UNITY PATH
FAMILY SUPPORT

Coping with Cravings & Triggers

A Peer-Based Guide for Recovery

What Are Cravings?

Cravings are strong urges or desires to use alcohol or other drugs. They can feel intense, but they **do not last forever**.

Cravings are a normal part of recovery, especially in the early days. Having a craving does **not** mean you've failed or that recovery isn't possible.

What Are Triggers?

Triggers are people, places, emotions, situations, or memories that can increase the urge to use.

Common triggers include:

- Stress
- Feeling lonely or isolated
- Anger or frustration
- Celebrations or parties
- Seeing people you used with
- Certain places or neighbourhoods
- Boredom
- Feeling tired or overwhelmed
- Conflict with others
- Financial stress

Learning to recognize your triggers is an important part of recovery.

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This resource is for educational and peer support purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice. If you are concerned about your safety or feel you are at immediate risk of using in a way that could lead to a medical emergency, seek immediate assistance from a healthcare provider or emergency services.

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Notice Your Warning Signs

Ask yourself:

☐ What was happening just before the craving?

☐ How was I feeling?

☐ Who was I with?

☐ Where was I?

☐ What do I need right now?

Awareness is the first step toward making a different choice.

Healthy Ways to Ride Out a Craving

Many cravings become less intense if you can delay acting on them.

You could try:

✓ Take slow, deep breaths.
✓ Drink a glass of water.
✓ Go for a short walk.
✓ Call or text someone you trust.
✓ Listen to music.
✓ Write down what you're feeling.
✓ Use a grounding exercise.
✓ Change your environment.
✓ Attend a peer support meeting.
✓ Remind yourself why recovery matters to you.

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Build Your Personal Coping Plan

My biggest triggers:

Things that help me:

People I can reach out to:

If I Feel Like Using...

Before making a decision, I will try at least one of these:

☐ Call someone.

☐ Leave the situation.

☐ Eat something.

☐ Rest if I'm exhausted.

☐ Go to a safe place.

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☐ Read my reasons for recovery.

☐ Wait 20 minutes before deciding.

☐ Other:

Remember

A craving is **not** a command.

You can notice it, let it pass, and choose what happens next.

Every craving you get through builds confidence and teaches you more about what helps.

A Message from One Peer to Another

Recovery isn't about never having cravings. It's about learning new ways to respond when they happen.

Every time you choose a healthier response—even if it feels small—you are strengthening your recovery.

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