Free S.E.C.R.E.T. Recovery Starter Toolkit Guide

A public guide to the free website launch tools from The Recovery Space

Important note - please read before using the tools

The Recovery Space provides education, self-help tools, reflection resources and signposting only.

We do not provide medical advice, mental health assessment, crisis support, detox support, safeguarding support, counselling, therapy, diagnosis, treatment, legal advice or one-to-one support.

These tools are not a replacement for professional, medical, mental health, safeguarding, detox, crisis or emergency support.

These tools can be saved, printed and used in your own time, or alongside your designated keyworker, support worker, recovery worker, counsellor, therapist or another relevant professional.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E.

This guide explains what is included in the free starter toolkit, what each tool is designed to support, and how the tools can be used safely and responsibly.

The free starter toolkit includes 9 printable worksheets and 3 Recovery Reminder Cards.

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Page numbers are provided to help you move through the guide. The tools are also grouped by category so you can find the type of support that feels most relevant.

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About this guide and The Recovery Space

The Recovery Space is a UK recovery-focused website created to offer calm recovery education, practical self-help tools, reflective resources and trusted support signposting.

This starter guide introduces the free launch tools available through The Recovery Space. The tools are designed to support reflection, self-awareness, safer choices and recovery-focused next steps.

The tools do not tell someone what they must do, and they do not replace professional support. They are designed to help people pause, notice what is happening, and think about one safer step they may be able to take.

The Recovery Space is not

a crisis service, medical service, detox service, counselling service, safeguarding service, treatment provider, assessment service or one-to-one support service.

If someone needs urgent, professional or emergency support, the safest step is to use appropriate services rather than relying on a worksheet.

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What is S.E.C.R.E.T.?

S.E.C.R.E.T. is a self-help reflection framework created by The Recovery Space. It is designed to help people pause, understand themselves, reconnect with recovery, and take the next safe step forward.

S - Stop

Pause before reacting. Create space between the thought, urge, feeling or situation and what you do next.

E - Explore

Notice what is happening within you. Look at the thoughts, feelings, urges, needs, triggers or patterns that may be present.

C - Challenge

Question unhelpful or risky thinking. Ask whether the thought is true, helpful, balanced or recovery-supporting.

R - Reconnect

Come back to what matters. Reconnect with values, support, recovery reasons, safer choices and the person you are becoming.

E - Exchange

Swap an old pattern for a safer one. Replace harmful coping strategies with something more recovery-supporting.

T - Take Action

Choose one practical next step. Recovery is built through repeated safe actions, even when they are small.

Important boundary

The tools are designed for education, reflection and self-help. They are not CBT, REBT, counselling, therapy, mental health treatment, diagnosis, detox support, safeguarding support, crisis support or a replacement for support from a qualified professional.

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How to use the tools safely

There is no perfect way to use these tools. You can start with the tool that feels most relevant to what you are experiencing today.

- Read the tool description first so you understand what the tool is designed to support.
- Print the worksheet or reminder card if that makes it easier to use. Some people may find printed copies easier than editing PDFs digitally.
- Use the tools in your own time, or alongside a keyworker, support worker, recovery worker, counsellor, therapist, group, sponsor, peer or trusted professional.
- Pause if a tool feels too difficult or brings up distress. You do not have to complete everything at once.
- Use urgent or emergency support instead of a worksheet if there is immediate risk, crisis, safeguarding concern, or risk of harm to yourself or someone else.

A gentle reminder

These tools may support reflection, but they cannot assess risk, diagnose, treat, detox, provide safeguarding action, or replace professional judgement.

If you feel unsafe, overwhelmed, at risk of harm, or unable to keep yourself or someone else safe, seek urgent or emergency support.

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What is included in the free starter toolkit?

The free starter toolkit includes a small selection of tools from the wider S.E.C.R.E.T. Recovery Framework.

The printable worksheets help with areas such as urges and cravings, thinking patterns, recovery strengths, support networks, routine, and next safe steps.

The Recovery Reminder Cards are quick visual prompts. They are not worksheets and do not need to be written on. They are designed to be looked at in the moment, to help someone pause before reacting.

The three free Recovery Reminder Cards are

- THINK - a simple check-in for questioning risky thoughts before acting on them.
- RECOVERY - a personal recovery check-in for reconnecting with self, support, values, and the life someone is building.
- My Boundaries of Control - a visual reminder for separating what cannot be controlled from what someone can work with, helping them focus their energy, boundaries and recovery choices on a next safe step.

Together, these reminders help people question risky thoughts, reconnect with recovery, and focus their attention and energy on what they can work with right now.

Starter toolkit at a glance

9 printable S.E.C.R.E.T. Recovery worksheets

3 Recovery Reminder Cards

Tool descriptions and purpose statements

Safe-use guidance and support signposting

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My Recovery Reset Worksheet

Category: Core S.E.C.R.E.T. Framework Tools | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The My Recovery Reset Worksheet helps people pause, understand what is happening, reconnect with recovery, and choose their next safe step.

This tool introduces the full S.E.C.R.E.T. Recovery Framework by guiding people through six simple stages: Stop, Explore, Challenge, Reconnect, Exchange, and Take Action.

The worksheet supports people to slow down and reflect on what they may need to pause, stop, or step away from. It encourages them to explore what they are feeling, thinking, craving, needing, or avoiding, and to challenge any risky thoughts, excuses, urges, or beliefs that may be affecting their choices.

The tool also helps people reconnect with what matters to them, identify who or what may support their recovery, exchange an old pattern for a safer coping strategy, and choose one small recovery-focused step they can take next.

This tool can be useful during urges, cravings, emotional overwhelm, risky thinking, stress, low motivation, difficult decisions, or moments when someone feels disconnected from their recovery.

This tool may help with

Pausing, self-awareness, urges, thoughts, feelings, cravings, risky thinking, reconnecting with recovery, safer coping strategies, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Core S.E.C.R.E.T. Framework Tools
Secondary category	Mind, Mood & Behaviour Skills
Also connects to	Urge & Craving Support; Recovery Motivation & Direction

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My Problem-Solving Plan

Category: Recovery Motivation & Direction | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The My Problem-Solving Plan helps people take a specific problem, decision or situation and work through it in a structured, recovery-focused way, rather than reacting automatically or feeling pressured to solve everything at once.

The worksheet starts by helping people define what they are trying to work out, change, decide or solve. It then explores what may be making the problem difficult, including thoughts, feelings, needs, fears, pressures, habits or practical barriers. This supports the S.E.C.R.E.T. approach of understanding what may be underneath a problem before deciding what to do next.

The tool then helps people generate up to three possible options and review each one by considering what could help, what could create difficulty or risk, and what support may be needed. From there, they can choose the option that feels safest and most workable for them right now.

The worksheet finishes with a simple action plan: the first step, when they will start, who or what can support them, and how they will review whether the choice helped or needs adjusting. It can be useful when someone feels stuck, has a decision to make, is facing a practical or recovery-related problem, or wants to slow down and consider their options before acting.

This tool may help with

Problem solving, decision-making, understanding barriers and pressures, generating and comparing options, considering risk and support, realistic planning, recovery-focused choices, and reviewing next steps.

Primary category	Recovery Motivation & Direction
Secondary category	Mind, Mood & Behaviour Skills
Also connects to	Balanced Living & Wellbeing

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My Recovery Strengths Worksheet

Category: Recovery Motivation & Direction | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The My Recovery Strengths Worksheet helps people recognise the strengths, qualities, skills, support, and personal progress that can help protect their recovery.

This tool supports people to reflect on what has helped them get this far, including the qualities, choices, or actions that have helped them survive, cope, change, or keep going.

The worksheet encourages people to think about what they have learned about themselves through difficult times, progress, setbacks, and support. It also helps them identify the coping tools and skills they already use to manage urges, emotions, stress, thoughts, conflict, or difficult moments.

The tool also asks people to consider who or what strengthens their recovery, such as people, places, routines, values, groups, services, activities, or beliefs that help them stay connected to recovery.

It finishes by helping people choose one strength they want to use more and one small recovery-focused step they can take with that strength.

This tool can be useful when someone feels low in confidence, disconnected from their progress, stuck in self-doubt, or needs a reminder of the strengths and support they already have.

This tool may help with

Recovery strengths, self-belief, confidence, coping skills, support, progress, personal qualities, motivation, resilience, and recovery-focused action.

Primary category	Recovery Motivation & Direction
Secondary category	Mind, Mood & Behaviour Skills
Also connects to	Balanced Living & Wellbeing

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My Urge Tracker Worksheet

Category: Urge & Craving Support | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The My Urge Tracker Worksheet helps people notice, understand, and reflect on urges without judgement or shame.

This tool supports people to identify what triggered the urge, what they were feeling, thinking, or needing, how strong the urge felt, and what the urge was telling them to do.

It also helps them record what safer action they used instead, what helped them get through the urge, and what they learned for next time.

The worksheet can be useful during recovery when someone wants to understand their urge patterns, build awareness of triggers, practise safer coping strategies, and recognise that urges can reduce, pass, or become more manageable over time.

This tool may help with

Urge awareness, trigger reflection, emotional understanding, coping strategies, pattern recognition, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Urge & Craving Support
Secondary category	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours

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Pause, Distract & Choose Worksheet

Category: Urge & Craving Support | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The Pause, Distract & Choose Worksheet helps people create space between an urge, craving, impulse, or risky thought and the action they may feel pulled towards.

This tool supports people to pause before acting, choose a short delay period, and use a safer distraction or coping strategy while the urge begins to pass.

It encourages people to move away from immediate risk and use practical coping options such as grounding, walking, drinking water, messaging someone, leaving the situation, or writing down what they feel.

The worksheet also helps people check how strong the urge felt before and after the pause, which can help them notice that urges can reduce, shift, or become more manageable over time.

It then encourages them to choose the safest recovery-focused next step and identify who or what can support them if they still feel at risk.

This tool can be useful during cravings, emotional overwhelm, impulsive moments, high-risk situations, or times when someone feels pulled towards old patterns.

This tool may help with

Urge management, delaying action, safer distraction, emotional regulation, reducing risk, coping strategies, support planning, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Urge & Craving Support
Secondary category	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours

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Thinking Traps in Recovery Worksheet

Category: Mind, Mood & Behaviour Skills | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The Thinking Traps in Recovery Worksheet helps people notice common unhelpful thinking patterns that can show up during difficult emotions, urges, triggers, conflict, or high-risk moments.

This tool supports people to identify what happened, recognise the thought that showed up, and explore whether they may be caught in a thinking trap such as all-or-nothing thinking, catastrophising, mind reading, fortune telling, emotional reasoning, minimising progress, labelling themselves, or justifying risky behaviour.

The worksheet helps people understand how the thinking trap affected their feelings, urges, or behaviour, before creating a more balanced, honest, and recovery-focused response.

It also encourages them to choose one small next safe step.

This tool can be useful when someone feels stuck in negative thinking, tempted to give up, pulled towards old patterns, or caught in thoughts such as 'I've messed up, so I may as well give up,' 'I know I'll relapse anyway,' or 'I deserve this after the week I've had.'

This tool may help with

Recognising thinking traps, thought awareness, emotional reflection, urge management, challenging unhelpful thinking, balanced self-talk, recovery-focused responses, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours
Secondary category	Urge & Craving Support

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Unhelpful Thought Challenge Worksheet

Category: Mind, Mood & Behaviour Skills | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The Unhelpful Thought Challenge Worksheet helps people notice, question, and reframe thoughts that may increase distress, urges, risky behaviour, or emotional overwhelm.

This tool supports people to identify what happened, recognise the unhelpful thought that showed up, and understand how that thought affected their feelings, urges, or behaviour.

It then encourages them to challenge the thought by asking whether it is completely true, whether it is helpful for recovery, what might happen if they act on it, and what they would say to someone else in the same situation.

The worksheet helps people create a more balanced, honest, and recovery-focused thought, before choosing one small next safe step.

It can be useful when someone feels stuck in negative thinking, tempted by an urge, overwhelmed by emotion, or caught in thoughts such as 'I can’t cope,' 'just one won’t hurt,' or 'I’ve already failed.'

This tool may help with

Thought awareness, challenging unhelpful beliefs, emotional reflection, urge management, safer self-talk, recovery-focused thinking, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours
Secondary category	Urge & Craving Support

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My Support Network Map Worksheet

Category: Balanced Living & Wellbeing | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The My Support Network Map Worksheet helps people identify safe support, recognise where support may be missing, and choose one connection step that can protect their recovery.

This tool supports people to think about who they can speak to honestly, safely, or calmly.

It also helps them identify professional or recovery support they may be able to use, such as recovery workers, groups, meetings, helplines, counselling, peer support, or other trusted services.

The worksheet encourages people to reflect on where they may feel alone, unsupported, isolated, or unsure who to turn to.

It also helps them think about the kind of support they need most right now, such as someone to listen, help them plan, encourage them, challenge them safely, distract them, or help them stay away from risk.

The tool finishes by helping people choose one person, group, service, or safe place they can reconnect with, and one practical step they can take to build or use support.

This tool can be useful when someone feels isolated, disconnected from recovery, unsure who to contact, at risk of withdrawing, or in need of safer support and connection.

This tool may help with

Safe support, connection, recovery support, reducing isolation, support planning, protective relationships, recovery capital, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Balanced Living & Wellbeing
Secondary category	Recovery Motivation & Direction
Also connects to	Urge & Craving Support

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My Routine Reset Worksheet

Category: Balanced Living & Wellbeing | Type: Printable worksheet

Purpose

The My Routine Reset Worksheet helps people notice when their routine, self-care, recovery, or wellbeing has started to slip, and gently reconnect with basic stability.

This tool supports people to reflect on what has become harder to keep up with, what may be affecting their routine, and what basic need may need attention first.

It encourages people to look at feelings, thoughts, stress, tiredness, urges, or changes that may be making things harder.

The worksheet helps people choose one small routine step they can restart, rather than feeling pressured to fix everything at once.

It also includes a simple 24-hour reset plan, helping people identify one thing they can do for their body, one thing they can do for their mind or recovery, and one thing they can do to reduce risk or stress.

This tool can be useful when someone feels stuck, overwhelmed, unmotivated, out of routine, emotionally drained, disconnected from recovery, or aware that small slips in structure may be increasing risk.

This tool may help with

Routine, stability, self-care, basic needs, emotional awareness, reducing risk, recovery structure, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Balanced Living & Wellbeing
Secondary category	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours
Also connects to	Urge & Craving Support

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THINK Recovery Reminder

Category: Recovery Reminder Collection | Type: Recovery Reminder Card

Purpose

The THINK Recovery Reminder helps people question risky thoughts before acting on them.

This reminder supports people to identify the thought driving an urge or reaction, consider whether it is helpful or harmful, check whether it is true, find a new perspective, and keep recovery first.

THINK encourages people to remember that not every thought needs to be believed, followed, or fought.

This reminder can be useful during urges, cravings, impulsive decisions, negative self-talk, all-or-nothing thinking, emotional reasoning, or 'I may as well' thoughts.

This tool may help with

Thought checking, cognitive awareness, urge awareness, emotional reasoning, safer thinking, and recovery-focused choices.

Primary category	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours

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RECOVERY Recovery Reminder

Category: Recovery Reminder Collection | Type: Recovery Reminder Card

Purpose

The RECOVERY Reminder is a personal recovery check-in for reconnecting with self, values, support, and the life someone is building.

This reminder supports people to reconnect, evaluate what is helping or making recovery harder, identify coping strategies, open up to support, visualise the life they are moving towards, explore what they are learning, rediscover parts of themselves, and reflect on who they are becoming.

RECOVERY encourages people to remember that recovery is not just about what they stop doing. It is also about who they are reconnecting with and what they are beginning to rediscover.

This reminder can be useful during reflection, recovery planning, low motivation, identity change, rebuilding confidence, values work, or moments where someone needs to reconnect with the bigger picture.

This tool may help with

Recovery identity, reconnection, evaluation, coping, support, visualisation, self-discovery, values, and long-term recovery direction.

Primary category	Recovery Identity & Values
Secondary category	Recovery Maintenance & Relapse Prevention
Also connects to	Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviours

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My Boundaries of Control Recovery Reminder

Category: Recovery Reminder Collection | Type: Recovery Reminder Card

Purpose

The My Boundaries of Control Recovery Reminder helps people separate what they cannot control from what they can work with, so they can choose where to place their attention, energy and next recovery step.

This reminder helps people notice when they may be carrying things they cannot change or control, such as other people's choices, opinions or reactions, the past, unexpected changes or delays, world events, or whether somebody understands them.

It then brings attention back to what they can work with right now, including their thoughts, actions, boundaries, responses, recovery choices, self-care, asking for support, and what they say yes or no to.

The reminder includes a short reflection called "Where will I put my energy?" It helps people identify what they are carrying, what is actually theirs to work with, what boundary, support choice or recovery action could help, and their next safe step.

This reminder can be useful during stress, conflict, people-pleasing, uncertainty, anxiety, urges, cravings, emotional overwhelm, or situations where someone feels pulled into things they cannot control.

This is a Recovery Reminder Card, not a worksheet. It is designed as a quick visual prompt that can help someone pause, gain perspective and focus their energy on a recovery-supporting choice.

This tool may help with

Boundaries, perspective, emotional regulation, self-awareness, support choices, recovery choices, reducing overwhelm, letting go, and next safe steps.

Primary category	Mind, Mood & Behaviour Skills
Secondary category	Balanced Living & Wellbeing
Also connects to	Urge & Craving Support; Recovery Motivation & Direction

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Support information and copyright

Support services, opening times, contact details and eligibility can change over time. Please check directly with each organisation for the most up-to-date information before using or sharing their details.

Urgent or emergency support

- If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E.
- If you need urgent medical advice and it is not a 999 emergency, contact NHS 111 online or call 111.
- If you need urgent mental health help in England, contact NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.
- If you need someone to talk to, Samaritans can be contacted free, day or night, on 116 123.
- If you are worried that a child or young person is at risk of harm, contact emergency services, children's social care, the NSPCC Helpline, or another appropriate safeguarding route.

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Final reminder

The tools are designed to support reflection and recovery awareness.

They are not a replacement for professional, medical, mental health, safeguarding, detox, crisis or emergency support.