



*Please Note: The information contained in this Worksheet is not intended as legal advice in any individual's case. There are many exceptions and variations in the parole consideration process. If you have questions, please consult with an experienced parole attorney.*

*This Worksheet was created to provide an example of how a Relapse Prevention Plan (RPP) can be written and organized. Instructions are highlighted in grey while examples are shown in boxes. The examples included are intended to get you started, to provide inspiration, and are meant to be personalized as much as possible. Please also keep in mind that there are many ways to create an effective RPP, and the format shown below is only one example of how it can be done. You should feel free to create a RPP that looks different from the Worksheet below, as long as the main components (introduction, warning signs, internal & external triggers, coping skills, and support network) are included. Once you have read through and filled in your answers on this Worksheet, copy your answers onto separate pieces of paper to make your RPP.*

*Last, we recognize that this is a lengthy Worksheet that may feel overwhelming to engage with and that may raise difficult emotions. Feel to read and work on this Worksheet as slowly as you need, while taking care of yourself.*

## **RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN FOR [Target Behavior]**

By: [Name]

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Start your Relapse Prevention Plan with a short introduction. Your introduction should explain (1) what the target behavior is; (2) how it developed; (3) how it contributed to the life crime, any other harm you have caused, and any misconduct committed while incarcerated; and (4) your current commitment to avoiding relapse. Target behaviors are harmful behaviors that contributed to the life crime and/or other harmful conduct. They are behaviors a person wants to fix, change, and not go back to doing. Common target behaviors are: violence, substance use, criminal thinking, gang membership, anger leading to violence, domestic violence, and sexual violence.*

#### **1st Paragraph: What is your target behavior and why did it become an issue for you?**

Example sentence starters...

- I started struggling with [target behavior] when I was [age/time period] because...
- I learned that [target behavior] helped me deal with [name examples of feelings/situations that caused you to engage in your target behavior] because...
- I also remember learning about [target behavior] from watching and listening to the people around me. For example, [name role models you saw/heard engaging in

*your target behavior*] engaged in [*target behavior*]. I wanted to behave the same way because...

Your answers... (move these answers to your RPP when you are ready to write it)

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**2nd Paragraph: What harm did you cause by acting on your target behavior?**

Example sentence starters...

- My choice to engage in [*target behavior*] resulted in my causing harm because...
- [*Target behavior*] contributed to my life crime because...
- [*Target behavior*] contributed to my crimes before my life crime because...
- [*Target behavior*] contributed to my misconduct in prison because...

Your answers... (move these answers to your RPP when you are ready to write it)

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**3rd Paragraph: Why is it important for you to have a plan to prevent relapsing into your target behavior?**

Example sentence starters...

- Today, I am committed to my recovery from [*target behavior*] because...
- I now understand my issues with [*target behavior*] and the importance of having a plan to prevent relapsing back into it because...

Your answers... (move these answers to your RPP when you are ready to write it)

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**WARNING SIGNS**

*Warning signs are bodily sensations, behaviors, emotions, or thoughts that signal a person is feeling triggered and is vulnerable to relapsing into their target behavior. Some examples of warning signs are, "I am withdrawing from people," "I stop going to groups," and "I feel my heart racing." Include a list of at least 5 to 10 warning signs.*

***List of Warning Signs***

1. My palms are sweaty
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...

**INTERNAL TRIGGERS**

*Internal triggers are thoughts and feelings that become so overwhelming they cause a person to resort to their target behavior in order to cope. Internal triggers are often very*

*painful feelings that someone experienced in childhood that made them unable to cope in a healthy or positive way. One way to think about internal triggers is that they are the difficult feelings that caused you to develop the target behavior in the first place. You can begin brainstorming your internal triggers by answering the following question: What were the painful feelings and thoughts you were trying to cope with, or escape from, by using your target behavior? Common internal triggers are feelings of: shame, insecurity, abandonment, rejection, grief, and lack of control. Include a list of at least 5 to 10 internal triggers and the reasons why those feelings trigger you.*

<b><i>List of Internal Triggers</i></b>	<b><i>Reasons Why These Feelings Trigger Me</i></b>
1. Shame	I felt shame about an experience of abuse I had as a young child. My feeling of shame was overwhelming so I used to use alcohol to numb myself. Today when I feel shame, I know I have to use one of my coping skills because my shame has resulted in substance use in the past.
2. ...	
3. ...	
4. ...	
5. ...	

**EXTERNAL TRIGGERS**

*External triggers are situations or circumstances that might result in a relapse to a target behavior. Sometimes, external triggers are environments, people, or places that remind you of the target behavior. Common external triggers like this are: people you used to engage in your target behavior with, environments you used to engage in your target behavior in, situations that cause you to think about/want to engage in your target behavior, or things associated with a target behavior. For example, the smell of cannabis may remind someone with a substance use disorder of their former cannabis use, making*

*them want to use again. External triggers can also be associated with trauma or external situations in which your internal triggers may arise. For example, someone who's parent would yell at them before physically abusing them may grow up to associate being yelled at with shame, anger, and/or powerlessness, and therefore may be more likely to react to being yelled at with physical violence. Include a list of at least 5 to 10 external triggers and the reasons why those situations trigger you.*

<i>List of External Triggers</i>	<i>Reasons Why These Situations Trigger Me</i>
1. Being in my old neighborhood	My old neighborhood triggers me because it is where my addiction developed and where I used when I was in the community. Today if I am in my old neighborhood, it may remind me of my past use and trigger me.
2. ...	
3. ...	
4. ...	
5. ...	

**COPING SKILLS & MECHANISMS**

*Coping mechanisms are the healthy tools that you use to deal with stressful situations or triggers in order to prevent a relapse into a target behavior such as substance use, criminal thinking, or anger leading to violence. Coping mechanisms are the specific actions that you take – and will continue to take – when you experience an internal or external trigger. Healthy coping mechanisms help you to manage stressful events while maintaining your emotional health and well-being. Examples of healthy coping mechanisms are exercising, journaling, meditating, engaging in breathing exercises, reaching out to someone for support, or staying connected to spiritual practices. Include a list of at least 5 to 10 coping skills and an example of a time you have used each skill.*

<i>List of Coping Skills</i>	<i>Example of a Time When I Have Used This Skill</i>
1. Breathing exercises	I use breathing exercises when someone offers me pruno. I immediately calm myself with my breath and exit the area.
2. ...	
3. ...	
4. ...	
5. ...	

**SUPPORT NETWORK**

*Identify the support network that you turn to when you experience triggers related to your target behavior. Who are the people you can talk to about your feelings and who will support you in using healthy coping skills? Your support network could include a sponsor, a mentor, family members, friends, or even organizations. List them below and include their contact information so that you can reach out to them at any time you need support.*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>
	<u>Phone Number:</u> <u>Email:</u> <u>Address:</u>
	<u>Phone Number:</u> <u>Email:</u> <u>Address:</u>
	<u>Phone Number:</u> <u>Email:</u> <u>Address:</u>

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	<u>Phone Number:</u> <u>Email:</u> <u>Address:</u>
	<u>Phone Number:</u> <u>Email:</u> <u>Address:</u>