

PREAMBLE

Cocaine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other, that they may solve their common problem and help other to recover from their addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. There are no dues or fees for membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We are not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution. We do not wish to engage in any controversy, and we neither endorse nor oppose any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay free from cocaine and all other mind-altering substances, and to help others achieve the same freedom.

We use the Twelve Steps of Recovery because it has already been proven that the Twelve Step Recovery Program works.

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PREVENTION

The following suggestions have been invaluable to the prevention of relapse by those of us in recovery in Cocaine Anonymous.

1) ABSTINENCE - We suggest that any person desiring recovery abstain from the use of any mind-altering substances. We have found that as addicts, we possess an uncanny ability to switch drugs. Again, addiction is not the drug, it is the disease.

2) TRIGGERS - Many of us weren't aware of those things that prompted our use. We view these as triggers, some of which are as follows:

PLACES - In recovery, we found it wise to be aware of our motives for being in certain places. Most of us found it necessary to stay away from clubs, parties, rock houses, pool halls and other places where we used.

PEOPLE - It's difficult to understand, but necessary to do, and that is to stay away from our using friends. We had to be mindful that they too are sick and at no time are we stronger in our recovery than they are in their disease. They have the power to trigger our relapse by and through their behavior.

DEALING - Here, many of us face a dilemma. We were addicted to the money and the excitement. We dealt for power and for control. Many of us relapse because we lost sight of our lack of personal power.

3) MEETINGS - We suggest a meeting a day for newcomers. We also suggest a meeting whenever you don't feel like you need one. We have found that WHEN WE DON'T WANT TO GO is WHEN WE DO NEED TO GO. Again, meetings are where our collective experience, strength and hope are shared.

4) KEEPING IN TOUCH - Keeping in touch with a sponsor or friend in recovery is an ideal way of keeping your focus on recovery.

5) HUNGRY - Don't get too hungry. While Cocaine Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, we have found that it's difficult to maintain emotional balance without the aid of eating regularly throughout the day.

6) ANGRY - It is said that this emotion is best left up to those better equipped to deal with it. As people in recovery, we have found that lingering anger, whether justified or not, is better left to others. There is no shorter course to getting loaded than a run with anger and resentment.

7) LONELY - It's been our experience that an addict alone by himself is the worst possible company. Again, we suggest meetings and fellowship. For those of us who isolated behind closet and bathroom doors or tin-foiled windows, being around others is at first an unnerving experience. After we tried it, and sincerely gave it some time, we found a new freedom and friendships that we never dreamed possible.

8) TIRED - It took some time for many of us to reach regular sleep habits. While it's not known of people dying of lack of sleep, we do know of many instances where a tired addict reached for that bump or jump-start and relapsed.

9) ACTION/WORK - Again, we say that it's a rare case where someone actually working the steps has relapsed. We have found that as long as our focus is on the steps and the action required to work them, relapse is a remote, rare thought.

10) PHRASE - These simple sayings or prayers have helped many of us through those times:

This too shall pass

It's difficult to remember, but in daily recovery, whatever the feeling or problem is, it will pass on.

The Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

This prayer is not designed to make a problem disappear. Its purpose is to bring peace to the user.

First things first

You can only do what's in front of you.

One day at a time

Not for the rest of your life. Focus on staying clean and sober for this day (or hour or minute) only.

Let go and let God

Do the foot work but leave the results up to your Higher Power.

11) SIGNS OF RELAPSE - The following are some of the signs that have preceded relapses:

- I deny my fear.
- I convince myself that "I'll never drink/use again."
- I decide that "not using" is all I need.
- I try to force sobriety on others.
- I become overconfident about my recovery.
- I behave compulsively... I overwork or underwork, I overtalk or withdraw.
- I start isolating.
- I make unrealistic or haphazard plans.
- I live in the "there and then."
- I start daydreaming of failure.
- I view my problems as unsolvable.
- I avoid having fun.
- I over-analyze myself.
- I become irritated by friends or family.
- I am easily angered.
- I begin blaming people, places, things and conditions for my problems.
- I begin doubting my disease.
- I eat irregularly (over- or under eating, snacking).
- I have listless periods.
- I sleep irregularly (oversleeping, under sleeping).
- I experience periods of deep depression.
- I develop an "I don't care" attitude.
- I hoard money, sex or power.
- I openly reject help.
- I rationalize that drinking or using can't make my life worse than it is now.
- I feel sorry for myself.
- I have fantasies of social drinking or using.
- I begin to lie consciously.
- I increase my use of aspirin or other nonprescription medications.
- I am overwhelmed with loneliness, frustration, anger and tension.
- I begin contacting or visiting my drinking or using "friends" and places.
- I convince myself I'm cured.
- I lose control.
- I tell myself it's okay to deal. I can use the money. It will be quick and easy.

What if I do relapse?

- Call your sponsor, hotline or other sober member of Cocaine Anonymous. Stay in touch.
- Keep going to meetings. The only requirement is a desire to stop using.
- Keep affirming your desire by getting newcomer chips.