

# 39 Planning for setbacks



If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, these two exercises and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on pages 142-144. These two exercises assume you have completed exercise sheet 1 **Starting an activity journal**.

## Making an action plan for setbacks

To make an advance action plan for setbacks, in your journal record any potential setbacks or risky situations. Look at these in turn and try to predict your likely negative thoughts in that situation. Try to challenge these by checking the evidence for and against such thoughts. Next consider the behaviour which usually occurs alongside such negative thoughts or in situations of stress. Weigh up how beneficial these behaviours are and think of some alternative ways of managing the situation. Ask yourself what would make you feel better and develop your action plan from this. Remember to be realistic in your action plan so that this does not create more pressure.

## Assessing the impact of a setback

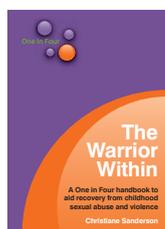
To help you assess the impact of the setback you can measure your level of distress by using the Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS). This scale helps you to assess your levels of distress. It is a useful aid in monitoring your recovery and can be used on a weekly basis to monitor your level of distress and to alert you to any reduction in your

stability. This can help to forewarn you of changes in your well-being so that you can take action before your distress level reaches a critical point. This can help in predicting setbacks and prevent major relapses. It will also help you to compare your level of distress prior to the setback.

Rate yourself on the following ten point scale:

- How alert are you? (one being asleep and ten wide awake)
- How calm are you? (one being most calm and ten highly anxious)
- How well are you able to focus on tasks such as conversation, reading a book or watching TV? (one being very focused and ten not able to focus at all)
- How regulated is your mood? (one being totally normal and ten being extreme mood swings – try to include the frequency and severity of the mood swings)
- How long does it take you to get back to normal? (one being very quickly and ten a long time)

You could add to this scale by adding any other signs of your distress such as number of hours spent sleeping, increase in work hours or temptation to resort to self-harming behaviours.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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**One in Four**  
219 Bromley Rd, Catford SE6 2PG  
Telephone 020 8697 2112  
Email [admin@oneinfour.org.uk](mailto:admin@oneinfour.org.uk)  
[www.oneinfour.org.uk](http://www.oneinfour.org.uk)

Registered charity number 1081726