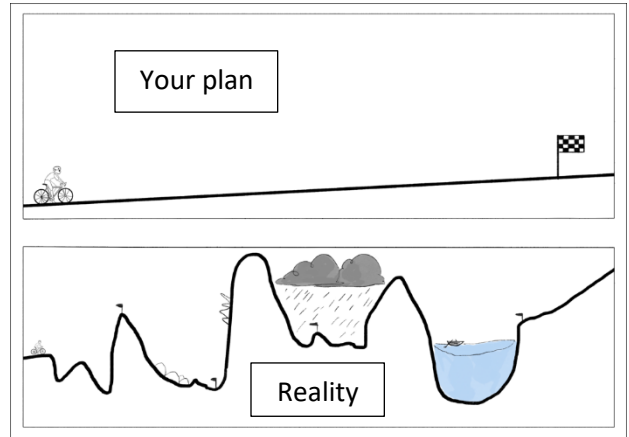


Tools for recovery – Plan for Flare ups

The road of recovery from persisting pain is rarely straight forward and smooth. It is filled with obstacles and setbacks. One very important skill to develop is to create a plan for how you are going to deal with these situations. If you look carefully at the bottom image you will notice some flags. These represent goals. Notice that in reality each goal may require a different set of skills. You may find it challenging to notice progress as you struggle to negotiate each challenge, yet each goal successfully reached marks the mastery of a new skill.



The images on the right have been made into a 3 x 5 card that you can put onto your refrigerator or bathroom mirror to have in easy see every day. It is very helpful to have a plan of what to do when a setback occurs. When they occur, it is difficult to remember these concepts and tools so having it in a visible location will make it easier to remember and not to freak out. Plan **now** as to how you will get through your next flare up.

Flare ups or setbacks are actually a very important part of your recovery. When in pain we all want a map to follow. A map of what to do and where to go. Unfortunately, the only useful maps are those we make for ourselves. **The skills and confidence that you gain as you work through the challenges will make the next episode easier to recover from and will help you advance towards your long-term goals.** As the old Buddhist saying goes, “**the challenge is the path**”.

The plan will look different for everyone and that is why there are some blank spaces. Think about what you have found works consistently for you to have some control over your pain and add them to the card. For most people becoming aware of their breathing and regaining some control over that is one primary tool. Curiosity is critical as well as you seek to understand what the triggers may have been. Do not immediately blame too much movement or ‘I must have moved wrong’. Most likely there are some social stressors involved or ‘**doing too much too fast after doing too little for too long**’.

Keep moving but be more vigilant about pacing and be kind to yourself. Remember – this too shall pass and if you learn or strengthen your skills, you are still moving forward.

Set back plan	
1.	Remember - it's set back not start over
2.	Remember your breathing exercises
3.	Keep moving, with curiosity, not fear
4.	Pace yourself
5.	_____
6.	_____
7.	Remember - this too shall pass