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. 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.