



Deer Valley Counseling

"Skills for Better Living"

High Risk Situations for Relapse

Here are some high risk thoughts, behaviors and situations where the chances of relapse are higher than usual. This applies to addictions such as alcoholism addiction, drug addiction or, with some modifications, sex addiction or gambling addiction.

1. **Denial.** We say that our use doesn't control us—we control it. We say we can stop anytime we want to. We say it is no longer a problem.
2. **Shifting the Blame.** We refuse to make the connection between our using and our problems and blame other people or situations instead. For example, we say everyone was doing it.
3. **Problems Temporarily Stop.** Drinking or drugging has caused us problems, which has led us to stop. But we feel deprived because we are not using, and some of the problems temporarily get better, so we start using again.
4. **We Refuse Help.** We associate with people who support and encourage our using and push people away who want to help us stop.
5. **We Awfulize Sobriety.** We think being sober is awful, unbearable or just not as much fun.
6. **Romancing the High.** We reminisce about how good using was. We exaggerate the good times and minimize the problems.
7. **Do You Believe in Magic?** We think that being high will make all our problems magically disappear, that we'll use responsibly, that we'll only use once or for a short time.
8. **Obsession.** We repeat the previous three high risk thoughts over and over again in our head—being sober is awful, being high was great, being high will magically make everything great again.
9. **Fitting In.** We want to fit in but can't seem to do it without using. We have trouble establishing a clean & sober support system or social group.
10. **Conflict.** We get in arguments with friends and family. We think no one cares or understands.
11. **Overcommitment.** We overcommit, start to get behind and get stressed.
12. **Frustration.** We want what we can't get and we think we're entitled to get everything we want.
13. **Boredom.** We get bored.
14. **Celebrations.** We want to celebrate a birthday, promotion or something else and can't think of doing it without using.
15. **Old Friends.** We just "happen" to hang out with old friends or family who use.
16. **Unexpected Party.** We just "happen" to find ourselves in a social situation where people are drinking or drugging.
17. **Grief.** A friend or family member dies. We are sad and drugs or alcohol are available.
18. **Memories.** Something reminds us of some bad experience.
19. **Sickness.** We get sick or injured and feel pain. The doctor prescribes pain medication, muscle relaxers or tranquilizers.

Sandra Nettles, LCSW, MSSW
Jamie Nettles, MS

The original of this article can be found online at <http://deerval.com/Articles/HighRiskSituations.htm>.

Copyright © 2009-2010 Deer Valley Counseling. Verbatim copying and distribution of this entire article are permitted worldwide, without royalty, in any medium, provided this notice and a link to the original article are preserved.