

# CHEMSEX

## Identifying Triggers

### *Managing Cravings differently*

**Triggers** are things that can cause us to **crave** chems; situations, circumstances, events, emotions, places... anything that might make us think (obsessively sometimes), about doing chems. If you learn how to **identify triggers**, even anticipate them, then you can be better **prepared** for them. It's always better than being taken by surprise.

Cravings can be overwhelming; sometimes it can feel like they rob us of our power of choice. But if we learn to **anticipate, identify and manage triggers** better... and if we learn different techniques to manage our cravings when they hit us, we have a better chance of riding them out without using.

### TIMES THAT I'M MOST VULNERABLE

*Tick all that apply*

- After work Fridays
- Weekday mornings
- Sat late afternoon (no plans)
- Bed time weekdays, can't sleep
- Travelling home after work
- Sat night, alone
- Sat night dinner / drinks with friends
- Sunday mornings, breakfast time
- Sunday mid morning, no plans
- Sunday afternoon, bored
- Sunday late afternoon, after a busy day
- Late night Sat, can't sleep

**When are other times you might be vulnerable to using Chems?**



## COMMON TRIGGERS

*Tick all that apply*

- When I'm alone
- After drinking alone
- When out drinking with friends
- After clubbing
- When playing online/on Apps - no specific plans
- When returning to London from a trip
- After a fight with a friend / family member / partner
- When I feel lonely & miss intimacy
- When I feel bored
- When I feel stressed and anxious
- When I feel horny
- When I feel depressed
- When I feel angry at myself, someone else, or at life.
- When I get unexpected correspondence / an invitation to party
- Returning home alone after a night out
- Returning home to partner after a night out
- After an unsatisfactory sex encounter
- After being rejected online
- Whenever I feel like celebrating
- Whenever I feel I deserve a reward for "being good"

**What are other triggers for you?**

## ALCOHOL

*For some, ChemSex is completely unrelated to alcohol; for others, it only happens after they've a drink or few. Tick the box that's true for you:*

- I'm always sober when I decide to get high / find a Chem shag
- My resistance to temptations / cravings for chems is strong when I'm sober
- My resistance to temptations / cravings for chems is definitely weaker after I've been drinking.
- The majority of my Chem sessions have begun while I'm under the influence of alcohol

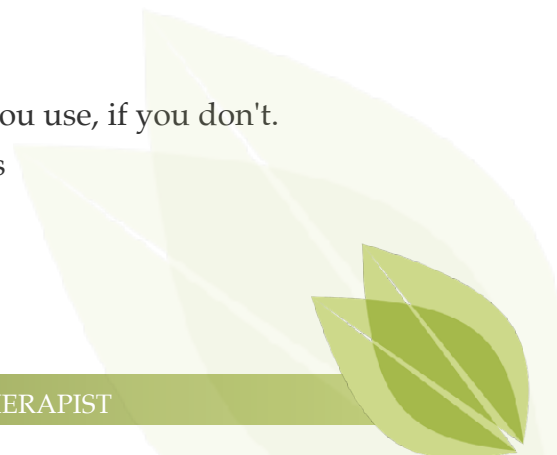
## “LEAD-TO” DRUGS

*For some a social line of cocaine, bump of MDMA or ecstasy - though not ChemSex - can lead to sex-App use and cravings for Chems & ChemSex. How likely are you to resist ChemSex cravings in these circumstances?*

- These drugs never lead to ChemSex cravings for me
- Yes, the high from these drugs often leads to ChemSex in my case
- Sometimes yes, sometimes no, it depends on other circumstances

## WHAT CAN YOU DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME YOU FEEL A CRAVING OR TRIGGER?

- Leave the room/place I am in - eg go outside
- Call a friend/supportive person
- Clean the house/do gardening
- Write a letter/journal note to yourself
- Record a video message to yourself on your phone, to remind yourself of consequences
- Go to gym/do exercise
- Cook a favourite meal
- Practice meditation/mindfulness
- Watch a favourite (distracting) film or box-set
- Have a (distracting) activity ready for just these moments; make a list of these
- Get offline/close the App/
- Take a deep breath; smile.
- Turn off any pornography
- Masturbate (quickly) Then occupy yourself off line
- Continue breathing. Take in your surroundings
- Take a shower
- Tell someone how I'm feeling
- Change the mood/music/lighting/temperature
- Go to the local shop. Buy chocolate. Ask shopkeeper how his day was
- Put favourite music in your ears. Go for a walk
- Be with people who care/value you
- Take a deep breath: smile. Continue breathing. Take in your surroundings
- Call a friend/supportive person
- Create a list of things you want to do this week
- Think about what you'll be doing two days from now - if you use, if you don't.
- Watch a YouTube playlist that helps you deal with cravings
- Change your emotional state somehow. Be creative.



What else can you do when you feel a trigger? List where and when and what you can do. *Anything that quickly and safely interrupts the impulse process works. Even if you go to the gym at 3am its fine!*

Adapted from work by David Stuart/56 Dean Street CWNHS

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