

## SMALL STEPS TO HEALTH AND WEALTH™

### Expect Obstacles and Prepare for Relapse

#### Instructor Guide Strategy 24



SSHW Materials Developed by: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Instructor Guide Developed by: University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

### Objectives:

#### Participants will:

1. Learn that obstacles and relapses are perfectly normal and should be expected during the process of behavior change.
2. Learn that the most common causes of relapse are distress (e.g. depression, loneliness, anxiety) and social pressure (e.g. people in social network who smoke, overspend or overeat).
3. Learn relapse prevention skills to help to identify obstacles and to develop plans to overcome obstacles.

### Glossary:

**Spiral Pathway:** Path towards behavior change that includes several backwards slips rather than a straight line in moving from one stage to the next.

**Estimated Time:** 20 minutes (1:1 counseling) to 30 minutes (small group activity)

**Activity Handout Needed:** *Obstacle Identification and Relapse Prevention Worksheet*

### Introduction and Instructor Script:

The purpose of this strategy, *Expect Obstacles and Prepare for Relapse*, is to recognize that obstacles can block positive actions related to health and wealth behavior changes. It is recommended to clearly identify the obstacles and to develop

specific plans to overcome the obstacles. For example if feeling stressed and the usual remedy is go shopping, or eat sweets, develop “Plan B” to do something else to release the stress such as working out, cleaning a closet, bubble bath or listening to music. Try to control everything possible to avoid obstacles and relapses and this may include assertive actions in dealing with others to prevent following the same old path to destructive behaviors.

### Instructions for the Activity:

**Individual Counseling:** Discuss examples of obstacles and relapses that can prevent progress towards reaching health and wealth goals, and the recommended strategies to deal with relapses using the examples illustrated below. For the next steps have the participant complete the *Expect Obstacles and Prepare for Relapse Worksheet*.

**Group Activity:** The facilitator discusses the examples of obstacles and relapses and asks the group to complete the *Expect Obstacles and Prepare for Relapse Worksheet* as was discussed with the individual participant.

### Debriefing Questions:

Can you identify successful role models for health & wealth behaviors who had obstacles, roadblocks and relapses?

### Additional Resources:

*Changing For Good*

Behavior Change Recommendations	Health	Wealth
<b>1. Balance &amp; Compensate</b> (Fall short one day, make it up the next)	Goal-eat 1600 ca/day, but eat 2,000; cut back 200 ca/2 days	Goal-eat out 1 time per wk, but eat out 3Xs /1 wk; cut back to 0Xs/2wk
<b>2. Learn a Lesson</b> (Relapses viewed as a learning lesson)	If overeat, ask what was learned & what could have been done differently	Was there a disruption in routine?
<b>3. Get Back on Track</b> (Relapses viewed as temporary stops)	If firmly committed to 1600 ca goal, get back on track on day four.	In week four, go back to eating out once during the week.
<b>4. Reframe the Relapse</b> (If you are not doing as well as planned, this is still better than if nothing was done.)	Any small step toward better health by eating 100 fewer calories is better than doing nothing.	Any small step toward wealth by eating out just 1 time per week is better than doing nothing.

“Failures are finger posts on the road to achievement.”

-Charles F. Kettering



**Expect Obstacles and Prepare for Relapse**  
 Strategy 24—Obstacle Identification and Relapse Prevention Worksheet

Use the *Obstacle Identification and Relapse Prevention Worksheet*, below, to anticipate potential barriers and develop a plan for what you're going to do when setbacks occur.

Question	Health Goal	Wealth Goal
State your goals in a sound bite (one short sentence).		
List up to three obstacles that can keep you from achieving your goal.		
List two strategies to overcome each obstacle.		
What factors have caused you to relapse (go back to poor health or financial practices) in the past?		
What can you do to address these factors in the future?		



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**This information has been reviewed by University faculty.  
[cals.arizona.edu/pubs/consumer/az1500x.pdf](http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/consumer/az1500x.pdf)**

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