Why People Relapse

Withdrawal Symptoms

One of the most common reasons for relapse is the discomfort of withdrawal. Depending on the addictive substance, detoxification and withdrawal symptoms can range from ***pain, headaches, trembling, sweating, anxiety, insomnia, vomiting, seizures, and in some cases death.***

Access to Places With Drugs and Alcohol

Having easy access to places where drugs and alcohol are readily available can make saying no difficult for people who struggle with addiction. An important part of relapse prevention is limiting access to places where illicit substances will be available for purchase or passed around.

Access to People With Drugs and Alcohol

Being around old friends and contacts can remind a former addict of good times and create the desire to use again. This can be even more challenging for former addicts whose friends use peer pressure. Saying goodbye can be hard, but a critical step in recovery is eliminating contact with people who use drugs and alcohol.

Reminders of Addiction

Objects and things can also trigger a relapse by serving as a reminder of addiction and the feeling of being intoxicated. Former addicts have more success when they eliminate all potential reminders of drugs and alcohol in spaces they can control.

Mental Illness and Past Trauma

Many people who suffer from mental health disorders and/or a history of past trauma use drugs and alcohol as a form of escapism or self-medication. Often, treating underlying mental illnesses and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder can help to significantly reduce the risk of relapse.

Triggering Relationships

Difficult relationships and stress can easily cause a former addict to become triggered and puts them at the risk of relapse. As difficult as it may be, for some people, cutting off contact to people who are toxic or who don't support a sober lifestyle is the best way to stay on the path to sobriety.

New, Uncomfortable Situations

Former addicts that tend to be uncomfortable in new situations or where there is a need to be social may find themselves tempted to use substances to numb the emotions and "get through it." Many former addicts believe they are unable to do certain things or be around other people without being intoxicated.

Loneliness and Boredom

Feeling alone and/or bored is a relapse trigger for many former addicts. Planning fun activities with sober friends can help stave off boredom and the feeling of being lonely, ideally keeping the person's mind too occupied to think about drugs and alcohol.

Becoming Too Confident

After several weeks, months, or even years of sobriety, it's easy for a former addict to become overconfident in their ability to resist the temptation of drugs and alcohol. They may imbibe with the intent of it being a singular event, only to fall down the same rabbit hole of using again.

Lack Of Access to Ongoing Support

People who don't have access to a drug and alcohol treatment program that provides ongoing support tend to relapse more often than those who do. Having the ability to reach out for help from drug & alcohol treatment centers in Arizona can reduce the reoccurrence of active addiction.

Building Cognitive Tools and Resources

The cognitive behavioral counseling approach has been found to be very effective in treating addiction. This approach is unique in that it focuses specifically on building internal resources for coping with stress or depression, as well as countering fallacious thought patterns. Together, the patient and psychologist set goals and objectives, and then build skills and techniques that will help to achieve that outcome through directing mental resources and finding creative solutions for problematic self-talk.

Often, stress and/or depression are major triggers for relapse. However, by building our patients' internal resources for dealing with these challenges in a healthy and self-sufficient way, they are able to redirect their path during the initial stages of relapse.

Fortifying Support Networks and Connections

The most important resource of each patient as they leave a recovery center is their network of personal connections that can provide love and support as they work on their road to recovery. One of the most dangerous things for someone recovering from addiction is isolation.

Our focus on family dynamics and intensive family and group counseling seeks to strengthen each patient's resource network, through building communication skills, troubleshooting harmful relationship patterns, and enabling breakthroughs between family members. Our responsibility to teach coping techniques and effective management doesn't end with our patients; it's also important to build up family and friends of our patients so that they are further empowered to aid in the recovery of their loved one.