

Dear XXXXX

Last time we met we discussed the concept of relapse signatures. Whilst this concept is more frequently used for people suffering from a severe mental illness (such as schizophrenia) it is also useful for other concerns that are episodic in nature.

Some people feel that the only way to cope is to deny their experiences and forget that it ever happened. The problem with that is that we may fail to learn from our experience, thus making a return of symptoms more probable.

A way of dealing with, or preventing another relapse is to learn or 'arm yourself' with skills which will provide you with a 'safety net'.

People can develop their own personal '**relapse signature and drill**' and have more control. These can help you predict a relapse by identifying any early warning signs and ways to deal with the situation.

The 'relapse signature' aims to identify your individual symptoms. Everybody tends to experience their own set of symptoms when becoming ill. If we are able to recognise them upon the horizon we can get the help in place before it becomes a problem. When you are beginning to become depressed you and those around you will begin to notice certain commonalities that are present at all previous depressions. These will comprise of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are different from those that you experience when well. Please make your own list of things that you feel may have caused you to have a relapse:

Once the relapse signature has been identified, a plan known as a 'relapse drill' can be put into place. The relapse drill is aimed at focusing on your strengths, past coping strategies and interventions that have been helpful. Carers and other supports available to you can be incorporated into the drill.

Once you have completed the relapse signature and drill you will have a copy that can be shared with those you trust.

Can I ask you to think a little about this before we next meet so that we are able to work towards such a plan?

Regards

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