

Relapse Prevention for the Holiday Season

The holidays put pressure on people to indulge. Maintaining a sober lifestyle becomes more difficult, but not unmanageable.

1 Acknowledge the Risk

Many people have difficulties coping during the holiday season. Three reasons include:

Non-Sober Environment

People, music, locations, emotions, advertisements, and other festivities may pressure or trigger you in the name of the season.

Stress

Shopping, cooking, and seeing relatives, all while carrying on your usual life may lead you to neglect your sober lifestyle.

Unrealistic Expectations

This year's going to be different than others. But expecting it to be perfect leads to disappointment, an emotional trigger.

2 Have a Plan

Prepare for Holiday Activities and know what to do before things go wrong. Ask yourself:

Why?

Do I really need to go? Am I avoiding something or someone?

Where?

Am I ready to handle this type of environment?

Who?

Can I bring someone to help me?

Will anyone compromise my sobriety?

What?

What are possible triggers?

What's my "escape plan" if I feel a craving coming on?

When?

How long will I stay?

What time will I leave?

3 Practice Saying No

... and not just to drugs or alcohol. Activities and people may pressure you into situations you don't want to be in.

I won't be able to make it.

I wish I could make it work.

I'm focusing on other things.

Sounds lovely, but no thanks.

I'm supposed to be somewhere else.

I'm in a season of No.

I'm taking on new things.

It's not a good idea for me.

Thanks for the invite, but no.

I've got too much on my plate.

I'm not able to set aside time.

I won't be able to help.

I appreciate you thinking of me but...

4 Use Your Support System

Meetings, sponsors, coaches, and counselors understand what you're going through better than friends and family.

Do Not

Skip out on meetings, rely solely on friends and family, ignore sponsor's calls, avoid talking about cravings.

Do

Go to more meetings than usual, tell loved ones the importance of meetings, call your sponsor, reach out for help.

5 Find the Holiday Spirit

Look beyond the traditions of the season and discover the real purpose and joy of the holidays.

Give Thanks

Find gratitude in every moment, even the chaotic ones. Keep a list of your blessings in your pocket to read in tough situations.

Share Love

The season of giving is more than gifts under a tree. Spend time, not money, with those who encourage, inspire, and support you.

Celebrate Beginnings

With each day comes a reason to celebrate sobriety. Let your joy be contagious to all this holiday season.



Student Support Services



Umbrella Project