

Writing a Relapse Prevention Plan

By Rob Sharp

Post Reporter

WHEN WRITING A relapse prevention plan, one can go about it in a couple of ways; however, something similar to the parole plan outline featured in the March 2020 edition of the *Post* would probably work well. These outline formats are easy to read and make it easy to locate particular subjects while in a hearing. But remember, the outline below is just a suggestion, and you may decide to use a different format for your relapse prevention plans. Any relapse prevention plan is a good one if it fits your needs. To create an individual plan, you must consider your history and the behaviors and contributing factors for your specific crime.

Begin with an introductory paragraph detailing particular needs like drug and alcohol treatment, maintaining a positive attitude, remaining open and honest with your support network — whatever fits your particular needs. Be

For example:

Negative Behaviors

1. Specific crime
2. Alcohol/drug abuse
3. Isolating oneself
4. Negativity

Now make a list of coping skills:

Now list internal and external triggers:

Internal Triggers

1. Anger
2. Feelings of rejection
3. Negative thinking

External Triggers

1. People who abuse substances
2. Actual rejections
3. Negative people

Coping Skills

1. Positive thinking
2. Stop and think
3. Stay involved with others
4. Meditation
5. Exercise

Finally, make a list of people and groups that constitute the support network:

Next, list warning signs for you and for your support network to be aware of when slipping toward relapse:

Warning Signs

1. Negative talk
2. Avoiding parole officer
3. Being defensive
4. Making excuses

Support Network

1. Parole officer
2. Family
3. Friends
4. NA/AA sponsor and groups
5. Religious elder

You can include a short paragraph before or after each section to explain anything of particular importance to relapse prevention and recovery. Nevertheless, do not get too wordy and stretch the plan beyond two pages. Remember, it's supposed to be reviewed daily, and so it must be brief.



Volume III, Issue IX September 2020

The Effects of the Coronavirus

By William Goehler
Mule Creek State Prison

THE COVID-19 CRISIS certainly has caused a lot of grief around the world, and our hearts go out to everyone who has been affected. As prisoners, we empathize with all the people required to stay at home by emergency decree. And, while it has been difficult for us to be away from work or school, it is hardly comparable to the difficulties experienced by citizens out in the real world who are not used to being on "lockdown." Nevertheless, every crisis presents opportunities for us to decide how we'll handle it. In this spirit, a poll of the population on Facility A asked the question: How are you surviving the COVID-19 ordeal? Here are some remarks:

- I try to stay busy and keep my mind off it.
- Staying busy has helped me survive the uncertainty and confusion.
- I'm used to it after being locked up for 26 years.
- It's true that we are socially adapted to this form of existence because [of] where we are. I think it is important for us to share our wisdom with our loved ones of how to cope with it, and [to] show empathy towards them.
- Though I can see that a lot of people are really stressed at this time, we are seeing some really good things emerge in response to these difficulties, i.e., families spending more time together and society expressing more empathy for the less fortunate, etc.
- Trying to stay positive and talking with family.
- Day-by-day normal program.
- Hanging out with my buds and staying in a positive mindset — this too shall pass.
- No problem. I've gone through a lot worse.
- Other than worrying about my family, it doesn't affect me.
- It is what it is. It doesn't affect us because we are already in a controlled environment.

The thing for us to remember during this crisis is that we are all in this together and many people are experiencing a new level of anxiety they are not accustomed to. Have patience.
