

Active change

Session 3 – Managing Cravings

Today's session

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Group agreements
- What are cravings and urges?
- Ways to deal with cravings
- Closing round and feedback

Introductions and check in

Hello! ... introductions

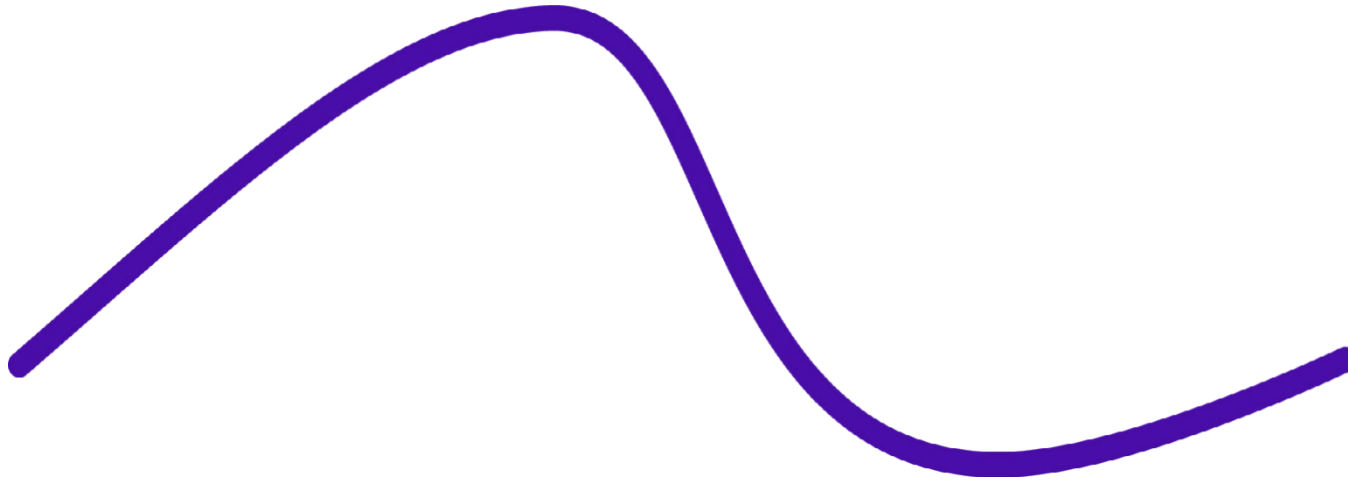
How has your week been?

Has anyone been experiencing cravings to use/drink?



Cravings/urges

... can be like waves on a beach



Urge surfing

When cravings are too strong to ignore, it can be useful to stay with your urge until it passes. This technique is called 'urge surfing'. You can imagine yourself as a surfer who will ride the wave, staying on top of it until it crests, breaks, and turns into less powerful, foamy surf.



What helps with urge surfing?

In general, finding things that distract, relax, and/or change your physiology are helpful in riding the wave. Below are some examples you might find helpful:

- Hold ice in your hand, or against your face/forehead/neck
- Take a warm shower
- Take a few minutes to focus on your breathing – slow and steady.
- Call a friend or family member
- Play a playlist of your favourite songs
- Watch funny You Tube videos
- Light a scented candle or use some scented lotion or oils
- Imagine a very relaxing scene or re-play a joyful memory in your mind
- Say encouraging statements to yourself as though you are talking to your best friend

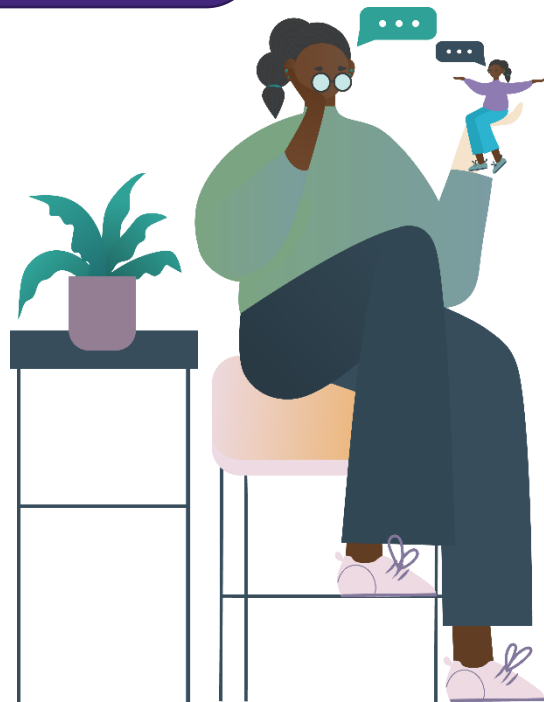
Mindfulness

Mindful awareness is about befriending and just letting ourselves experience the moment-to-moment experience of our thoughts, perceptions, feelings and body sensations with openness, curiosity and acceptance.



Ideas to deal with cravings

Argue with your thoughts



Expectancies we have when craving can be:

Anticipatory, "I'll be Mr. Wonderful after one line."

Relief Oriented, "I won't have to worry about it if I drink this bottle of wine."

Facilitative or Permissive, "I've worked hard all week, I'm entitled to it."

Since we rarely think about longer-term consequences when craving, bring them to mind deliberately.

Remind yourself of why you don't want to drink/use drugs



Ideas to deal with cravings

5 Ds or ACE

5 Ds

Decide

De-stress

De-catastrophise

Delay

distract

ACE

Avoid – early stages

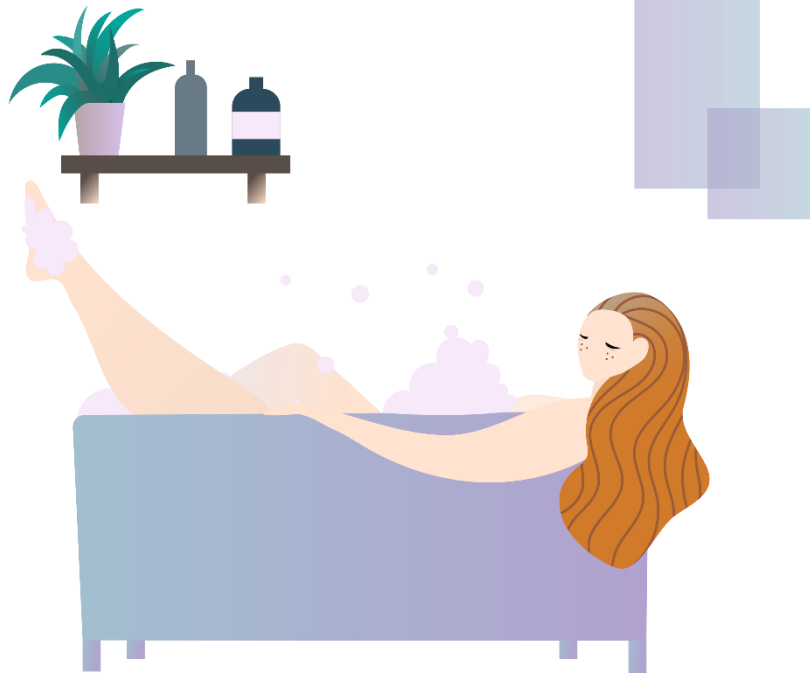
Control – abstinent
for a period of time

Escape – planning
ahead



Ideas to deal with cravings

distract



Some urges are so relentless that talking back to them isn't enough. You still can't get your mind off your habit.

Good old -fashioned distraction can help.

Distraction can be cognitive, in the form of some mental exercises, or behavioural, in the form of activity.

Certainly, what you choose will depend on your interests, but the key is to make it something that will be easy, interesting and fun to do.



Ideas to deal with cravings

Other ideas



Keep a cravings diary or urges log

Talk to someone

Challenge other unhelpful thinking patterns leading to cravings (e.g. self criticism, 'should' and 'must', catastrophising, comparing yourself with others)



How can I deal with my cravings?

Things I can tell myself

Ways I can distract myself

Ways I can relax myself

Other things I can do



Cravings diary

Craving	date	time	Describe the situation	Mood when it started	Craving strength? 0-10	How long did it last?

Feedback

- How has today been?
- Can you say one thing that will enable you to manage cravings?
- Where might it be useful to keep the work you've done today?
- Reminder about 'Useful Resources,' including mutual support
- Thank you for coming and the next session is: 'Personal and Community Resources Management'