

What To Do If A Lapse Turns Into A Relapse		
Who said?	What did they say?	Key Learning Points
Counsellor	Well, it's great that you've been able to control your drinking over the past few weeks. As I've said before, it's a much more difficult goal for people to pursue, and the fact that you've been able to successfully control your drinking, I'm very impressed about that.	
Patient	I'm pleased too. I only came back to tell you that everything is going well. I suppose we won't meet anymore.	
Counsellor	Yes, I'm glad you brought that up. But when we were working out the agenda, I'd mentioned to you there are a few things that I would like to discuss with you which would be helpful for you, so would that be alright?	
Patient	Ok, if you want.	
Counsellor	Ok. As I mentioned before, it's great that you've been able to control your drinking until now, but we both need to be mindful of the fact that with regards to problems like these, there may be difficulties in the future that you may face. I know you've told me that you're very determined to control your drinking and the likelihood is that you may not face such difficulties even more, but it's always better to be prepared to deal with them. So what I would like to do in this session is to discuss about these difficulties and then for you to think about them and then practice it in the real world. If I could describe it, compare it to a fire drill. No one likes for a fire to happen and most often it will not happen, but when it does happen, one always has to be better prepared to deal with it. Does that make sense?	Collaboratively preparing the patient for the future
Patient	Yes, if you put it in that way, it sounds sensible to me.	
Counsellor	Ok. Ok so what I would like for us to do is to first talk about what happens when things go wrong and then what you could do to deal with such situations so that you're better prepared. Alright, so let's consider that you are controlling your drinking, which you are doing right now. That is your plan - to have a controlled drinking plan. Alright? So say if you were to, for one occasion... in one situation, you were to drink much more than what you had planned. Ok? That we would call a 'lapse'. A lapse is when you drink much more than what you had intended to, but for one situation. If you were to continue to do that over many situations, so if you were to drink uncontrollably for many situations, time after time, we would call that a 'relapse'. So that is the difference between a lapse and a relapse. Is that clear?	Explaining lapse and relapse
Patient	Yes. If I break my plan once, it's lapse. If I break my plan many times, then it's relapse.	
Counsellor	Great. So now that you've understood the difference between a lapse and a relapse, we have to make sure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining triggers and high-risk

	<p>that you don't have a lapse, at all. And in case you do have a lapse, we need to make sure that it stops there and it does not turn into a relapse. So for that we need to identify why the lapse happens in the first place, to identify triggers, because lapses are most often associated with triggers. So let me give an example of what one trigger could be. Say if you've met your friend in the market, and you've met him after a long time and you both start chatting and then suddenly your friend says, 'oh, let's carry this conversation on, let's go to the bar'. This puts you in a high-risk situation, because you were in a situation in which you were talking to your friend and you were put into a situation where you may be forced to drink - because it's daytime and your plan is not to drink in the day time, you might be forced to drink in the daytime. And hence you're in a dilemma in such a situation. So, what we need to do is to identify many such high-risk situations and then to work out what you could do in each of these situations. So, can we do that?</p>	<p>situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of a high-risk situation • Identifying triggers and using them to prevent lapse and relapse
Patient	<p>Yes. Actually, I can think of one. I went with my family to visit my wife's brother and then he took me to a room where he showed me a lovely bottle of whiskey, which he had brought from [a] foreign country and then he suggested that we should have a drink when our wives and children were busy. I felt very bad, but then I refused, saying 'no' because that was the daytime.</p>	
Counsellor	<p>Ok, that's a really good example of a situation that puts you at high risk and well done for not lapsing. But what I want to remind you is that such situations will happen over and over again and it is best that we work out what could be done in such situations so that you're able to better deal with them. You would find that what we have discussed in our previous sessions would be rather helpful in such situations, for example, managing your feelings, managing the urge to drink, saying 'no'. Do you think so as well?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying triggers and using them to prevent lapse and relapse • Analysing high-risk situations that trigger the patient's drinking behaviour • Clarifying skills already learnt which can be used to cope with triggers differently
Patient	<p>Well I can say 'no', as suggested by my doctor, not to drink since I have a liver problem, or I can say that I don't drink now.</p>	
Counsellor	<p>Ok, that's a good way of saying it, but now what I want you to do is to say that out loud and not to yourself. So what you could do is say it in front of a mirror aloud, say it when your wife or son are around, practice it with them. The point that I'm trying to make here is that the more you practice saying 'no', the more likely it'll be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with triggers differently • Reinforcing skills learnt to maintain the goal set by

	that you'll easily be able to say it, or it'll come out more naturally. So, let's add that to our action plan later and you could practice how to say it more often as well then.	the patient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising skills
Patient	Yes, this will be really helpful. And I feel if I can practice it over and over again, then in case such a situation arises, then it will be really easy for me to handle it.	
Counsellor	Ok. Ok it's great that we understand each other. However, it's important to remember that in spite of all our efforts, we do slip up sometimes. I know you're very committed to controlling your drinking and you've even mentioned to me about saying 'no' to your brother-in-law, or that lovely bottle of whiskey. But in my experience, I've seen that people do slip up, and it's best to learn ways in which you can deal with that. We have spoken about what you can do to get out of high-risk situations and what those situations look like. Now I would like for us to talk about what you can say to yourself or do in case you have a slip up. Is that alright?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the possibility of a lapse occurring • Preparing the patient to deal positively with a lapse if it occurs
Patient	Yes.	
Counsellor	Ok. So what do you think you can say to yourself in a situation in which you have been drinking uncontrollably?	
Patient	I don't know. Maybe I can say to myself that I mustn't allow a small stumble to turn into a catastrophe.	
Counsellor	Ok, that's true and that's good in case you could say that to yourself. What I'd want you to also remember is that in case you do have a lapse, in case you've had a lapse in any particular situation, I want you to contact me and for us to meet. The main reason for doing so is to review what has exactly happened and what didn't work, and then to plan for the future and see you could otherwise implement. I know you'll think that you could do this by yourself and that you don't really need to meet me, but in my experience I feel that it's better, at least for the first time that you have had a lapse, to come and see me. So can you make a promise to me and tell me that you'll come and see me in case you do have a lapse?	Preparing for a lapse
Patient	Yes, surely. But I don't have any more appointments with you.	
Counsellor	So if you have a lapse, do telephone me or you can directly walk in and re-refer yourself in. But before we stop, I also want to remind you about situations where a lapse turns into a full relapse. I know that you're very determined to control your drinking and this might not happen with you at all, but in a situation of a lapse turning into a relapse for you, I still would want you to either call me up and directly walk in and you can re-refer yourself. Is that fine with you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for an emergency • Discussing re-referral • Making emergency contact after sessions are completed
Patient	Yes, surely.	

