

COCAINE RELAPSE Worksheets



Overview

The **Cocaine Relapse Worksheets** have been developed by the SAOL Project in consultation with local drug projects and services in the Dublin area. The need for relapse intervention tools was identified by projects in the North Inner City Drugs Task Force area and an application to fund a range of cocaine responses was made to the Dormant Accounts Fund by the SAOL Project. While the worksheets are specifically targeted at cocaine users, they could be used effectively with other addictive behaviours by adapting the examples.

The worksheets are part of a range of three practical responses to cocaine use, including an Eight Week **Reduce the Use** Course for groups of cocaine users and a **CD** targeting individual users.

The Worksheets are designed to be used in one to one sessions between a client and Key Worker. They are a practical, brief, intervention tool and not a replacement for counselling or a longer term therapeutic relationship. A Key Worker with good inter-personal skills, experience and training in addiction work should be well equipped to work through them with their client.

Many local projects are helping clients through cocaine relapses on a regular basis by providing support, guidance and advice. These worksheets simply provide the worker and client with a practical framework to address their relapse.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who assisted us in developing all of the cocaine resources but especially the following:

North West Training & Development Project, Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign, Youth Action Project, SNUG Counselling, Ana Liffey Drugs Project, Star Ballymun, HSE Rehabilitation Integration Services, Addiction Counsellors, HSE Addiction Services, Dublin Aids Alliance, Crosscare, Chrysalis, HOPE, After Care Recovery Group, Star Ballyfermot, SOILSE, Crinan Project, Canal Communities Local Drug Task Force, North Inner City Drugs Task Force.

To the Key Workers and clients that helped us to trial and refine the worksheets we would also like to say thank you.

For more information on the resources go to: www.saolproject.ie

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHEETS



This booklet contains instructions for the Key Worker and worksheets for the client. This booklet is your Project's Resource and is intended to be used over and over again. You should photocopy the Worksheets, Cravings, Information Sheet and Drug Diary Sheets.

DO NOT WRITE ON THE ORIGINAL WORKSHEETS PHOTOCOPY BEFORE USE

What will these Worksheets do?

- They will provide you and your client with a helpful, structured intervention tool to address a cocaine relapse.
- They will help your client to identify what problems cocaine is causing them
- They will help your client recognise what triggers them into using cocaine
- They will help your client plan to avoid these triggers
- They will assist your client to gain a better understanding of why they have relapsed
- They will assist your client to learn how to develop refusal skills and avoid future relapses

Why use Worksheets?

- Giving your client pre-formatted worksheets helps to focus both you and your client on the task in hand
- They focus on the immediate problems faced by cocaine users who are struggling to control their drug use.
- They are a brief intervention tool and are therefore well suited to projects with limited resources
- They are practical and easy to understand
- They are compatible with a range of other treatments which your client may be receiving
- The worksheets provide a written record for later reflection by your client in times of crisis or relapse



WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU – THE KEY WORKER?

- You should ensure that you have the addiction skills and experience to work with your client through his/her relapse.
- You should ensure that you have fully familiarised yourself with the Worksheets and instructions before using them.
- You should ensure that you have allocated the appropriate, uninterrupted time with the client (usually a minimum of three one hour sessions – maximum six sessions)
- Aim for each session to be approx 45 minutes long. This is flexible but as a general rule anything longer than one and a half hours is too long.
- If your client has literacy difficulties you should be prepared to be the scribe for the worksheets. Use your clients own words and write down their reflections, situations and plans.
- You should ensure that your client does not leave any sessions without making a Relapse Action Plan for the immediate day(s) ahead. This can be a verbal agreement between you and your client or you could use W3.
- You should encourage your client at all times and make sure that they get the message that they CAN do this.
- You should ensure that you have adequate information and resources to follow up with the process if necessary, e.g. referrals to other agencies/counselling etc.
- You should ensure that you, or your project, are available to your client for a reasonable amount of support and follow up work after completing the Worksheet intervention.

What is expected of your client?

- Your client should be motivated and have expressed a wish to overcome their relapse.
- Your client should be prepared to work through the Worksheets over an agreed number of sessions with you.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET ONE

PROBLEMS WITH USING COCAINE

Aim: To help your client explore the problems that their cocaine use is causing them.

Step 1 | **Client fills in Worksheet One. To encourage honesty, you could prompt them with the following questions**

- Do they owe money? Have they picked up any new charges?
- Has their health gotten worse recently?
- Has their use of other drugs (including alcohol) increased?
- Are they having family or relationship problems because of their cocaine use?
- Are they paranoid or aggressive?

Step 2 | **Discuss the Wheel of Change with your client. Explain each of the six stages and ask your client where they place themselves on the wheel. This exercise will help your client determine if they are ready for change now.**

Step 3 | **When your client has completed Worksheet One, use the information as a focus for further discussion. Ask them to reflect on the following:**

- Can they continue to go on this way?
- Do they want to change things?
- Are they ready to make these changes now?

If you are satisfied that your client has reached a point where they want to address their cocaine use, then proceed. If your client has serious doubts at this stage about their readiness or commitment to stopping their cocaine use, please continue to set time aside for further discussion and encourage your client to take some more time to reflect. In this case, you may want to give your client a copy of the Cocaine CD which is included in your Cocaine Resource Pack. Additional copies of this CD can be downloaded from the website www.saolproject.ie

Always keep 'the door open' letting your client know that you will be here when they are ready for the next step.

Step 4 | **Get your client to fill in the Drug Diary before your next meeting. This will help you to identify patterns and trigger situations.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET TWO

IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS

Aim: To help the client understand what a drug use trigger is and to help them begin to identify their own personal triggers.

Step 1 | Explain to your client that a trigger is like the spark that lights the flame. It is the moment when they find themselves in a situation that ignites their 'thoughts' of cocaine into actually using the drug again. Remind them that these thoughts may have been in their head for many days/weeks/months before they actually used. By getting your client to recognise their triggers they are taking the first step towards making a plan to avoid or get out of their relapse.

Step 2 | Triggers can be grouped around **People, Places, Things and Feelings**. Using **Worksheet Two** ask your client if they can identify what may have triggered off their cocaine use. The following examples may be useful:

- People:** partners, family members, friends, neighbours, etc
- Places:** particular streets, pubs, cafes, houses, clinics, parks, etc
- Things:** music, tinfoil, works, etc
- Feelings:** boredom, loneliness, happiness, sadness, grief, etc

Please remember that your client may identify triggers such as the fact that they are living with a partner who is using and can see no immediate way to deal with this. Remember you should concentrate on what **CAN** be achieved in the short term, but your client will need to do some further thinking on the more difficult issues, such as relationships.

Step 3 | Use the information they have provided to discuss how they will avoid their triggers

Use what the client has given you to prompt discussion and the beginnings of a plan. You will need to identify what supports they will need over the coming days.

This is the beginning of your client's Relapse Action Plan and it is very important to spend some time discussing this with them. If they make any concrete decisions, get them to write them down in **Worksheet Three (My Relapse Action Plan)**.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET THREE

RELAPSE PLAN ACTION PLAN



Aim: To help your client plan how to avoid their triggers and to put a Relapse Action Plan in place

Step 1 | Review the information your client has already written about their triggers. Get your client to talk about the various triggers they have identified and to see which triggers are obvious (e.g. hanging around with others who are using cocaine) and which ones are unexpected (e.g. bumping into someone on the street). Using Worksheet Three, prompt your client to name their trigger and identify a plan to avoid it. You may want to talk about the difference between obvious triggers and unexpected triggers. You may need to challenge your client if they are putting themselves in the way of their triggers and allowing themselves to believe that they don't have any control over this.

Some prompters:

- Do they need to get a new chip for their mobile phone?
- Are there people in their life that they should avoid and how are they going to do this?
- What other services or supports can they make contact with?
- Do they need to get rid of certain items around them which remind them of using?

Step 2 | Road test the plan with the client to ensure it is clear, realistic and achievable. Do this by asking questions or role play some situations if you think it would be helpful.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET FOUR

REFUSAL SKILLS



Aim: To help your client identify and practice their refusal skills.

Step 1 | Often clients will find it difficult to imagine themselves refusing coke. To work through this ask your client to think about any situation from the past when they refused cocaine. If your client says that they haven't been able to say no in the past ask them if every time they had a craving, did they go out and use? It would be near impossible for someone to use coke every time they experience a craving so the chances are that they have used some form of refusal skills in the past but that they were not aware of it.

Step 2 | Discuss the kind of refusal skills they may use in different situations. Raise the following points:

- They need to be direct, assertive and make eye contact with the person. There is no need to be aggressive or confrontational.
- Close off any future offers of cocaine i.e. tell the dealer that they have given up coke for good.
- If they can't refuse face to face, possibly a phone call or a text message would do.

Step 3 | If the client does not feel comfortable in refusing directly they may want to use an excuse and leave the situation i.e. say that they are in trouble with some authority i.e. courts, social workers, drug treatment clinic etc.

Make sure your client writes down the various refusal ideas they have come up with as it will help them remember them in the future. Role play or discuss various situations with your client until he/she feels comfortable with their refusal skills. If you feel that your client is being unrealistic or negative you may need to respectfully challenge them.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET FIVE

COPING WITH CRAVINGS – CRAVINGS DIARY



Aim: To help the client recognise, record and deal with cravings.

Step 1 | Using Worksheet Five Information Sheet “Understanding Cravings”, explain to your client how cravings are a normal part of the recovery process. Give your client a photocopy of the W5 information sheet. Discuss how your client will deal with their cravings.

Step 2 | Explain the Cravings Diary to your client. Ask them to take it home and write about their cravings when they experience them. This helps in two ways:

- Firstly, it gives the client something to focus on when the craving kicks in.
- Secondly, it empowers the client to listen to their own body and begin to take control over the physical and emotional cravings the drug produces.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET SIX

RELAPSE WARNING SIGNS

Aim: To help your client identify their relapse warning signs in order to prevent further relapses in the future.

Step 1 | Discuss Information Sheet (W6i) with your client – Common Warning Signs.
Explain the concept that prior to a relapse people will often choose to ignore their relapse warning signs until it is too late and they begin using again.

Step 2 | Give your client Worksheet Six and get them to identify their own personal relapse warning signs. If your client is to avoid having any further relapses in the future, they will need to heighten their awareness of their warning signs so they can interrupt them before it turns into an action i.e. a relapse.

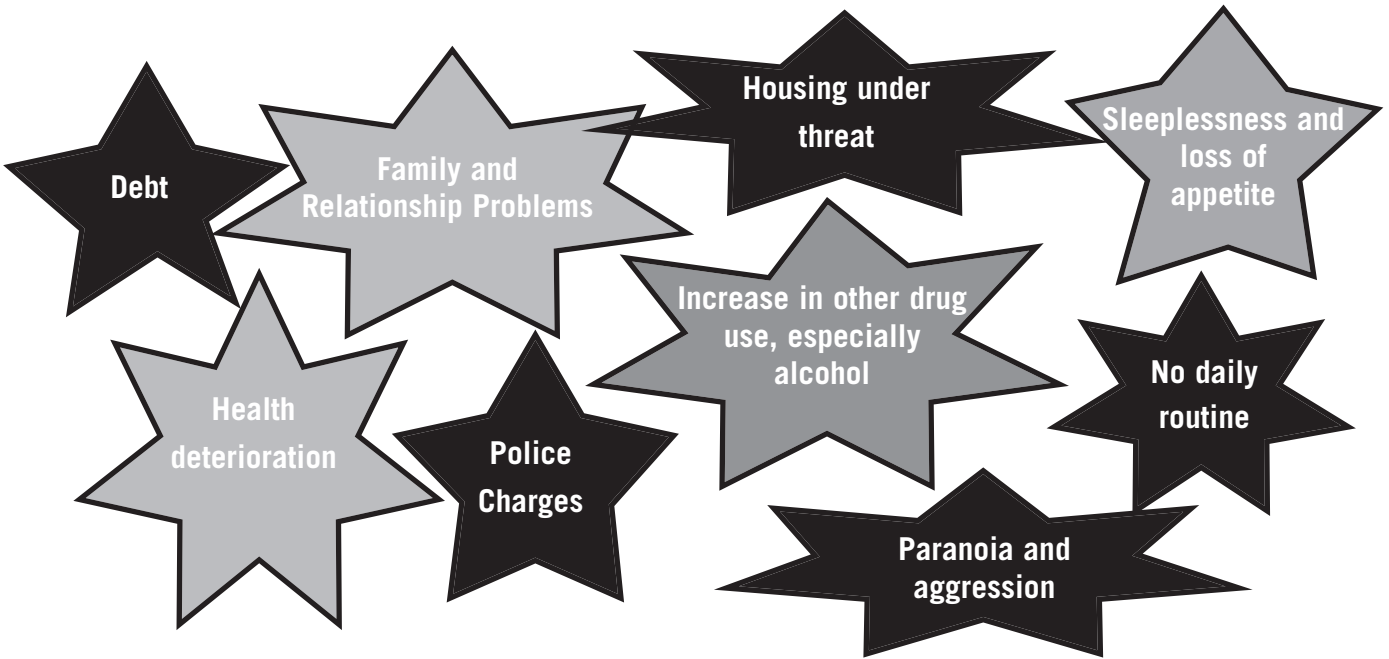
Step 2 | Get your client to list interventions that they can put into action to help them prevent relapsing when they notice their warning signs. Remember that these need to be practical and achievable. You should challenge your client if they have identified any unreasonable, unrealistic interventions. Your client should have an intervention for each warning sign that they listed.

Your client should carry this information around with them at all times so they can look at it from time to time. If they maintain their heightened level of awareness around their warning signs they have a better chance of avoiding relapses in the future.

WORKSHEET ONE:

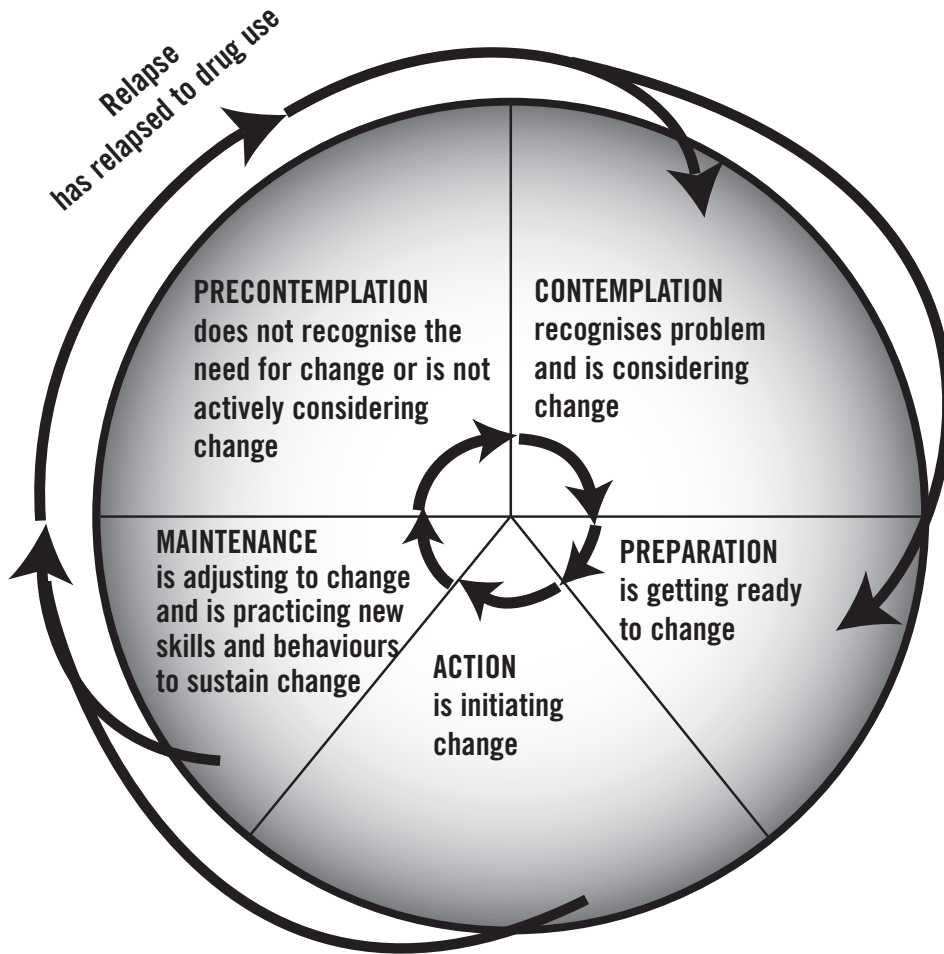
PROBLEMS WITH USING COCAINE

This exercise is designed to get you to start looking at the problems that your cocaine use is causing you. Please take your time with this, as this is an important first step in your efforts to take back your self control. Below are some things that have been mentioned by other cocaine users. They might help to get you thinking. Write your own list in the space provided:



What problems is my cocaine use causing me?

WORKSHEET 1.1:
WHEEL OF CHANGE



<p>PRECONTEMPLATION This stage is when a person either does not realise they have a problem or has no desire to make changes in their lives.</p>	<p>MAINTENANCE This stage is when someone continues to modify behavioural changes in order to maintain their recovery.</p>
<p>CONTEMPLATION This stage is when someone is starting to think about their addiction and the possibility of making changes in their lives.</p>	<p>RELAPSE This stage is when someone goes back to drug using behaviour.</p>
<p>PREPARATION This stage is when someone makes the decision to make changes in their lives and puts plans in place to make this a reality.</p>	<p>It is important to state that clients can go around the wheel many times when working on their own recovery. It is for this reason that relapse can be seen in the context of a stage of a person's recovery as they will learn new insights into their addictive behaviour and can focus on the reasons for their relapse before getting back on the wheel.</p>
<p>ACTION This stage is when someone has decided to make some changes and starts to implement the actions necessary to achieve their goals of being drug free.</p>	

WORKSHEET TWO:

IDENTIFYING MY TRIGGERS

This exercise is designed to help you identify your personal triggers or risk factors. Please use the reverse side of the worksheet if you need to.

PEOPLE: What people trigger my relapse?

PLACES: What places do I go to that trigger my relapse?

THINGS: What things trigger my relapse?

FEELINGS/EMOTIONS: What emotions trigger my relapse?

DRUG DIARY



By filling out this diary sheet you will be able to see the patterns to your drug use, what triggers you to use, the feelings associated with it and the consequences of your actions. You should also record the times when you were faced with a trigger but didn't use. This information will help you to be more aware. If you need more space, use the back of the sheet.

Trigger What made me want to use? Include day and time.	Thoughts & Feelings What was I thinking? What was I feeling?	Behaviour Did I use? If so, what? If I didn't use, what did I do instead?	Good Consequences Did anything good happen?	Bad Consequences Did anything bad happen?

WORKSHEET THREE:

MY RELAPSE ACTION PLAN

Examples:

- Are there people that I need to break ties with? If so, what do I need to do to avoid them?
- Are there people I know who use or supply cocaine? If so, what do I need to do to avoid them?
- Are there things that remind me of cocaine use? If so, what do I need to do to get rid of them?
- Are there places that remind me of cocaine use? If so, what do I need to do to avoid them?
- How much money should I carry out with me in order to reduce the possibility of buying cocaine?
- How can I protect myself against certain people/feelings that may trigger my drug use?

What's my trigger?

What's my plan to avoid it?

WORKSHEET FOUR:

MY REFUSAL SKILLS

This worksheet will help you think through how you will refuse offers of coke. What do you need to say? What do you need to do? If it helps, role play some situations with your Key Worker. Remember the clearer you are, the clearer you will get your message across to others who may be encouraging you to use.

LIST SOME SITUATIONS WHERE YOU WILL NEED TO REFUSE COKE

A large rounded rectangular box with a thick black border and ten horizontal lines for writing.

LIST HOW YOU WILL REFUSE IN THESE SITUATIONS

A large rounded rectangular box with a thick black border and ten horizontal lines for writing.

WORKSHEET FIVE:

MY CRAVINGS DIARY

Write down **what is actually happening inside your body** when you experience a craving. Describe the physical feeling of the craving. This will help you to recognise your cravings when you experience them. By actually allowing yourself to 'go through the craving' and experience the physical feeling you will be confronting your fears about cravings. If you bring something out in the open, you lessen the fear of it. Get to know your body and what it is actually telling you.

The scale of 1-10 is used to describe the intensity or anxiety caused by the craving. 1 being the least bothered and 10 being the most bothered.

DATE	DAY/TIME	What does the craving feel like?	On a scale of 1-10 how bad is it?	How long does the craving last?	How did you cope with it?

WORKSHEET 5.1: INFORMATION SHEET

Understanding Cravings

Cravings are a normal process and are to be expected. They will come and go and are most often experienced early in recovery but can persist longer. Cravings can be triggered in many ways:

- Seeing someone that you associate with cocaine use
- Emotions such as frustration, stress, boredom, depression, excitement, happiness, etc
- Familiar objects, smells and sounds

Physical signs of Cravings can include:

- Feeling nervous and agitated
- Heart pounding
- Sensation of being able to smell or taste the drug
- Sweaty palms
- Feeling of wanting to go to the toilet/diarrhoea

Psychological signs can include:

- Fantasies about using
- Convincing yourself that you'll feel great if you use
- Fooling yourself that it'll be ok to use just the once

There are a variety of ways that you can cope with cravings.

Distraction

Find something to take your mind off the craving.
Make a list of the things that are possible to do.

Talking about cravings

A very effective way of getting through a craving is to make contact with someone who understands what you are going through. Do you know someone you can trust and talk to? Can you phone someone? Can you contact your Key Worker?

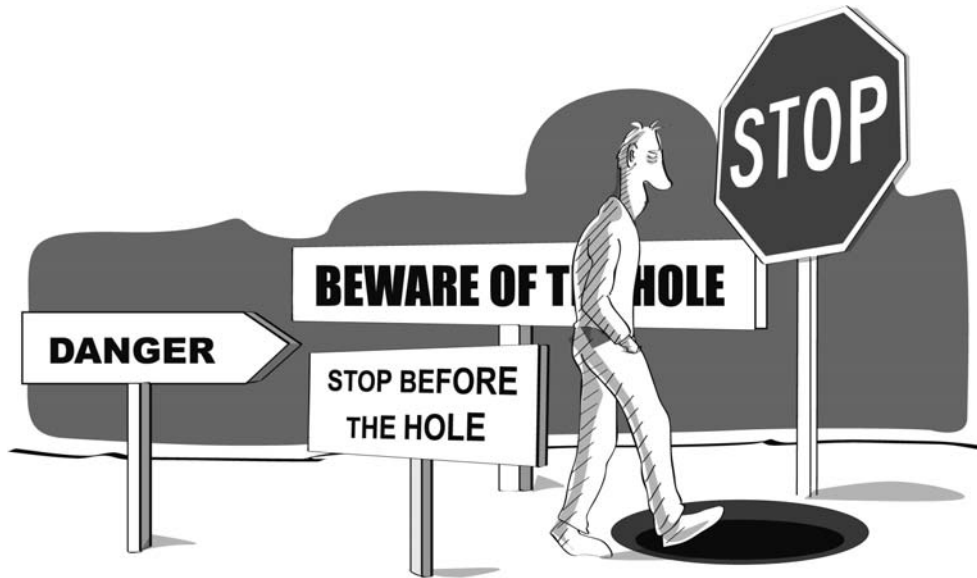
Going with the craving

It can be a very empowering, positive experience to let the craving occur, peak and pass. In other words, experience it without fighting or giving in to it. Imagine you are walking over a hill. Its tough going up but you know you will shortly reach the top and come down the other side. Listen to the craving, focus on how intense it is and where it occurs in your body. If you find it useful, fill this information into your Craving Diary.

Think about the negative consequences of using cocaine again

Many people tend to remember only the positive effects of cocaine: they often forget the problems that cocaine use brings with it. Worksheet One asked you to make a list of the problems you were experiencing with cocaine. Read your list again. If you cannot find them, re-do your list. Remind yourself, very strongly, of the negative consequences of using again.

WORKSHEET SIX: INFORMATION SHEET

COMMON WARNING SIGNS**Changes in Behaviour**

- Hanging out with people who use
- Not going to rehabilitation programmes or support groups (such as NA/AA)
- Taking other drugs including alcohol
- Arguing with others for no apparent reason
- Not being honest with those around you
- Doing things that are self destructive, i.e. shoplifting, hanging out with people that make you feel bad
- Not filling your days and spending a lot of time feeling bored

Changes in Attitude

- Not caring about yourself
- Becoming really negative about life and how things are going

Going Back to Your Old Ways of Thinking

- Thinking that you deserve a reward for being clean for a period of time
- Thinking that you could just have one bag and that it would be alright
- Thinking that you are 'cured' and you no longer need to be careful of your triggers

Changes in Feelings or Moods

- Feeling unusually stressed
- Feeling depressed or angry
- Feeling invincible and unusually happy

RELAPSE INTERVENTION

PART 1 – Your Relapse Warning Signs

i.e.

- Stopped going to NA meetings.
- Was feeling really angry with everyone around me.
- Was thinking negative thoughts a lot of the time.
- Starting avoiding my family.
- Fantasised about using as a reward.

PART 2 – What to do when you notice your warning signs – Relapse Interventions

i.e.

- Make myself speak to my sponsor.
- Talk to a counsellor about my feelings of anger.
- Take some time out to do something for me.
- Open up to someone I trust about my feelings.
