

Chapter 14

PREVENTING, MINIMISING & RECOVERING FROM SETBACKS



INTRODUCTION

In the course of making significant changes,
things don't always go completely to plan.

Set-backs can happen. We can experience barriers to moving forwards,
fluctuations in our mood and exacerbation of symptoms.

It is important to be able to identify when things are slipping
and to have both
a contingency plan and a crisis plan
in place.

By the end of this session, you will be able to identify when things are
slipping, and you will be able to have these plans in place.

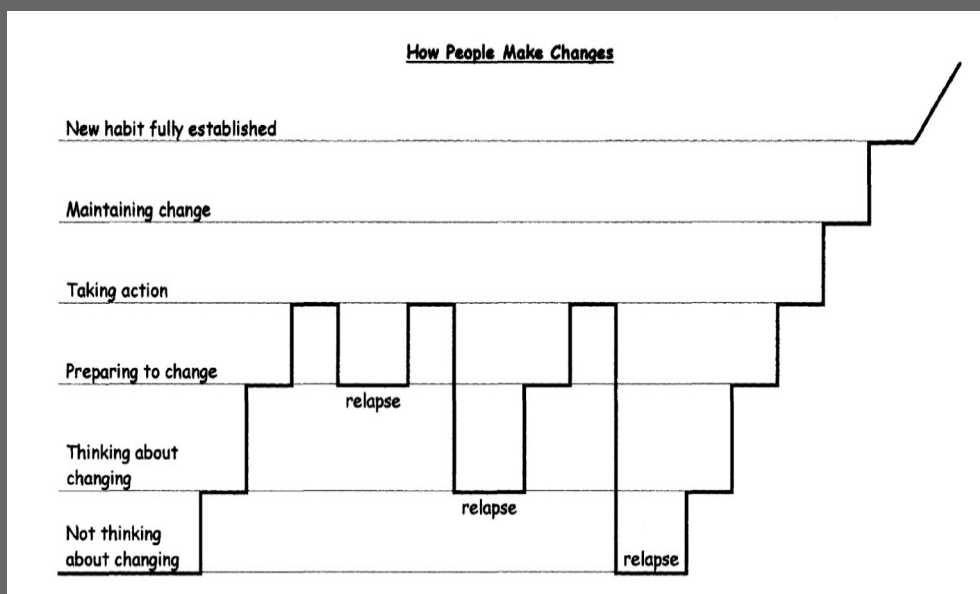
Setbacks
can interfere with our motivation
and our
best intentions to change and develop new habits.

It's important to be ready for setbacks.
If you have a plan in place, it will be easier to get back on track.
(Hopefully, like a fire escape plan, you won't ever need it.)

**Fluctuations
in mood, symptoms and motivation
are normal.**

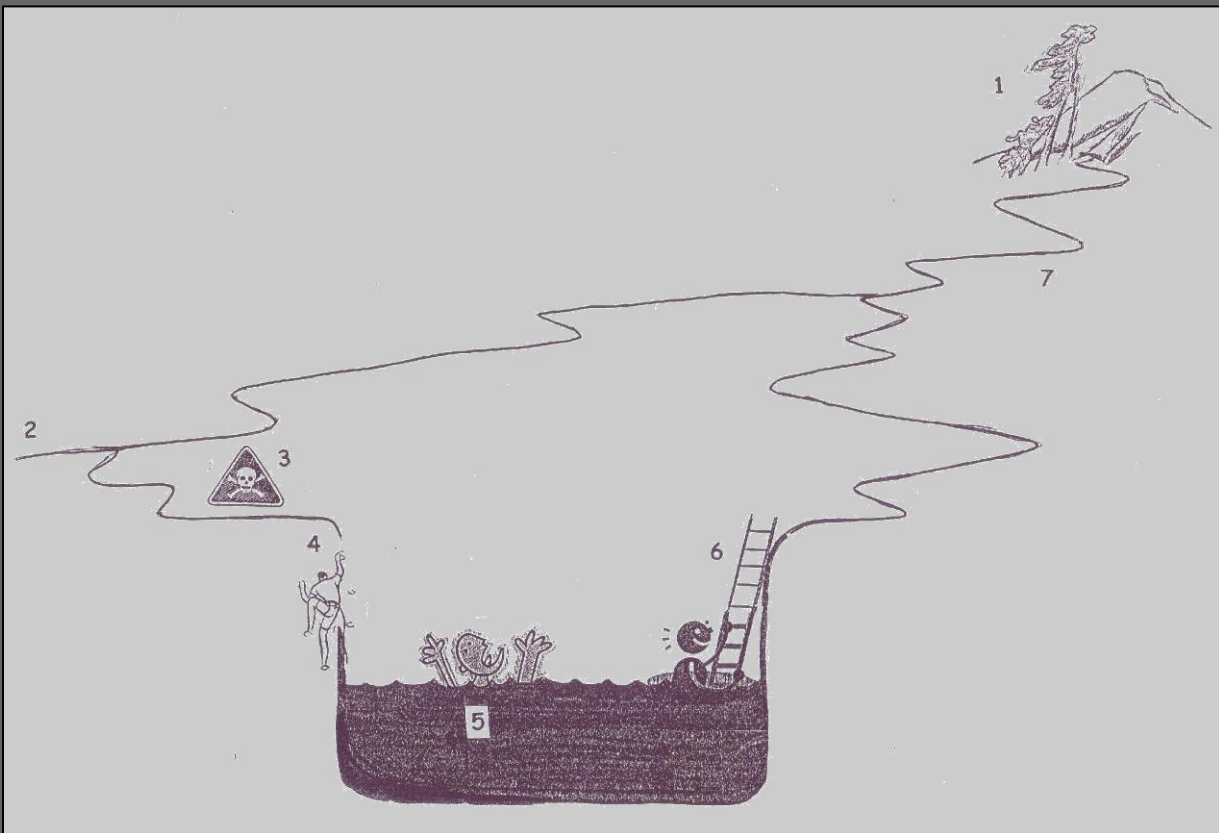


**A setback or relapse is normal
and can be part of making changes.**



THE TAR PIT

Having a setback
is a bit like
slipping into a tar pit.



(Numbers 1-7 are explained on the next page.)

WHEN YOU ARE ON TRACK ...

1. You have a clear idea of where you are going.
2. You have a clear idea of your immediate action plans, therapeutic routine and maintenance plan.

BUT, YOU MIGHT NEED A CONTINGENCY PLAN IF ...

3. You hear early-warning whispers and realise you have wandered off the path.
Ignore these warnings at your peril!
4. You catch yourself in time and there's still a chance to get back on track.
Final warning!

A contingency plan is used at 3 and 4, when you notice things are beginning to slip, or maybe you are not coping as well as you want to.

If you put this plan into practice, you can prevent yourself from slipping into the tar pit.

OR, YOU MIGHT NEED A CRISIS PLAN IF ...

5. You have a relapse or setback - you have fallen into the tar pit.
What stops you sinking deeper?
What would help you get out sooner?
6. You really have to do something.
Who could help you get out?
What are the signs of things beginning to improve?

A crisis plan is used when you are in the tar pit at 5 and 6. It will stop things getting worse and help you climb out quicker.

You need to put these plans in place NOW so that they can be rolled out automatically if you need them.

WHEN YOU ARE BACK ON TRACK AGAIN ...

7. You have your eye back on where you are going and you are back into a therapeutic routine.

Here are some ideas of what you could put in a CONTINGENCY PLAN

Know what your helpful daily routine is, then you will notice if you go off track.

What might be the key features of a typical day when you are “on track” towards recovery?

- Get up at a regular time
- Do some relaxation and/or exercises
- Take part in a social activity (eg meet friends)
- Relax in the evenings

What will tell me I’m beginning to go “off track”?

- Struggling to get out of bed
- Not returning calls

Who would notice me moving “off track” and how could they help me?

- Partner - by reminding me to do my relaxation
-
-

What has helped in the past or can help in the future to get me back “on track”?
eg

- Noticing earlier helps
- Friends making me come out

Here are some ideas of what you could put in a **CRISIS PLAN**

Know when you are in crisis.

How do I and others know when I'm in crisis - what are the signs?

- Staying in bed/feeling isolated

Enlist automatic support (before you need it).

Who can help? (Doctor, wife, friend)

Who can I or others call on my behalf?

- List of names and phone numbers to contact

Stop things getting worse.

What can help prevent further setback? Start practising relaxation techniques

What am I already doing that is stopping things becoming worse? Looking at my crisis plan

What else can I or others do to stabilise things? Remind me to do more of what works best

Do I need treatment?

Have I to go anywhere?

- GP appointment/Consultant

Recognising the first small signs of recovery.

How can I or others know that I am beginning to recover?

- Starting to do some gentle activities
- Contacting friends

Taking Action (first steps).

What can I or others do as a first step towards my recovery?

- Re-set baseline activities
- Getting into a routine again (pacing & planning)

Know what to do next.

What has helped in the past or what can help in the future?

- Relaxation, pacing.

Back on track.

How do people who help me know when there is no longer any need to use this plan?

- When I am back to my normal daily routine.

Symptom Management – dealing with flare-ups



Sometimes symptoms such as pain, fatigue or poor concentration, can flare up.

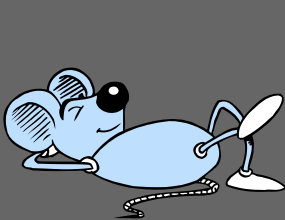
While it is normal to feel upset, frustrated or distressed in these situations, it can be useful to remember that these symptoms **WILL** settle down to their usual levels.

Our job is to step out of the way and let our bodies (and our minds) settle down.

A typical (pre-prepared) crisis plan would have you: -

- Relax - practise using the techniques you have learned
- Take stock
- Re-set your baseline activities
- Include some gentle activities while you are recovering
- If distraction helps to prevent frustration then plan in books and TV, or phone a friend if concentration allows
- Continue with medications

And gradually start to build yourself up again.



The biggest predictor of recovery from relapse is your attitude:

"Oh dear." "Oh well." "OK then."

Having confidence in your ability to recover from setbacks is a marker of recovery.

MANAGING YOUR SITUATION IS A SKILL

- The more you practise it, the better you will get at managing it.
- The more you practise it, the more automatic it gets.

Soon you will be able to apply your skills
to meet any challenge that comes your way
without even thinking about it.



KEEP POLISHING UP YOUR SKILLS
OR THEY WILL BECOME RUSTY.



Use it or lose it
applies to anything and everyone.