

Planning for Dialectical Abstinence

Plan for Abstinence

- 1. Enjoy your success, but with a clear mind; plan for temptations to relapse.
- 2. Spend time or touch base with people who will reinforce you for abstinence.
- 3. Plan reinforcing activities to do instead of addictive behaviors.
- 4. Burn bridges: Avoid cues and high-risk situations for addictive behaviors.
- 5. Build new bridges: Develop images, smells, and mental activities (such as, urge surfing) to compete with information associated with craving.
- 6. Find alternative ways to rebel.
- 7. Publicly announce abstinence; deny any idea of lapsing to addiction.

Plan for Harm Reduction

- 1. Call your therapist, sponsor, or mentor for skills coaching.
- 2. Get in contact with other effective people who can help.
- 3. Get rid of temptations; surround yourself with cues for effective behaviors.
- 4. Review skills and handouts from DBT.
- 5. Opposite action (Emotion Regulation Handout 10) can be rehearsed to fight guilt and shame. If no other option works, go to an anonymous meeting of any sort and publicly report your lapse.
- 6. Building mastery and coping ahead for emotional situations (Emotion Regulation Handout 19), and checking the facts (Emotion Regulation Handout 8), can be used to fight feelings of being out of control.
- 7. Interpersonal skills (Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 5–7), such as asking for help from family, friends, sponsors, ministers, or counselors, can also be helpful. If you are isolated, help can often be found via online support groups.
- 8. Conduct a chain analysis to analyze what prompted the lapse (General Handouts 7, 7a).
- 9. Problem-solve right away to find a way to “get back on the wagon” and repair any damage you have done (Emotion Regulation Handout 12).
- 10. Distract yourself, self-soothe, and improve the moment.
- 11. Cheerlead yourself.
- 12. Do pros and cons of stopping addictive behaviors (Distress Tolerance Handout 5).
- 13. Stay away from extreme thinking. Don't let one slip turn into a disaster.
- 14. Recommit to 100% total abstinence.