

Relapse Pattern Timeline Mapping Board

Mapping board · Recovery Timelines · The Recovery Files

Printable fill-in version: write your answers on the lines. The interactive board, its charts and your saved entries stay in the app.

Relapse Pattern Timeline Mapping Board

Map your unique recovery journey to identify patterns, warning signs, and pivotal moments. Understanding where and when you begin to pull back is your strongest defense against relapse.

This tool is designed for use alongside professional treatment and is not a substitute for clinical care.

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Recovery isn't a straight line — it's a landscape of engagement, disengagement, growth, and vulnerability. This tool helps you map your unique recovery journey to identify the patterns, warning signs, and pivotal moments that shape your path.

Sobriety Periods

Life Events Mapped

Engagement Ratings

Reflections Written

Understanding the Relapse Process

Relapse is not an event — it's a process that unfolds over days, weeks, or even months before a substance is ever picked up. Understanding this process means recognizing that recovery requires ongoing vigilance, honest self-assessment, and the humility to stay connected to support.

Emotional Relapse

Bottling emotions, isolating, skipping meetings, poor self-care. You're not thinking about using, but your emotions and behaviors are setting the stage.

Mental Relapse

Romanticizing past use, thinking about people/places/things, bargaining, planning relapse. Part of you wants to use, part doesn't.

Physical Relapse

The act of using. Once mental relapse is in full swing without intervention, physical relapse becomes increasingly difficult to prevent.

How to Use This Tool

1. Recovery Timeline — Map your sobriety periods and significant life events chronologically.
2. Engagement Map — Rate your level of engagement across 8 recovery dimensions for different time periods.

3. Warning Signs Inventory — Identify which cognitive, behavioral, and emotional warning signs you've experienced.

4. Character Prompts — Deep reflection questions organized by theme: denial, rationalization, complacency, character defects, and isolation.

5. Pattern Analysis — Identify the "relapse signature" unique to you.

6. Action Plan — Synthesize your insights into a concrete, personalized relapse prevention strategy.

Clinical Note: This tool is designed for use in individual counseling, group therapy, or self-guided reflection. It is not a substitute for professional treatment. If you are at risk of relapse, please call SAMHSA: 1-800-662-4357 or 988.

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Recovery Timeline

Sobriety Periods

Map each period of sobriety — including what ended it and what was happening in your life

× **Cancel**

Start Date

End Date (blank if current)

Length of Sobriety

What triggered the end of this sobriety period?

Describe what was happening in your life...

Save Period

No sobriety periods added yet. Click "Add Period" to begin mapping your recovery timeline.

Life Events & Stressors

Map significant events that impacted your recovery — both stressors and milestones

× **Cancel**

Date

Event Type

[☐ Loss / Grief / ☐ Relationship Change / ☐ Career / Financial / ☐ Health Issue / ☒ Legal Issue / ☐ Family Stressor / ☒ Trauma Trigger / ☐ Positive Event / ☐ Recovery Milestone / ☒ Complacency Marker]

Description

Describe what happened and how it affected your recovery...

Impact on Recovery (1 = minimal, 5 = severe)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Minimal Severe

Save Event

No life events mapped yet. Add stressors, milestones, and pivotal moments from your recovery journey.

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Engagement Map

Recovery Engagement Map

For each recovery dimension, rate your level of engagement during different periods. Look for which dimensions decline first — these are your personal early warning indicators.

5 = Fully Engaged

4 = Mostly Engaged

3 = Going Through Motions

2 = Pulling Back

1 = Disengaged

First 90 Days

☐ Months 3-6 ☐ Months 6-12 ☐ Year 1-2 ☐ 2+ Years ☐ Pre-Relapse ☐ Current

Meeting Attendance

Frequency and quality of recovery meeting participation

Step Work

Active engagement with the 12-step process

Sponsorship Contact

Frequency and depth of sponsor communication

Home Group Commitment

Consistency with home group responsibilities

Honesty & Transparency

Willingness to be truthful with self and others

Self-Care & Boundaries

Maintaining healthy routines, sleep, nutrition, boundaries

Healthy Relationships

Quality of connections and willingness to be vulnerable

Emotional Awareness

Ability to identify, process, and express feelings

Engagement Heatmap Overview

Blue = engaged, red/orange = disengaging. Look for your personal patterns.

First 90 Days

Months 3-6

Months 6-12

Year 1-2

2+ Years

Pre-Relapse

Current

☐ Meeting

☐ Step

☐ Sponsorship

- ☐ Home
- ☐ Honesty
- ☐ Self-Care
- ☐ Healthy
- ☐ Emotional

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Warning Signs

Relapse Warning Signs Inventory

Check the warning signs you've experienced in your recovery. For each, note when it first appeared and what was happening in your life at that time.

- ☐ Cognitive Warning Signs (Thinking)
 - ☐ Romanticizing past use / "the good old days"
 - ☐ "I'm different from everyone else here"
 - ☐ "I deserve to relax / I've earned it"
 - ☐ "I can control it now / I've learned my lesson"
 - ☐ "Just one won't hurt"
 - ☐ "Nobody will know"
- ☐ Behavioral Warning Signs (Actions)
 - ☐ Skipping meetings / making excuses not to attend
 - ☐ Avoiding sponsor calls / being dishonest with sponsor
 - ☐ Isolating from recovery community
 - ☐ Reconnecting with using friends / visiting old places
 - ☐ Breaking healthy routines (sleep, exercise, nutrition)
 - ☐ Keeping secrets / building a "shadow life"
- ☐ Emotional Warning Signs (Feelings)
 - ☐ Increased irritability, restlessness, or agitation
 - ☐ Self-pity / "poor me" thinking
 - ☐ Growing resentments left unaddressed
 - ☐ Feeling overwhelmed but refusing to ask for help
 - ☐ Emotional numbness / "I don't feel anything"

☐ Chronic boredom / feeling life is "flat" without substances

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Character Prompts

Character & Pattern Reflection Prompts

These deep-dive questions help you examine the character patterns, defense mechanisms, and blind spots that often precede relapse. Approach each with radical honesty.

☐ denial ☐ rationalization ☐ complacency ☐ Character Defects ☐ isolation

Q1. What truths about my substance use am I currently unwilling to face?

Take a moment to reflect honestly. Write what comes to mind without censoring yourself...

Q2. Who in my life has expressed concerns that I've dismissed or minimized?

Take a moment to reflect honestly. Write what comes to mind without censoring yourself...

Q3. What evidence of a problem have I explained away or rationalized?

Take a moment to reflect honestly. Write what comes to mind without censoring yourself...

Q4. In what areas of my life am I telling myself "it's not that bad"?

Take a moment to reflect honestly. Write what comes to mind without censoring yourself...

Q5. What would I say to a friend showing the same patterns I'm showing?

Take a moment to reflect honestly. Write what comes to mind without censoring yourself...

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Pattern Analysis

Period-by-Period Pattern Analysis

Select a recovery period to answer targeted questions about what was happening during that phase. This helps you identify your unique "relapse signature."

First 30 Days

☐ Months 1-3 ☐ Months 3-6 ☐ Months 6-12 ☐ Year 1-2 ☐ 2+ Years

First 30 Days

Recovery period: 0-30 days

What was your motivation for getting sober at this point?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Who was in your corner supporting your recovery?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What did your daily recovery routine look like?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How frequently were you attending meetings?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What fears were most present for you?
Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Months 1-3

Recovery period: 1-3 months

When did the initial urgency of recovery begin to fade?
Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How did your meeting attendance change during this period?
Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Were you actively engaged with a sponsor and step work?
Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What life stressors emerged that tested your recovery?
Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How were you managing emotions without substances?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Recovery period: 3-6 months

Did you experience a "pink cloud" period? When did it lift?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How did relationships change as you progressed in recovery?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What complacency behaviors first appeared during this time?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Were there moments you considered using? What was happening?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How connected did you feel to your recovery community?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Recovery period: 6-12 months

What old patterns or behaviors began creeping back?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How did your commitment to recovery practices change?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Were there unresolved issues that began surfacing?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What role did boredom or restlessness play?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How was your relationship with your Higher Power / spiritual practice?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Recovery period: 1-2 years

Did you begin feeling like you had "graduated" from recovery work?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How did your identity begin shifting — were you still identifying as someone in recovery?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What new challenges or stressors appeared at this stage?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Were you still doing service work and helping newcomers?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How honest were you being with yourself about your recovery?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Recovery period: 2+ years

What subtle shifts occurred in your thinking about recovery?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Were there periods where you felt "cured" or "past it"?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

How did major life changes affect your recovery commitment?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

What role did unresolved trauma or grief play?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

Looking back, where were the earliest signs of disengagement?

Reflect on this period of your recovery...

My Relapse Signature — Pattern Synthesis

Based on everything you've mapped — describe your personal "relapse signature." What happens first? What follows? What are the dominoes that fall before you pick up?

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Action Plan

Personal Relapse Prevention Action Plan

Now that you've identified your patterns, it's time to build your defense. Answer each section to create a personalized, actionable relapse prevention strategy based on YOUR unique warning signs.

⚠ My Earliest Warning Signs

Based on your pattern analysis, what are the FIRST signs that your recovery is slipping? List 3-5 specific, observable behaviors or thoughts that signal the beginning of your relapse pattern.

Write your plan here...

☐ **My Non-Negotiable Recovery Actions**

What are the recovery practices that you CANNOT afford to let slip, no matter what? These are your bedrock — the things that, when maintained, keep everything else in place.

Write your plan here...

☐ **My Accountability Structure**

Who will you tell about your warning signs? Who has permission to call you out? How will you maintain transparency? List specific people and specific arrangements.

Write your plan here...

☐ **My Stress Response Plan**

When a major stressor hits (and it will), what will you do INSTEAD of pulling back from recovery? Write specific, concrete actions — not vague intentions.

Write your plan here...

☐ **My Complacency Prevention Strategy**

How will you keep your recovery fresh and urgent when things are going well? What practices will prevent the "I've got this figured out" mindset?

Write your plan here...

☐ **My Emergency Intervention Plan**

If you find yourself in active craving or pre-relapse — the "just one won't hurt" moment — what is your step-by-step emergency plan? Be specific: who do you call, what do you do, where do you go.

Write your plan here...

□ **My Recovery Commitment Statement**

Write a statement to yourself — about why your recovery matters, what you've learned from mapping these patterns, and what you commit to doing differently. This is your anchor. Read it when the rationalizations start.

Dear Me, I am writing this to remind you of what you know to be true when the disease tries to convince you otherwise...

□ **Crisis Resources**

SAMHSA National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357 (Free, Confidential, 24/7)

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988

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Q1. What excuses have I used to justify skipping recovery activities?

Q2. How have I convinced myself that my situation is "different" or "unique"?

Q3. What reasons have I given for pulling back from my support network?

Q4. When did I start believing I had "figured this out" on my own?

Q5. What half-truths am I telling myself to avoid full accountability?

Q1. When did recovery stop feeling urgent and start feeling optional?

Q2. What daily practices have I let slip because I "don't need them anymore"?

Q3. How has my gratitude for sobriety changed since early recovery?

Q4. In what ways have I begun to take my sobriety for granted?

Q5. What would my early-recovery self think about my current effort level?

Q1. Which character defects have I stopped actively working on?

Q2. How has pride or ego influenced my recent decisions in recovery?

Q3. Where am I being dishonest — even in small ways — with myself or others?

Q4. What resentments am I carrying that I haven't shared or processed?

Q5. How has my willingness to be vulnerable changed over time?

Q1. When did I start preferring being alone over being with recovery peers?

Q2. What stories am I telling myself about why I don't need others?

Q3. How have I been declining invitations or avoiding connection?

Q4. Who have I pushed away, and what was my justification?

Q5. What would it take for me to reach out to someone today?