



# Pacific Post Partum Support Society

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## Preventing and Managing Relapse

Now that you are feeling better, it is important to remember that feelings of distress or depression may return in the future. This is normal. It does not mean you will end up where you started. There are things you can do to both prevent and manage relapse. You can start by paying attention to changes in your mood and take action early to take care of yourself. Preparing for a possible relapse is part of your recovery.

### What can I do to prevent a relapse?

Be aware of things that might contribute to relapse and develop an action plan for how you will deal with these situations. Examples of these might be family holidays, being alone for periods of time, changes in the weather, or lack of sleep.

Watch for signs of low mood or depression like feeling more tired than usual, feeling down or not taking care of yourself and put your action plan into effect right away.

### What can I do if I have a relapse (tips)?

1. Use the strategies and tools that have helped you in the past. Remember your self care strategies such as breathing and relaxation, doing things you enjoy, taking care of your emotional and spiritual needs, resting, sleeping, and exercising.
2. Think positive thoughts.
3. Revisit your support network and call upon them or add to it. Contact your health care provider, counsellor or public health nurse.
4. Think about what was going on for you before the relapse. See if you can figure out what things might have lead up to you feeling down or upset. Think about what you could change to avoid these types of feelings next time.
5. Remember this is a learning opportunity and not a failure in any way. Learn from each new experience.
6. Moving Forward: Be easy on yourself if you have a relapse, it is normal. Be forgiving, move on and be flexible. Get back on track and follow your action plan. Give yourself credit for how far you have come.

**Above all: Be compassionate, gentle and accepting of yourself.**