

Family Relapse Warning Signs

The following are common relapse warning signs for family members. The list is adapted and expanded from the work of Terence T. Gorski.¹²⁴ Check all that apply. You do not have to be experiencing these signs at the moment, but recognize them as requiring attention to prevent them from becoming relapse triggers.

- I allow my daily activities to interrupt my recovery schedule, including my Al-Anon meeting, daily readings, time with my sponsor, service work, or working the Twelve Steps.
- Temporary issues, such as an illness, keep me away from recovery activities, but I do not return once I am well or otherwise unburdened.
- I've stopped enjoying or doing the little things I do for myself.
- I've let my appearance or hygiene deteriorate.
- I have an inability to set appropriate limits with others, especially children. I'm either too lenient or too rigid.
- I'm overwhelmed by personal responsibilities and cannot prioritize.
- I increasingly have difficulties making decisions related to daily living.
- I'm obsessive in needing to take on all responsibility and, even then, feel like I am not doing enough.
- I go to bed too late and get up too early to get sufficient sleep. I suffer from insomnia or fitful sleep.
- I mentally ruminate over old resentments, feeling increasingly angry.
- I've returned to old controlling behaviors, trying to control not only the addict but other people, places, and things.

- When anyone points out the unhealthiness of my behaviors, I become defensive.
- I'm magnifying problems from the present or past. I fall into self-pity, complaining to others about all that is wrong in my life.
- I worry constantly about money, or I'm overspending, using shopping as an escape.
- I'm not eating enough or eating too much.
- I engage in the blame game, making others the scapegoat for all my problems, avoiding self-responsibility.
- I'm nervous or worry chronically. I may not know the source of my worries, but instead feel a free-floating anxiety.
- I've lost faith in a Higher Power or feel angry toward my Higher Power.
- My attendance at Al-Anon is sporadic; I always come up with excuses not to go.
- My mind is always racing and I cannot calm down. I'm constantly thinking of everything that is undone.
- I cannot solve problems. I'm always getting stuck and can't seem to move forward with decisions. I feel frustrated and unable to figure out the right thing to do.
- I feel a general sense of being out of sorts, but I don't know what's wrong.
- I'm overly emotional with no understanding of why, either crying or raging.
- I lose control over my temper with spouse, children, or other family members.
- I have extreme mood swings without warning; feelings are exaggerated.

- I have deep feelings of loneliness or isolation. I've stopped reaching out to friends or family.
- I suffer from tunnel vision. I cannot see others' points of view. I insist on being right.
- I've had an onset or increase of panic attacks or depression. Feelings snowball and create a dread of the next episode of panic or depression.
- I use dishonesty to manage my world. I create lots of little lies to control others or hide what's going on with me or my alcoholic.
- I suffer from physical maladies with no obvious causes: headaches, body aches, hives, stomach pains, hair loss, dizziness, diarrhea or constipation, frequent colds, tingling or numbness, rapid heartbeat, nausea.
- I medicate with tranquilizers, alcohol, or other drugs.
- I lack energy and sleep excessively.
- I feel hopelessness and helplessness. I don't believe anyone can understand or help me.
- I have an apathetic "whatever" attitude.