



DRINK and DRUGS

Identifying Triggers

Managing Cravings differently

Triggers are things that can cause us to **crave alcohol and drugs**; situations, circumstances, events, emotions, places... anything that might make us think (obsessively sometimes), about using them. It is well known that drink will for many lead to using drugs afterwards. 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. The better prepared you are with safety measures and alternatives the far more likely you are to avoid using.

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? BE VERY SPECIFIC

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
- If I am feeling upset with my life
- 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 after a night out
- After an unsatisfactory sex encounter
- After being rejected by someone
- Whenever I feel like celebrating
- Whenever I feel I deserve a reward for "being good"

What are other triggers for you?

ALCOHOL

For some, drug use is unrelated to alcohol; for others, drug use 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
- My resistance to temptations / cravings for drugs is strong when I'm sober
- My resistance to temptations / cravings for drugs is definitely weaker after I've been drinking.
- The majority of my drug sessions have begun while I'm under the influence of alcohol

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!*

