

Gosnold Relapse Protocol

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUP LEADERS

SESSION ONE:

1. Introduce the project: . 1) Define relapse as a return to use after a period of abstinence. 2) Ask each person how many efforts to stop he's made over how many years. 3) Get a group average.
2. Explain that this group will involve some homework that should be brought to the group for sharing.
3. Hand out the "6. Relapse by Relapse and 6.1 sheets and review them with the group members. There are several different ways suggested to research each relapse and look for patterns. 6.1 is the adaptation of the Gorski year by year grid. *Ask for the relapse by relapse analysis to be completed by the third session from today.* They will be presenting that in group. Sometimes people "have no relapses". Ask them to think about the last several years and include treatment, consequences of use, increases in use, decreases in use.
4. Hand out the first of the Research sheets "1. When and Where". Ask participants to look at and circle all the relevant items. The concept is to look for the specifics of each potential triggering place and to bring that information out into the open. For example, one group discovered that fast food chain bathrooms often serve as a place to use opiates. You should add common triggering places to this list.

Some groups have spent several sessions on each of the sheets.

One of the purposes of these exercises is to narrow the field of craving to something more manageable. Often people in early recovery will "feel" that everything is a trigger. In fact there are usually situations and relationships that are more difficult than others.

SESSIONS 2 AND 3: Continue the next session research sheets 2. Emotions and 3. People. Avoid rushing through the triggers.

SESSION 4. Have the participants pick the biggest trigger from each of the three sheets. For each trigger there must be another action or solution. Share these in group, and ask group members if they think the proposed solution will work. Watch for generalizations—"I'll just ask for help". Specific triggers need specific solutions. The goal is that the group collaborates on each other's problems. This sets the norm of providing each other with experience and feedback.

SESSION 5 Bringing the relapse into the here and now. People often have relapse rituals—clothes they wear, "hoodies", hats, torn jeans, cologne. Others stop shaving or bathing. when they relapse, These questions ask for concrete behavioral clues to relapse. Each person should know what the little clues are and to out those.

SESSION 6: Relapse by Relapse History. Before the group shares the relapse history, explain that we are looking for patterns (if there are any). Have each participant share the relapse history. Ask the group to comment on any red flags, triggers, or patterns that might be fueling the relapse? Often group members will have picked up these patterns with each other, but have no way to share the insights. Before moving on to the next person, ask "what could you do to improve the chances you will remain sober/clean?"

SESSION 7: This rehearsal depends upon clear pros and cons of recovery. Ask participants to remember the strongest reasons to remain abstinent and the strongest reasons to return to use.

Make groups of three. One person will play the “drug/drink” and one the recovery. Whoever is “it” shares the pros of recovery with person playing the voice of recovery and the cons with the person playing the voice of the drug/drink. Instruct the person who listens to the pros and cons from the other person to say “no” to the drug/drink when he feels ready. Then switch roles so that each person plays “the recovery” and each person plays the “drug/drink”. Processing: Most people find it very easy to play the voice of the drug/drink. Most find it very difficult to play the voice of recovery. Suggest that this is why it is important to practice with each situation of risk.

Part two: Divide the group into smaller groups. Each group develops a relapse scenario and gives that to another group. Competition for difficult scenarios should be encouraged. The role play is done, and the group should decide by vote if the recovering person won or if the person relapses. Play until all scenarios have been role played at least twice.

SESSION 8: The family, friend, sponsor recovery contract is an into action piece of work. Whenever possible, sharing this document should be encouraged. Have everyone in the group complete the contract, read it OUT LOUD, and accept suggestions for improvement.

SESSION 9 Mastering triggers for relapse is an important and continuing skill of self awareness and self responsibility. This form is a suggested way to track triggers. You can do this on a Monday, after people come back from passes.

Supplemental suggestions:

- Michael Levy, Ph.D. at CAB in Danvers, MA suggests paying attention to the myth of “I can use once”. This thought/wish/fantasy often persists through early recovery. Encourage discussion of the “just once” or “vacation concept of abstinence”.

RESEARCH YOUR TRIGGERS FOR USE

1. WHEN AND WHERE: Circle all the situations where you really want to use drugs/alcohol.

When you first wake up 

With a 

- at: Parties Clubs Bars
- at: Friend's house Certain Neighborhoods
- at: School Work After Work
- at: Sports Concerts Movies
- at: before during after sex

at: meals, lunch break, dinner, or before

at: pay day 

at: a time when I want to change my physical appearance
at: end of day

at: alone times—driving,

at: HOME ALONE: WITH TV. 

at: fast food places, anonymous places,
bathrooms



YOUR OTHER PLACES/TIMES:

2. EMOTIONS as Keys to relapse: ⇆ ⇆ ⇆ ⇆ CIRCLE THE KINDS OF FEELINGS THAT make you want to use drugs/alcohol.

ANGER **ABANDONED**

Y on top of the world

|| Bored || bored || bored really bored
frustrated tired defeated

Passionate happy confident sexy

Unwanted »» neglected »» **WRONGED**

TRAPPED »» guilty »» criticized

depressed neRVous anXious
deprived,
lonely

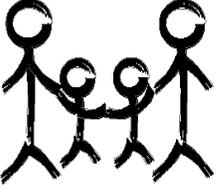
POWERLESS

less than

A loser wronged by others unfairly treated

OTHER BIG FEELINGS THAT YOU MIGHT RELAPSE
ABOUT: _____

3. PEOPLE as triggers/cues for relapse. Thinking back over your use of drugs/alcohol, mark an x next to family members/friends connected to your use. Put names or other descriptions for the other two columns.

| Family:  | Romantic or sexual partners: | Business, school, friends, anonymous people, dealer or others: |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Spouse/partner | | |
| Mother | | |
| Father | | |
| Sister | | |
| Brother | | |
| Children | | |
| Other family | | |

GO BACK through the list & MARK WHO YOU USED “AT” OR “BECAUSE OF”.

4. KEY TRIGGERS X 3

LOOK BACK THROUGH THE THREE BOXES AND PICK ONE KEY TRIGGER FROM EACH AND PUT IT BELOW. Then work with your group to find an alternative to each trigger—one you will be willing to try out with your group.

| 1. PLACES/THINGS KEY TRIGGER | 2. FEELINGS KEY TRIGGER | 3. PEOPLE KEY TRIGGERS |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | | |
| Alternative action/solution: | Alternative action/solution:  | Alternative action/solution: |

5. RELAPSE: RESEARCH: "I gamble my relapse, I lie my relapse, I shop my relapse, I drink my relapse/I shoot up my relapse". Relapse leaves many clues.



First: Describe what you would be doing if you were about to relapse. Do you change friends, activities—gambling, cards, betting, smoking, start hanging some place, stop responsibilities, stop taking showers, shaving? Make a thorough, honest list of the things that go with your relapse.

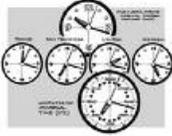
Second: Do you wear different clothes when you are using? What are they like?

Third: Thinking about the first two questions—are there things that you are doing right now that are related to your using/relapse? If you are doing things or acting the way you do before relapse, are you WILLING TO get honest with someone? Who?

Fourth: If you were going to set yourself up for recovery. . . . If you were going to tip the balance to stay clean/sober...If you were going to make a play for recovery . . .

What would you do **RIGHT NOW, TODAY?**

6. RELAPSE: RESEARCH



Relapse-to-Relapse Time Line.

- 1) Put the date of the first effort to stop using drugs/alcohol on the top of a page.
- 2) For each relapse: Write when, where, who and what was going on
- 3) How to do that?
Draw it like a map.

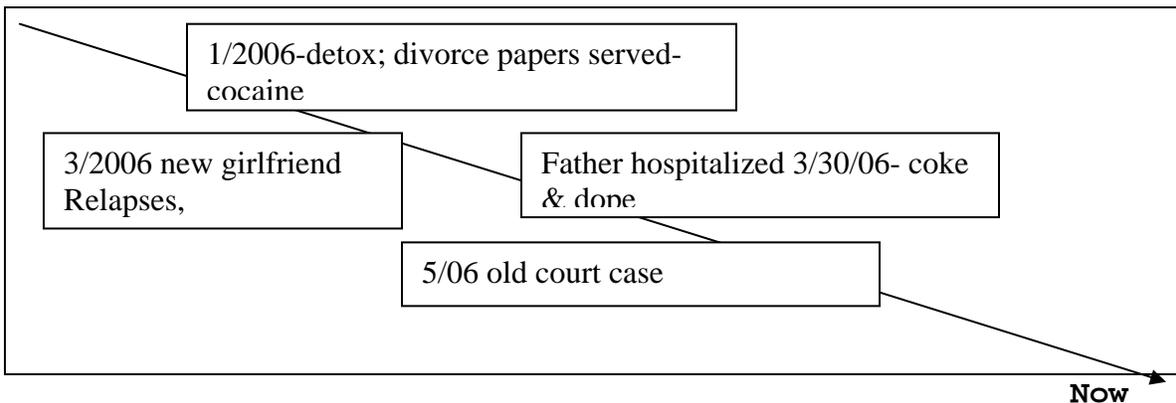
Or

Use a table like this one developed by Terence Gorski in 1988

| Year | Jan | Feb | Mar | April | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Or make it a time line with each relapse on a side of the line.

THEN:



What do the relapses have in common?

7. MAKE NOTES about

your best reasons to relapse. BE SPECIFIC.

And then your best reasons to stay sober and clean
BE SPECIFIC.

NEXT: Divide into groups

of three. PICK ONE PERSON TO BE "THE VOICE OF RELAPSE" AND ONE PERSON TO BE "THE VOICE OF RECOVERY". Your job is to see if you can say NO TO the relapse voice. Have both people talk to you at the same time.

This is practice. Try it. Then switch roles so everyone plays the voice of recovery and the voice of relapse.

PART TWO: Relapse Olympics: Divide the room into three or four groups. Each group comes up with a relapse scenario. Then swap the relapse scenarios and have the other group role play saying no!

eXample:

Your girl friend ditches you for your best friend. Your old high school buddy drops in with some of your favorite drug and you open a letter saying you are being sued. Have someone play the buddy with the goods and someone play the guy who is ditched.

Have the group give points for the buddy and the guy. Have the group judge who wins.

8. RECOVERY CONTRACT

This is your safety plan to use with family, friends and or sponsor. You decide WHO to share this with, but it is strongly recommended that you share.

1. My triggers are:

2. Things I cannot do in safety:

3. Things that help me not to drink or drug:

4. If you see me doing these kinds of behaviors, this is the help that I would like from you:

5. If I relapse, this is the help that I want, and here are the people to call to help me:

6. Here are the things I am willing to take responsibility for to help keep my chronic disease in remission.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

9. FOLLOW-UP: During the time in treatment have participants share new information on triggers and solutions.

Date: 1) New key triggers:
New solutions and alternatives:
Who is helping with this key trigger?

Date: 2) New key triggers:
New solutions and alternatives:
Who is helping with this key trigger?

Date: 3) New key triggers:
New solutions and alternatives:
Who is helping with this key trigger?

Date: 4) New key triggers:
New solutions and alternatives:
Who is helping with this key trigger?

Date: 5) New key triggers:
New solutions and alternatives:
Who is helping with this key trigger?