

Chasing Anxiety with Alcoholism

Deep Dives · The Recovery Files

Understanding the Cycle That Feeds Itself

From the Hamster Wheel to Solid Ground — The Recovery Files

Yesterday · Wreckage & dread · Today · Stolen present · Tonight · Chase relief · ♻ · The cycle repeats — each revolution adds weight

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Each reading is followed by its check-in questions and exercises, in the same order as the app. Your scored results are shown in the app.

PART 1 OF 4 · READING

Chasing Anxiety: The Cycle That Feeds Itself

There is a particular kind of anxiety that belongs almost exclusively to the person caught in active alcoholism or substance use — and it is unlike any other anxiety you will ever experience. It is not the anxiety of a single stressor that can be identified, addressed, and resolved. It is a compounding, self-generating, self-perpetuating anxiety that has no beginning and no end, because the very thing you use to relieve it is the thing that creates it.

You are chasing anxiety with the substance that manufactures it. You are running from a fire while carrying gasoline.

To understand this cycle, picture your day — not as a straight line from morning to night, but as a hamster wheel with three stations that spin endlessly.

Station one is yesterday. You wake up and your first conscious thought is not about today. It is about what happened last night. What did you say? What did you do? Did anyone notice? Are there texts you don't remember sending? Is your partner angry? Did you make it to bed, or did you pass out on the couch? Did you miss something at work? Are there bottles to hide before someone sees them?

Before your feet even hit the floor, your nervous system is flooded with cortisol, adrenaline, and dread. You are already in crisis — not because of anything happening right now, but because of what already happened.

Station two is today — the present moment that you cannot access. Your body is physically here. You are at work. You are at the dinner table. You are in the car with your children. But your mind is split in two directions: backward toward the wreckage of yesterday, and forward toward the relief you are already planning.

You are a ghost in your own life, going through the motions while your internal world is consumed by the anxiety loop. Your colleagues are talking about a project deadline and you are calculating how many hours until you can drink. Your child is telling you about their school day and you are wondering if you have enough at home or if you need to stop somewhere.

You are physically incapable of being present because your brain is occupied territory — seized by the dual invasion of regret and anticipation.

Station three is tonight — the anticipated chemical solution that your entire day orbits around. Everything between now and that first drink is an obstacle. Work is an obstacle. Traffic is an obstacle. Dinner is an obstacle. Bedtime routines with children are obstacles.

Everything that should give your life meaning has been reduced to a barrier between you and the substance.

And here is the cruelest part: the anxiety about whether you will be able to drink — whether something will interfere with the plan — creates its own layer of tension. What if your partner suggests going out? What if work runs late? What if someone drops by?

The anticipated relief is generating its own anxiety. You are anxious about whether you will be able to access the thing you use to treat anxiety.

This three-station wheel spins every day, and it spins faster with each rotation. Yesterday's wreckage creates today's anxiety. Today's anxiety drives tonight's drinking. Tonight's drinking creates tomorrow's wreckage.

The cycle is not just repetitive — it is accelerating. It is a snowball rolling downhill, gathering mass and momentum, and every revolution of the wheel adds weight.

This is not metaphor. This is the lived experience of active alcoholism, and understanding it with clinical precision is the first step toward stepping off the wheel.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you identify the three stations of the anxiety wheel in your own experience? Describe what each station looked and felt like on a typical day in your active use.

2. Which station consumed the most mental energy — the wreckage of yesterday, the inability to be present today, or the anticipation of tonight's use? Why?

3. Describe a specific day where you were physically present for an important moment (with family, at work, with friends) but mentally consumed by the anxiety cycle. What did you miss?

4. When did you first notice the cycle accelerating — that each day was getting harder instead of easier? What did that recognition feel like?

5. If someone could have seen the inside of your mind during a typical day of active use, what would they have seen? Describe the mental landscape.

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 1 OF 5

Anticipatory Drinking Anxiety

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I find myself planning when, where, and how I will drink before the day's obligations are even finished

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I feel anxious about whether I will be able to drink tonight — will something get in the way?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I experience restlessness or irritability as the anticipated drinking time approaches

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I rush through tasks, conversations, and commitments to get to the point where I can use

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I feel anxiety about how much I will drink and whether I can control it this time

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I worry about having enough supply — enough alcohol, enough time, enough privacy

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. My mood improves just knowing I will be able to drink later, and drops when that is threatened

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I make mental deals with myself about "how much" or "when I'll stop" even though those deals always fail

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

The 24-Hour Anxiety Timeline

Mapping the Cycle Through a Typical Day of Active Use

Instructions

Think of a typical day during your active use — not the worst day, not the best day, but a representative day. Walk through each time block and describe what was happening in your mind, your body, and your anxiety level. Rate your anxiety at each point on a 1-10 scale.

Waking (First 30 Minutes)

Consider: First thoughts, physical sensations, emotional state, damage assessment

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Morning Routine

Consider: Getting ready, interactions with household, evidence management

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Commute / Transition to Obligations

Consider: Travel anxiety, rehearsing explanations, mental planning

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Mid-Morning Work / Obligations

Consider: Performance anxiety, concentration, physical symptoms

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Midday

Consider: Shift from yesterday-focus to tonight-planning, appetite, energy

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Afternoon

Consider: Anticipation building, clock-watching, restlessness, irritability

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

End of Day Transition

Consider: Racing to leave, logistical planning, securing supply

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Evening / Using Period

Consider: Initial relief, escalation, loss of control, consequences forming

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Late Night / Passing Out

Consider: Blackout territory, final awareness, physical collapse

Anxiety Level (1 = calm, 10 = unbearable)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What was your mind focused on during this time?

What physical sensations were you experiencing?

Were you focused on yesterday, today, or tonight? What percentage of attention went to each?

Timeline Summary

1. Looking at your anxiety levels across the day, where was the peak? Was it the morning wreckage, the afternoon anticipation, or another point?

2. At what point during the day did your focus shift from yesterday's consequences to tonight's anticipated use?

3. How much of your 24-hour day was spent in genuine present-moment awareness versus cycling between past and future?

4. Write a letter to yourself at the peak anxiety point of your day. What would you want yourself to know from the perspective of recovery?

YOUR EXERCISE

Three Stations of the Wheel

Deep Dive into Each Phase of the Cycle

Instructions

For each station of the wheel, describe in detail what happened in your experience. Be specific. Use concrete examples. The more honest you are here, the more valuable this exercise becomes.

Station One: Yesterday — The Wreckage

1. Describe what yesterday looked like during your active use. What thoughts dominated? What feelings?

2. What specific behaviors did this station drive? What did you do that you wouldn't have done otherwise?

3. How much of your day's mental and emotional energy was consumed by this station?

4. What was the cost of this station to your relationships? Your work? Your health? Your sense of self?

5. Looking back, what truth about this station do you wish you had seen while you were caught in it?

Station Two: Today — The Stolen Present

1. Describe what today looked like during your active use. What thoughts dominated? What feelings?

2. What specific behaviors did this station drive? What did you do that you wouldn't have done otherwise?

3. How much of your day's mental and emotional energy was consumed by this station?

4. What was the cost of this station to your relationships? Your work? Your health? Your sense of self?

5. Looking back, what truth about this station do you wish you had seen while you were caught in it?

Station Three: Tonight — The Chase

1. Describe what tonight looked like during your active use. What thoughts dominated? What feelings?

2. What specific behaviors did this station drive? What did you do that you wouldn't have done otherwise?

3. How much of your day's mental and emotional energy was consumed by this station?

4. What was the cost of this station to your relationships? Your work? Your health? Your sense of self?

5. Looking back, what truth about this station do you wish you had seen while you were caught in it?

Synthesis: The Full Wheel

1. Looking at all three stations together, how did they feed each other? How did yesterday create today, and today create tonight, and tonight create tomorrow's yesterday?

2. At what point did the wheel feel inescapable — like there was no exit and no stopping point?

3. Now that you can see the full mechanics of the wheel, what do you understand about your experience that you couldn't see while you were on it?

YOUR EXERCISE

Cause & Effect Chain Analysis

Tracing How Each Element Feeds the Next

Instructions

Map the direct cause-and-effect relationships in your cycle. For each chain, describe a specific, concrete example from your experience. Don't generalize — use real instances.

Drinking → Morning Anxiety

Last night I drank...

↓

This morning I felt...

Morning Anxiety → Today's Drinking

This morning I felt...

↓

So today I drank because...

Consequences → Anxiety Amplification

Because I drank, this happened...

↓

Which made my anxiety worse because...

Anxiety → More Consequences

My anxiety made me...

↓

Which caused this consequence...

Chain Recognition

1. Looking at all four chains, what patterns do you see? How is each chain connected to the others?

Identify the patterns...

2. If you could break just ONE link in these chains, which would it be? Why?

Identify your leverage point...

PART 2 OF 4 · READING

The Weight of Yesterday: Anxiety Born from the Wreckage

The morning anxiety of the active alcoholic is one of the most physiologically brutal experiences in the human repertoire. It begins before full consciousness — a surge of cortisol and adrenaline that the body produces while the brain is still assembling itself.

You do not wake up and then feel anxious. You wake up inside anxiety. It is the medium you emerge into, like surfacing into cold water.

Part of this is biochemistry. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. When you drink heavily, your brain compensates by increasing excitatory neurotransmitter activity — primarily glutamate — to counterbalance the depressant effects. When the alcohol wears off, the depressant is gone but the compensatory excitation remains.

Your nervous system is in overdrive with nothing to dampen it. This is why the morning after heavy drinking produces tremors, racing heart, sweating, and a sensation of electric dread that is indistinguishable from a panic attack.

You are experiencing neurochemical rebound — your brain is literally too excited, firing on all cylinders with no brakes. This is not "just anxiety." This is your nervous system in a state of measurable, physiological emergency.

Layered on top of this neurochemical storm is the psychological wreckage — the inventory of damage that your waking mind begins to compile. It starts with the immediate: how much did I drink? It moves to the behavioral: what did I do? Then to the relational: who did I hurt, embarrass, offend, or worry? Then to the professional: can I function today? Did I miss anything? Will anyone be able to tell? Then to the logistical: are there bottles to dispose of? Evidence to hide? Stories to fabricate?

Each question generates its own thread of anxiety, and those threads braid together into a rope that tightens around your chest.

The particularly vicious feature of yesterday's anxiety is the blackout gap — the spaces where memory should be but isn't. For many people in active alcoholism, portions of the previous evening are missing entirely. The brain, under the influence of alcohol, simply stopped recording.

These gaps are not benign silences. They are terrifying voids that the anxious mind fills with worst-case scenarios. Did I say something terrible? Did I do something humiliating? Did I hurt someone? The not-knowing is often worse than the knowing, because the anxious mind is infinitely creative in its capacity to imagine disaster.

And here is the trap: this morning anxiety — this neurochemical, psychological, relational storm — is the very thing that drives the person back to the substance. The anxiety is so unbearable, so physically overwhelming, that the brain's learned solution reasserts itself with irresistible force: drink to make it stop.

The wreckage of yesterday's drinking becomes the reason for today's drinking, which will create tomorrow's wreckage. The cycle is hydraulic. It runs on its own pressure.

For the person in early recovery, understanding this mechanism is essential. The morning anxiety you experience is not evidence that you are broken, weak, or fundamentally anxious. It is the predictable, measurable, neurochemical consequence of what alcohol does to the brain. It has a cause. It has a trajectory. And most importantly — it resolves.

As the brain recalibrates in sobriety, the morning terror diminishes. The cortisol surges decrease. The nervous system relearns its baseline. But in early recovery, the morning may still feel like a war zone, and knowing why it feels that way is the first defense against letting it drive you back to the substance that created it.

Reflection Questions

1. Describe your typical morning experience during active use. What was the first thought or feeling when you woke up? What physical sensations accompanied it?

2. Have you experienced blackout gaps — missing time that you could not account for? How did the not-knowing affect your anxiety compared to situations where you remembered what happened?

3. How much mental energy did you spend each morning on damage assessment, evidence management, and story construction? What was the cost of that effort?

4. Can you trace a specific instance where the morning anxiety from yesterday's drinking directly drove you to drink again that same day? Walk through the sequence.

5. Now that you understand the neurochemistry behind morning anxiety in alcoholism, does it change how you interpret those early-recovery mornings? How?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 2 OF 5

Yesterday's Wreckage Anxiety

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I wake up with dread about what I said or did while drinking the day or night before
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
2. I spend significant mental energy trying to reconstruct what happened during my last use
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
3. I feel shame, guilt, or panic about how my drinking affected my responsibilities yesterday
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. I check my phone for texts, calls, or social media posts I don't remember making
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
5. I experience physical anxiety symptoms (racing heart, nausea, shaking) related to yesterday's drinking
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
6. I worry that people at work, home, or in my life noticed my drinking or its effects
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I feel the need to apologize, explain, or cover up what happened when I was using
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. The regret from yesterday's drinking starts compounding before I've even gotten out of bed
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

The Lies the Cycle Tells

Exposing the False Narratives

Instructions

The cycle maintains itself through convincing lies. For each common lie, check if you believed it, describe how it showed up in your thinking, and write a counter-statement based on truth and evidence.

Lie 1: "Tomorrow will be different"

The Truth:

Tomorrow is always worse without intervention

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 2: "I'll just have one or two tonight"

The Truth:

Control is an illusion once the cycle has you

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 3: "Drinking helps my anxiety"

The Truth:

Drinking manufactures the anxiety you're trying to escape

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 4: "No one notices"

The Truth:

Everyone around you notices — they just don't know how to name it

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 5: "I can manage this on my own"

The Truth:

The cycle is designed to isolate and convince you that you don't need help

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 6: "I'm just stressed — once [X] is over, I'll cut back"

The Truth:

The cycle creates its own stress independent of external circumstances

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 7: "I'm not that bad compared to [other person]"

The Truth:

Comparing down keeps you stuck in the cycle

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Lie 8: "I function fine — I haven't lost anything major yet"

The Truth:

You've lost the present moment of your life — everything else is just details

Did you believe this lie during active use? How did it show up in your thinking or behavior?

Write your counter-statement — what you know to be true now

Additional Lies You Told Yourself

1. What other lies did the cycle tell you that aren't listed above?

List any other false narratives...

2. Which lie was the hardest to let go of? Which one still whispers to you in early recovery?

Name the most persistent lie...

PART 3 OF 4 · READING

The Stolen Present: Why You Could Never Be Here

One of the most devastating casualties of the anxiety-alcohol cycle is the present moment. Not the past, which is already gone. Not the future, which hasn't arrived. The present — the only place where life actually happens — becomes the one place the active alcoholic cannot access.

The present is stolen, occupied by twin invaders: the backward pull of yesterday's consequences and the forward pull of tonight's anticipated use.

Consider what the present moment requires of a human being. It requires attention — the ability to focus on what is happening right now. It requires engagement — the willingness to participate emotionally in the current experience. It requires responsiveness — the capacity to react appropriately to what others need from you in real time.

For the person caught in the anxiety-alcohol cycle, all three of these capacities are compromised, because the brain's bandwidth is consumed by the cycle itself.

At work, you are performing competence. You are present enough to avoid obvious failure, but the quality of your attention is degraded. You are in the meeting but not in the meeting. You hear the words but miss the meaning. You complete the task but not at the level you are capable of.

Your colleagues may not notice the decline immediately, but you notice it — and that awareness generates its own anxiety. You know you are underperforming. You know the gap between what you are doing and what you could be doing. And you know why. This knowledge sits in your chest like a stone, adding weight to the anxiety that is already crushing you.

At home, the theft of the present is even more devastating, because the people who love you are not measuring your performance — they are measuring your presence. Your child does not need you to perform parenthood. They need you to be there — actually there, making eye contact, listening to the story about the playground, caring about the drawing they made.

Your partner does not need you to execute the logistics of partnership. They need you to be emotionally available — to notice when they are struggling, to share the small moments, to be someone they can reach.

But you are unreachable. Your body is on the couch, but your mind is calculating. Your eyes are on your child's face, but your attention is on the clock. You are timing your life around the substance, and everyone around you can feel it, even if they cannot name it.

The cruelest irony is that the active alcoholic often recognizes this theft as it is happening. You are aware that you are missing your own life. You watch yourself from a distance — going through motions, saying the right things, performing normalcy — and you feel the grief of your own absence.

You are mourning yourself while you are still alive.

This awareness, rather than motivating change, often intensifies the cycle. The guilt of being an absent parent, partner, or professional becomes another source of anxiety — another reason to drink tonight. "I'm a terrible parent. I missed another bedtime because I was too focused on

drinking. I hate myself for this. I need a drink."

The cycle consumes even your self-awareness and converts it into fuel.

Recovery begins with reclaiming the present. Not perfectly. Not all at once. But in small, deliberate acts of attention: listening to one full sentence without your mind drifting to the bottle. Watching your child for thirty uninterrupted seconds. Tasting the food you are eating. Feeling the ground under your feet.

These acts of presence are not trivial. They are radical. They are the first evidence that the cycle's grip is loosening, that the present moment is being taken back, territory by territory, from the occupation of anxiety.

Reflection Questions

1. Describe a specific moment during active use when you were physically present but mentally consumed by the anxiety cycle. Who was there? What were you missing? What was your mind actually doing?

2. How did the people closest to you experience your absence? Did anyone ever say something like "you're not really here" or "you never listen"? How did that feedback land?

3. What percentage of your day during active use was spent actually present versus mentally time-traveling to yesterday or tonight? Be as honest as you can.

4. Have you experienced the grief of watching yourself miss your own life — the awareness that you were absent even while you were there? Describe that feeling.

5. In early recovery, have you had any moments of genuine presence — even briefly — that felt different from your experience during active use? What was that like?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 3 OF 5

Inability to Stay Present

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. My mind constantly jumps between regret about yesterday and planning for tonight's use
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
2. I have difficulty being fully present in conversations because part of me is thinking about drinking
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
3. I feel like I am physically in one place but mentally somewhere else most of the time
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. I miss important details at work, at home, or in relationships because my attention is fractured
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
5. I feel like I am watching my life from behind glass — present but not really there
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
6. I use substances partly because they are the only thing that temporarily stops my racing mind
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I experience time as either crawling (waiting to drink) or vanishing (while drinking)
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. Being asked to "be in the moment" feels impossible — there is too much noise in my head
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 4 OF 5

The Body Under Siege

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I experience physical withdrawal symptoms (tremors, sweating, nausea) that drive my anxiety higher
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
2. My body feels like it is pulling me toward the substance even when my mind says no
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I have difficulty performing work tasks because my hands shake, my stomach is upset, or I can't concentrate

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I use substances to stop physical symptoms so I can function at work or home

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I feel trapped between the physical need to drink and the physical consequences of drinking

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I experience chest tightness, shortness of breath, or heart racing that intensifies as the day goes on

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I have called in sick, left early, or avoided commitments because my body couldn't keep up with the anxiety

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. The physical discomfort creates a sense of urgency — a feeling that I MUST drink to make it stop

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Anxiety Body Scan

Where Did the Cycle Live in Your Physical Body?

Instructions

The anxiety-alcohol cycle isn't just mental — it manifests physically. For each body area, describe what you felt during active use. Rate the intensity. This creates a complete somatic map of the cycle's physical grip.

Head & Skull

Common symptoms: Pressure, pounding, fog, dizziness

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Chest & Heart

Common symptoms: Racing, tightness, pounding, shortness of breath

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Stomach & Gut

Common symptoms: Nausea, churning, emptiness, cramping

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Hands & Arms

Common symptoms: Tremors, tingling, weakness, sweating

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Throat & Neck

Common symptoms: Tightness, lump, constriction, tension

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Legs & Feet

Common symptoms: Restlessness, weakness, shaking, numbness

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Skin & Surface

Common symptoms: Sweating, crawling sensation, flushing, coldness

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

Overall Nervous System

Common symptoms: Electric feeling, overstimulation, exhaustion, panic

Intensity during active use (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe what you felt in this area during the cycle

How has this area changed in recovery (if at all)?

YOUR EXERCISE

Stolen Moments Inventory

What the Cycle Took From Your Life

Instructions

The inability to be present steals moments that can never be recovered. This exercise inventories what was taken — not to generate shame, but to clarify what you're reclaiming in recovery.

With Partner/Spouse

Conversations you were physically in but mentally absent from

Moments of connection you missed because you were planning your use

Times they needed you emotionally but you were consumed by the cycle

With Children

Bedtime stories, school events, or activities where your body showed up but your mind didn't

Questions they asked that you didn't really hear

Developmental moments you missed because you were focused on drinking

With Friends/Family

Gatherings where you were calculating when you could leave to drink

Calls or visits where you couldn't be present

Relationships that faded because the cycle took priority

At Work/Career

Meetings where you were managing hangover rather than contributing

Projects where you performed below capacity

Opportunities missed because the cycle had your attention

Hobbies/Passions

Activities you used to love that became obstacles to drinking

Creative or physical pursuits abandoned

Skills that deteriorated from lack of present engagement

With Yourself

Moments of peace or joy you couldn't access

Self-care you skipped

Personal growth that stalled because the cycle consumed everything

Acknowledging the Loss

1. Looking at everything the cycle stole, what do you grieve most?

Name what you mourn...

2. What can you reclaim in recovery? What moments can you start being present for now?

Identify what you're taking back...

YOUR EXERCISE

Present Moment Reclamation Plan

Grounding Techniques for Anxiety Spikes

Instructions

The anxiety cycle stole your ability to be present. These grounding techniques help you reclaim the present moment. Try each one, rate its effectiveness, and build your personalized toolkit.

5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Grounding

Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste

Have you tried this technique? Rate its effectiveness (1 = didn't help, 5 = very helpful)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Notes on using this technique — when does it work best? Any modifications you've made?

Box Breathing

Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4. Repeat 5 times.

Have you tried this technique? Rate its effectiveness (1 = didn't help, 5 = very helpful)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Notes on using this technique — when does it work best? Any modifications you've made?

Body Scan Anchor

Starting at feet, progressively tense and relax each muscle group up to head

Have you tried this technique? Rate its effectiveness (1 = didn't help, 5 = very helpful)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Notes on using this technique — when does it work best? Any modifications you've made?

Grounding Phrase Repetition

Choose a short phrase ("I am here now") and repeat it while focusing on your breathing

Have you tried this technique? Rate its effectiveness (1 = didn't help, 5 = very helpful)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Notes on using this technique — when does it work best? Any modifications you've made?

Cold Water/Ice Reset

Splash cold water on face, hold ice cubes, or take a cold shower to reset nervous system

Have you tried this technique? Rate its effectiveness (1 = didn't help, 5 = very helpful)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Notes on using this technique — when does it work best? Any modifications you've made?

Movement Grounding

Walk, stretch, do pushups — anything that reconnects you to your physical body right now

Have you tried this technique? Rate its effectiveness (1 = didn't help, 5 = very helpful)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Notes on using this technique — when does it work best? Any modifications you've made?

Your Personalized Grounding Plan

1. Based on your ratings, which 2-3 techniques work best for you? List them in order of effectiveness.

List your go-to techniques...

2. Create your anxiety spike protocol: When anxiety hits, what are the first three things you will do, in order?

Step 1: ___ Step 2: ___ Step 3: ___

3. Who can you reach out to when grounding techniques alone aren't enough?

List names and contact methods...

PART 4 OF 4 · READING

The Snowball Effect: How Anxiety and Alcohol Build an Avalanche

The relationship between anxiety and alcohol is not a straight line. It is not even a circle. It is a spiral — and it spirals downward, gaining speed and mass with every revolution.

Understanding the snowball effect is understanding why active alcoholism is a progressive condition, why each day is worse than the last, and why the window of perceived "normal functioning" narrows until it disappears entirely.

The snowball begins small. In the early stages of problematic drinking, the cause-and-effect cycle operates on a manageable scale. You drink too much on a Wednesday night. Thursday morning is rough — some anxiety, some regret, some physical discomfort — but you push through. By Thursday evening, you tell yourself it wasn't that bad. Maybe one or two drinks to take the edge off.

Thursday night becomes heavier than planned. Friday morning is worse than Thursday morning. The consequences are slightly larger. The anxiety is slightly more intense. The need for relief is slightly more urgent.

The snowball has begun its descent.

What makes the snowball accelerate is the compounding nature of unresolved consequences. Each day of the cycle produces problems — relational, professional, financial, physical, legal — that do not resolve overnight. They accumulate.

Monday's consequences are still unaddressed when Tuesday adds its own. By Friday, you are carrying the weight of an entire week's unresolved wreckage, and each unresolved problem generates its own thread of anxiety. The anxiety is no longer about one thing. It is about everything.

It is about the argument you haven't resolved, the work deadline you missed, the bill you forgot to pay, the doctor's appointment you skipped, the friend you haven't called back, the lie you told that you need to maintain, the physical symptoms you're pretending don't exist.

The snowball is no longer a single ball of snow. It is an avalanche of accumulated, compounding, unresolved life.

Simultaneously, the alcohol itself is changing the equation. Chronic heavy drinking produces neuroadaptation — the brain adjusts to the constant presence of a depressant by increasing its own excitatory activity. This means that baseline anxiety increases over time.

The person who began drinking to manage normal-range anxiety now has chemically amplified anxiety that exists even on days they don't drink. The substance that was recruited as the solution has become the primary manufacturer of the problem.

This is the metabolic core of the snowball effect: alcohol doesn't just fail to fix anxiety — it generates more anxiety, which demands more alcohol, which generates more anxiety, in a tightening gyre of neurochemical escalation.

The snowball also operates in the dimension of time. In the early stages of the cycle, the person can still maintain some separation between the three stations of the wheel — morning recovery, daytime functioning, evening drinking. These phases have distinct boundaries.

But as the snowball accelerates, the boundaries blur. Morning recovery takes longer. Daytime functioning becomes shorter. Evening drinking starts earlier. Eventually, the three phases merge into a single, undifferentiated state of anxiety-driven use. There is no longer a "morning" or "evening." There is only the cycle, spinning continuously, with no gap for clarity, reflection, or choice.

The person experiencing the snowball effect often describes a terrifying sensation: the feeling that they are falling behind their own life. They can see the obligations, the relationships, the responsibilities receding into the distance as the cycle carries them away. They are aware that the gap between where they are and where they should be is widening every day.

This awareness — far from motivating change — becomes the most potent fuel for the cycle. The bigger the gap, the more unbearable the anxiety. The more unbearable the anxiety, the more urgent the need for chemical relief. The more they drink, the bigger the gap becomes.

This is the mathematics of the snowball, and it is merciless in its logic.

Understanding the snowball effect is critical for people in early recovery because it explains why stopping felt so impossible and why early sobriety feels so overwhelming. The snowball did not stop the moment you stopped drinking. The accumulated consequences, the neurochemical imbalance, the unresolved wreckage — all of this is still present.

The difference is that without the substance, you are finally able to see the full extent of what has accumulated. This is why early recovery often feels worse before it feels better: you are surveying the damage for the first time with clear eyes.

The good news is that the snowball's momentum requires the substance to maintain itself. Without alcohol adding new layers every day, the snowball begins to slow. It begins to melt. The accumulated consequences can finally begin to be addressed, one at a time, in order of priority. The neurochemistry begins to recalibrate. The present moment begins to return.

The spiral begins — slowly, imperfectly — to reverse.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you trace the snowball effect in your own history? At what point did the cycle begin accelerating — when did the consequences start compounding faster than you could address them?

2. Describe the sensation of "falling behind your own life." What was the gap between where you were and where you knew you should be? What did it feel like to watch that gap widen?

3. At what point did the boundaries between morning recovery, daytime functioning, and evening drinking begin to blur? What did that transition look and feel like?

4. Now that you understand that alcohol chemically amplifies baseline anxiety over time, how does that change your understanding of why your anxiety seemed to get worse no matter how much you drank?

5. In early recovery, what does the accumulated snowball look like? What consequences are still present? Which ones feel most urgent? Which ones will require patience and time to resolve?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 5 OF 5

The Snowball Effect

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I recognize that my anxiety gets worse with each passing day of continued drinking, not better

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I notice that the "relief" drinking provides is shorter each time, while the consequences last longer

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I feel like each day adds more problems than the day before — financially, relationally, professionally

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I experience the feeling of being on a runaway train — gaining speed with no way to stop

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I tell myself "tomorrow will be different" but recognize that tomorrow is always worse than today

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I am aware that alcohol is creating the very anxiety I am drinking to escape

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I feel like digging myself out of today's problems is impossible because yesterday's problems aren't resolved

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I experience the terrifying recognition that this pattern is accelerating — the cycle is getting tighter and faster

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Snowball Consequence Mapping

How the Damage Compounded Over Time

Instructions

The snowball effect means consequences don't just add up — they multiply. For each life domain, map how the damage accumulated and compounded. Rate the severity and describe the progression.

Relationships

Examples: Broken trust, missed events, emotional unavailability, conflicts, isolation

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

Work/Career

Examples: Missed deadlines, poor performance, absenteeism, lost opportunities, reputation damage

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

Financial

Examples: Money spent on substances, bills unpaid, opportunities lost, debt accumulated

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

Physical Health

Examples: Medical issues ignored, deteriorating fitness, sleep problems, nutrition neglect

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

Legal/Administrative

Examples: DUIs, warrants, fines, deadlines missed, documentation piling up

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

Mental/Emotional

Examples: Anxiety amplification, depression, cognitive decline, emotional regulation loss

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

Identity/Self-Concept

Examples: Loss of values alignment, shame accumulation, self-worth erosion, purpose disconnection

Severity of accumulated damage (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

List the specific consequences that accumulated in this area

How did earlier consequences create later consequences? Trace the compounding effect.

The Total Weight

1. Looking at all seven domains, what is the total accumulated weight you're carrying? How does it feel to see it all mapped out?

2. Which domain feels most urgent to address in recovery? Which will require the most patience and time?

Set your priorities...

YOUR EXERCISE

7-Day Anxiety Cycle Check-In

Track Your Nervous System Recalibration in Recovery

Instructions

For 7 consecutive days, check in three times daily and rate your anxiety level. This creates visible evidence of your nervous system recalibrating. Note: Early recovery anxiety may still be high — that's normal. What you're tracking is the trend and pattern, not expecting perfection.

Day 1

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Day 2

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Day 3

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Day 4

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Day 5

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Day 6

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Day 7

Morning

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Afternoon

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

Evening

Anxiety Level (1-5)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Brief note (optional)

7-Day Analysis

1. Looking at your 7-day anxiety data, what trends do you notice? Is your baseline anxiety decreasing? Are mornings getting easier?

Identify patterns and progress...

2. What tools, practices, or support have helped the most in managing anxiety during this week?

Name what's working...

YOUR EXERCISE

Reversing the Snowball

Building Evidence of the Cycle Breaking

Instructions

The cycle reversed is recovery. For each dimension, identify concrete evidence that the snowball is slowing, stopping, or reversing. Document small wins — they're evidence of massive neurological and spiritual shifts.

Neurochemical Healing

What to Look For:

Baseline anxiety decreasing, mornings getting easier, sleep improving

What evidence of reversal have you noticed in this dimension?

What are you doing (or what support are you receiving) that's contributing to this reversal?

What can you do to strengthen the reversal in this dimension over the next 30 days?

Morning Reversal

What to Look For:

Waking without dread, no damage assessment needed, clear conscience

What evidence of reversal have you noticed in this dimension?

What are you doing (or what support are you receiving) that's contributing to this reversal?

What can you do to strengthen the reversal in this dimension over the next 30 days?

Presence Reclamation

What to Look For:

Actually listening in conversations, tasting food, noticing surroundings

What evidence of reversal have you noticed in this dimension?

What are you doing (or what support are you receiving) that's contributing to this reversal?

What can you do to strengthen the reversal in this dimension over the next 30 days?

Consequence Reduction

What to Look For:

No new wreckage, relationships stabilizing, work performance improving

What evidence of reversal have you noticed in this dimension?

What are you doing (or what support are you receiving) that's contributing to this reversal?

What can you do to strengthen the reversal in this dimension over the next 30 days?

Breaking Anticipation

What to Look For:

Engaging in evening activities, not clock-watching, genuine relaxation

What evidence of reversal have you noticed in this dimension?

What are you doing (or what support are you receiving) that's contributing to this reversal?

What can you do to strengthen the reversal in this dimension over the next 30 days?

Slowing the Snowball

What to Look For:

Days getting easier not harder, catching up on responsibilities, building margin

What evidence of reversal have you noticed in this dimension?

What are you doing (or what support are you receiving) that's contributing to this reversal?

What can you do to strengthen the reversal in this dimension over the next 30 days?

Commitment to Breaking the Cycle

1. Looking at all six reversal dimensions, which one feels strongest in your recovery right now?
Which one needs the most attention?

Assess where you are...

2. Write your commitment statement: How will you continue breaking the cycle? What will you do when anxiety spikes? Who will you reach out to?

Make your commitment concrete and specific...
