

Triggers and High-Risk Situations

In your recovery, you will find yourself in situations where the idea of drinking or using becomes attractive. Probably situations in which in the past you will have used or drunk, and you will find yourself thinking about these things.

These situations will differ from person to person. For example:

- Friends or family that you used or drank with,
- Watching a football game,
- Staying at a certain location,
- Experiencing chronic pain,
- Walking past your favourite pub,
- Being on your own.

Some of the things you may need to watch out for include:

- Putting yourself in difficult situations like visiting your favourite pub or hanging out with friends who are still using
- Keeping isolated – not accessing support at DHI or NA/AA
- Keeping any type of alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia around the house for any reason
- Obsessing about using drugs or drinking
- Skipping appointments and failing to follow your overall Relapse Prevention plan
- Having a strained relationship with a partner/spouse who still uses alcohol or drugs
- Being hard on yourself when things do not progress perfectly
- Changing your routine
- Ignoring sudden changes in psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, anger
- Dwelling on unresolved conflicts or past hurts
- Transferring your substance abuse addiction to other addictions
- Extreme emotional life changes
- Ignoring warning signs and triggers
- Refusing to deal with personal problems
- Not having awareness of your limitations
- Stopping medications against your Doctor's advice

One way to deal with high-risk situations is to avoid them completely.

- Don't frequent pubs or clubs,
- Don't hang around with heavy drinkers or drug users,
- Don't keep alcohol or substances in your house.

Of course, there will always be situations that you can't avoid. Therefore, you must plan to help you deal with these situations.

- If you meet a friend, decide where you will meet that is safest for you?
- Think about how you will respond if you are offered a drink
- How will you respond if you are questions about having a soft drink?
- What will you do if you feel vulnerable?
- If family situations can sometimes be difficult, plan how you can make things easier.

The more awareness you have about your Triggers, and the better plan and options you put together, the better the chances of keeping yourself safe.