

Coping with Cravings

<p>What are cravings?</p>	<p>A craving is an intense desire to use a substance. Cravings for substance use may occur during a quit attempt and typically become weaker and less frequent over time.</p> <p>During a craving, the idea of using a substance becomes the focus of a patient’s attention. Cravings can be intense but are generally brief, often lasting only a few minutes.</p> <p>While cravings can be uncomfortable, they are very common and do not indicate a problem. Substance use may provide relief though it is usually only temporary. Learning to cope with cravings increases the likelihood of maintained recovery.</p>
<p>Signs of cravings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tightness in your stomach • Feeling nervous • Increased thoughts about pleasurable experiences of drug use • Memories of past substance use • Intrusive plans for using a substance
<p>Strategies for coping with cravings</p>	<p>DISTRACTION: watch a video, read, exercise, write, call a friend</p> <p>URGE SURF: Cravings are temporary. Like a wave, a craving comes in, peaks and then goes out again. Knowing that the craving will pass may allow patients to take some deep breaths and stay with the urge until it passes.</p> <p>PRACTICE MINDFULNESS: Purposefully ignore urges by staying focused on the present moment.</p> <p>CHALLENGE AND CHANGE THOUGHTS: Recommend that patients remind themselves of reasons for quitting: problems caused by use and the benefits of not using.</p> <p>AVOID HIGH RISK SITUATIONS: Identify triggers (external (people, places and things) internal (hunger, boredom, anger) and try to avoid them when possible.</p> <p>TALK ABOUT THE CRAVING: Talking about cravings can help identify triggers and relieve the urge. A craving is nothing to hide or feel bad about.</p>

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