**Relapse Signs and Symptoms**

***Experiencing Post Acute Withdrawal:*** I start having problems with one or more of the following; thinking difficulties, emotional overreaction problems, sleep disturbances, memory difficulties, becoming accident prone, and/or starting to experience a serious sensitivity to stress.

***Return To Denial:*** I stop telling others what I’m thinking/feeling and start trying to convince myself or others that everything is all right, when in fact it is not.

***Avoidance And Defensive Behavior:*** I start avoiding people who will give me honest feedback and/or I start becoming irritable and angry with them.

***Starting To Crisis Build:*** I start to notice that ordinary everyday problems become overwhelming and no matter how hard I try, I can’t solve my problems.

***Feeling Immobilized (Stuck):*** I start believing that there is nowhere to turn and no way to solve my problems. I feel trapped and start to use magical thinking.

***Becoming Depressed:*** I start feeling down-in-the dumps and have very low energy. I may even become so depressed that I start thinking of suicide.

***Compulsive And/Or Impulsive Behaviors (Loss Of Control):*** I start using one or more of the following- food, sex, caffeine, nicotine, work, gambling, etc. often in an out of control fashion. And/or I may react without thinking of the consequences of my behavior on myself and others.

***Urges And Cravings (Thinking About Drinking/Using):*** I begin to think that alcohol/drug use is the only way to feel better. I start thinking about justifications to drink/use and convince myself that using is the logical thing to do.

***Chemical Loss Of Control (Drinking/Using):*** I find myself drinking/using again to solve my problems. I start to believe that “it’s all over ‘till I hit bottom, so I may as well enjoy this relapse while it’s good.” My problems continue to get worse.

*Adapted from Terence T. Gorski's Warning Sign Identification Process*

**THE TEN MOST COMMON RELAPSE DANGERS**

1. Being in the presence of drugs or alcohol, drug or alcohol users, or places where you used or bought chemicals.  
  
2. Feelings we perceive as negative, particularly anger; also sadness, loneliness, guilt, fear, and anxiety.  
  
3. Positive feelings that make you want to celebrate.  
  
4. Boredom.  
  
5. Getting high on any drug.  
  
6. Physical pain.  
  
7. Listening to war stories and just dwelling on getting high.  
  
8. Suddenly having a lot of cash.  
  
9. Using prescription drugs that can get you high even if you use them properly.  
  
10. Believing that you no longer have to worry (complacent). That is, that you are no longer stimulated to crave drugs/alcohol by any of the above situations, or by anything else – and therefore maybe it’s safe for you to use occasionally.

**RELAPSE ATTITUDES**

SOBRIETY IS BORING  
I’LL NEVER DRINK/USE AGAIN  
I CAN DO IT MYSELF  
I’M NOT AS BAD AS …..  
I OWE THIS ONE TO ME  
MY PROBLEMS CAN’T BE SOLVED  
I WISH I WAS HAPPY  
I DON’T CARE  
IF NOBODY ELSE CARES, WHY SHOULD I?  
THINGS HAVE CHANGED  
I CAN SUBSTITUTE  
THEY DON’T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT  
THERE’S GOT TO BE A BETTER WAY  
I CAN’T CHANGE THE WAY I THINK  
IF I MOVE, EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE  
I LIKE MY OLD FRIENDS  
I CAN DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
NOBODY NEEDS TO KNOW HOW I FEEL  
I’M DEPRESSED  
I SEE THINGS MY WAY ONLY  
I FEEL HOPELESS  
I CAN HANDLE IT

IF I HIDE BEHIND EVERYONE ELSE’S PROBLEMS, I WON’T HAVE TO FACE MY OWN I CAN’T DO IT  
WHY TRY?

**THE EVENT**: A RETURN TO THE USE OF ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS.