



If I Were About to Relapse

This exercise guides you through a process of imagining a hypothetical relapse experience. It helps you think through the different factors that could set you up for relapse.

Imagine that you are just about to relapse with porn. Answer each of the questions below based on what you envision. It can be helpful to reference to your past experiences when you've felt urges to use porn to guide you with your answers. Identify as many factors as might apply for each question.

Where are you likely to be (home, work, car, hotel, school and so on)? _____

What porn delivery systems would be readily available to you (computer, television, porn magazines, cell phone, and so on)? _____

What time of day would it be (morning, midday, afternoon, evening, or late at night)? _____

Who would you be with (alone, friend, intimate partner, stranger, a group of people, and so on)? _____

What activities would you be doing (working, studying, eating, travelling, resting, relaxing, being entertained, exercising, reading, socializing, and so on)? _____

How would you be feeling physically (tired, hungry; agitated, sexually excited, in pain, exhausted, sick, cold, overheated, disheveled, out of shape, fit, and so on)? _____

What, if any, other addictive or problem behaviors would you have been doing (smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, gambling, shopping, staying up late, overeating, overworking, and so on)? _____



What would have just happened (a disappointment, a rejection, an accomplishment, a reward or payment, an argument, a missed opportunity, a physical parting from someone, and so on)? _____

How would you be feeling emotionally (lonely, depressed, angry, anxious, frustrated, sad, happy, bored, disappointed, powerful, and so on)? _____

What unmet need would you be feeling (the need for companionship, excitement, novelty, competition, friendship, recognition, love, validation, relaxation, comfort, and so on)? _____

What core emotional wounds would be activated (feeling abandoned, betrayed, rejected, incapable, unattractive, humiliated, powerless, inadequate, and so on)? _____

What types of sexually explicit content would you have inadvertently been exposed to (sexual image on television, sex scene in a movie, pop-up ad on the Internet, advertisement, billboard, magazine cover, written sexual description, and so on)? _____

In what ways might you be "pushing the envelope" by involving yourself in activities that are similar to or remind you of using porn (going online when no one else is around, channel surfing for sexual imagery, looking for sexual images in regular magazines, watching R-rated movies, staying in hotels with pay-per-view porn channels, participating in chat room activity, being secretive about other behaviors, being alone with free time, and so on)? _____

If you were in the midst of the relapse, what strategies for reversing it might you fail to take (stopping what you are doing and admitting you are in a danger zone, getting away from porn thoughts and materials, calming yourself physiologically and emotionally, reaching out quickly for supportive help, reaffirming your commitment to your recovery)? _____



Any of the items you have identified in this exercise have the potential to trigger you into a relapse. Review your responses and think about changes you could make that would strengthen your ability to remain porn-free. Do you need to take better care of yourself physically? Do you need to learn to better handle your emotions? Do you need to improve your relationships with other people?

It is not uncommon for multiple triggers to be linked together and to reinforce each other when activated. For example, being alone, exhausted, bored, and in front of a computer late at night, may combine to create a high-risk situation. Use the space below to write out the triggers that link together that you need to pay attention to in order to avoid a porn relapse in the future: _____

Finally, based on all that you have learned by doing this exercise, use the following space to list a number of healthy, constructive alternatives you could use to meet your needs when you are vulnerable to using porn: _____
