CBTm

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY WITH MINDFULNESS

THÉRAPIE COGNITIVO-COMPORTEMENTALE DE LA PLEINE CONSCIENCE

Class 2 - Handouts

- Mindfulness Exercise - Recovery Meditation
- H.A.L.T. - Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired
- Substance Use And Nutrition
- Eating For Recovery
- Anger... Manage It Or It Will Manage You
- Coping With Loneliness
- 10 Tips For Healthy Sleep
- Coping With Cravings
- Structured Coping Skills Exercise for Maintaining Recovery
- Dealing With Cravings: The Four Steps, Plus One
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Positive Distortions In Addiction Thinking
- Urge Surfing

RECOVERY MEDITATION

Find a place where you can sit or lie down comfortably. At least when you are learning the practice, choose a place that is quiet or where you wont be disturbed for the next few minutes.

Close your eyes or rest your gaze on a spot in the room.

Bring your attention to your thoughts, especially on thoughts related to cravings. With curiosity, explore: Where is the voice located? Is it inside your head? Near your ears?
Notice the form of your thoughts. Are they like pictures, or are they more like words? Are the thoughts moving or still? If they are moving, how fast or slow do they move? If they are still, where are they resting?

Notice the environment around the thoughts. How do the thoughts relate to each other? Are they touching or are they on top of each other? Are there spaces in between them?

For a couple of minutes now, watch your thoughts coming and going. Watch with curiosity, as if you have never seen such thoughts before. If you get stuck with any thought, just let it hang out; do not try to push it away or force it in any way.

Acknowledge any difficult thoughts or cravings: Here is this old craving again. Notice these cravings for what they are – just words. Just observe them without any attempt to change them, push them away, or hold on to them. Just let them be there, and watch them as you would watch an interesting documentary on a screen.

If you do get pulled in by these thoughts and lose track of what you are doing, know that this is absolutely normal. As soon as you notice this, gently acknowledge it and return to observing the thoughts again.

Now slowly bring your attention back to the room. Notice where you are, and when you are ready, open your eyes. Look around you and notice what you see and hear. Welcome back!

H.A.L.T.
Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

In recovery it is important to stay in touch with your feelings and needs. H.A.L.T., this tried and true slogan can help. Sometimes the onset of anxiety or a sudden change in mood can be traced to you having forgotten to eat, forcing blood sugar levels to drop. Other times you may be carrying resentment, or feeling lonely, or are just too tired. Taking a little time out from a busy schedule to ask yourself if you are feeling too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired, gets you in touch with your needs and feelings. When you know what you are feeling, you can make choices and take the appropriate action to get your need for food, companionship, or rest, met. Being too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, are conditions that leave you vulnerable to the temptations that lead you away from your substance use goals. Part of recovery is learning to pay attention to these inner signals and practice appropriate ways to meet your needs and resolve issues in a manner that will enhance your substance use goals. You need to learn to communicate with your body.

Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired.
These are things you are warned against when entering into recovery.When you become too hungry, too angry, too lonely or too tired, you may seek relief in alcohol and/or drugs.Learning to take care of yourself may be a new skill if you have been abusing drugs and alcohol over a long period of time.

Thoughts
When you're hungry can you take the time to slow down and eat? When you're tired, can you remember to maybe go to bed a little earlier? When you're angry, can you express it at an appropriate time and place, or recognize your part in the situation? Are you taking steps to meet your social and personal support needs, or spending time alone feeling isolated? How are you coping? Are you using healthy strategies, or are urges to use substances taking over?

Following are four articles addressing the needs H.A.L.T presents:

HUNGRY - Substance Use and Nutrition, Eating for Recovery

ANGRY - Anger ... Manage It Or It Will Manage You

LONELINESS - Coping with Loneliness

TIRED - Tips for Healthy Sleep Hygiene

Edition Revised June 3, 2005

SUBSTANCE USE AND NUTRITION

Alcohol and drug use can contribute to nutritional deficiencies in several ways:

Decreased dietary intake – Eating may become less of a priority, leading to a reduction in the amount of food consumed. Food choices may shift toward convenient, processed options that are less nutrient-dense.

Decreased absorption – Over time, the body's ability to absorb vitamins and minerals can become impaired. For individuals who use alcohol, the stomach and intestinal tract can be affected, which may allow toxins and allergens to enter the body and cause additional health issues. D A diet high in refined sugars and processed foods can reduce the body's ability to absorb fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.

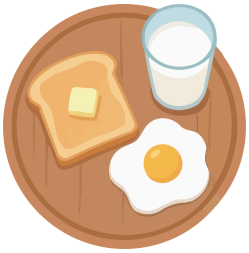
I**ncreased use of nutrients** - Stress increases the body's need for all nutrients particularly vitamin C, vitamin E, zinc, selenium and vitamin A. The body's stress regulators, the endocrine glands, require larger amounts of these nutrients to help maintain a balanced state. When the body becomes depleted, it can be harder for the mind to stay balanced and focused on recovery.

Returning to alcohol or other substance use after a period of non-use can sometimes be influenced by nutrition and changes in the body's chemistry that develop over time. For example, low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) may play a role for some people. Blood sugar, or glucose, is the brain's main source of energy. The body works to keep blood sugar within a relatively narrow range so the brain can function well. When blood sugar levels drop, a person may feel tired, irritable and possibly depressed and anxious. These physical and emotional changes can increase cravings and make it harder to cope, which may lead some individuals to return to substance use or to rely on quick, short-term fixes such as caffeine, nicotine, and highly processed foods high in sugar or fat.

Because changes in blood sugar can affect stress levels and mood, one helpful goal is to support balance by eating regularly and choosing nourishing foods. Blood sugar levels are often lowest in the morning after waking, which is why eating a balanced breakfast can be especially important.

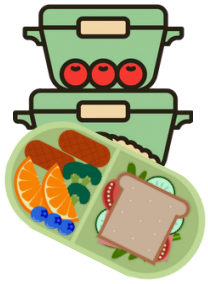
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www.coalharbournhc.com

EATING FOR RECOVERY



Break the fast

Your body needs energy to help you cope with the daily demands of life. Eating food within an hour or so of waking up can be difficult. Try tiny portions to start, such as one half cup milk or a piece of toast. If this is too much or if chewing food is a problem, try a small amount of blender drink, wait an hour or so to build up an appetite and try to eat a light, protein-based snack. Remember that it will take time to get an appetite for breakfast but eating small portions daily, while gradually increasing the quantity, can usually re-establish appetite within four to seven days.



Eat frequently

Start your day by eating breakfast and then have a light meal or snack about every three to four hours after that. This provides a constant supply of energy and helps combat fatigue, tension, mood swings, hunger and cravings. You can start to develop an appetite by eating small frequent meals and snacks. Choose foods that you usually eat and enjoy to re-establish a balances meal pattern



Eat a variety of foods

Your body needs more than 50 different nutrients each day. Eating a variety of healthy foods from each group listed in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating will ensure that you get enough of each essential nutrient.



A protein snack in the morning and afternoon

Include a protein food such as low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt and lean meats for your morning and afternoon snacks. Protein helps to keep energy levels stable and enhances your concentration and ability to remain alert. Eat before you feel hungry. Avoid eating protein foods in the late evening. Instead, try light-carbohydrate foods to promote calmness, relaxation and sleepiness.



Limit your intake of caffeine

The caffeine in coffee, tea, chocolate and colas can make you nervous and irritable, decrease your appetite, cause stomach upsets and interfere with sleep.

The average caffeine content of beverages varies:

Filter-drip coffee	1 cup=8oz=250ml	145-180mg
Instant coffee	1tsp = 5ml	80-90mg
Decaffeinated coffee	1 cup=8oz=250ml	5mg
Cola drinks	1can=10oz=300mg	35-50mg
Tea	1 cup=8oz=250ml	50mg

Remember: caffeine is also found in headache remedies, allergy medications and weight-loss products.

Try to limit your caffeine intake to a maximum of 450 milligrams per day (about three 250-millilter cups of coffee). Avoid caffeinated beverages at least five hours before bedtime.

Tea has other positive benefits that may offset some of the negative effects of caffeine. Black and green teas are antioxidants-the disease fighters.

Limit Your Sugar and Sweets

Sugar-rich foods are high in calories and low in nutrients. They may decrease your appetite for regular meals and can cause rapid rises and falls in your energy levels and leave you tired.Limiting sweets to small servings after meals can help control cravings and avoid unnecessary weight gain.

Cut Back on Fat

Eating large high-fat meals can leave you feeling tired and can lead to weight gain and other health problems. To energize yourself, reduce your fat intake and increase your intake of grains, vegetables and fruits.

Hydrate Your Body with Water

Drink six to eight cups of water daily to help your body flush out toxins.This will help enhance healing and recovery.

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Anger... Manage It Or It Will Manage You

By Richard Boyum
UW-Eau Claire Counseling Services

Anger is a very interesting emotion. It is much like dynamite. A little bit of it can go a long way, but used inappropriately it can backfire and blow up in your face. Anger that is not resolved or dissolved, or inappropriate levels of anger can lead to depression, a higher incident of various types of accidents, broken relationships, and can also be a major contributing factor to heart attacks and strokes in mid and later life. Keeping these thoughts in mind, consider the following thoughts and ideas to both better understand anger and to use I more appropriately.

1. Anger is often a function of frustration. Spend some time thinking about what you're really frustrated about and what actions you might be able to take to handle those frustrations.

2. Remember that, ultimately, you are responsible for your own anger. While situations may contribute to your anger, someone else doesn't make you angry; at some point you must accept responsibility for choosing anger over other emotions.

3. Speaking of emotions, anger is a basic emotion. There are things that are legitimate and appropriate to be angry about, but responses to anger do not have to be hostile or hurtful. In reality, anger is a way of protecting yourself. Spend some time thinking about what you really want to achieve in situations where you feel anger.

4. Consider to what extent your anger response is learned. Who did you learn it from? In what situations did it work for you in the past, but may not work for you in the present? Realize that for some individuals there may be a genetic predisposition to anger. In knowing this, you can make choices to keep yourself calm.

5. If you are prone to anger, rehearse appropriate and healthy responses that may be more beneficial to your situation.

6. Realize that basic, normal, human behaviors can help you effectively manage your anger. Getting appropriate exercise and making sure you get enough sleep can increase the number of choices and responses you have to situations where you may find yourself feeling upset.

7 Avoid using alcohol or other substances. Alcohol and drugs can significantly affect the rational part of the brain. When this part of the brain is impaired, emotions may become stronger and harder to manage.

8 Remember that you are not the content of your emotion; you are the invisible awareness. In other words, don't think of yourself in terms of, "I am angry ...", rather think of yourself, as, "Right now I am very aware of the anger I am feeling". When you do this, you can acknowledge your anger and somehow be a bit bigger than the feeling itself. Through your acknowledgement, you can find a way to say, "That's just the way it is, so what choices do I have now?"

9 Remember that anger can be overt, but it also can be covert, or passive-aggressive. Passive-aggressive anger in the form of backstabbing, gossiping about individuals, or baiting others can be as serious as more direct expressions, such as yelling at someone, or confronting someone with overt threats. Either way, these behaviors can damage your long-term goals. Think carefully about how you both directly and indirectly may use anger, not to only hurt others, but also possibly hurt yourself.

10 Know that if you have a serious problem with anger, antidepressant medication and mood stabilizers/ anti seizure medications seems to help individuals gain more appropriate levels of control. You may want to talk with a physician or counselor, if you think medication may be of help to you. Usually, a single consultation should give professional enough information to help you decide whether medication is something you would like to try.

11 Finally, remember at some level, anger is a choice. At times you may want to pick other words, such as being bothered, upset, irritated. These words may help you get not only at the nature of the difficulty you have, but at possible solutions that may be of help to you.

Remember that anger is an appropriate emotion, but in our culture sometimes it is overused. Use it carefully, and it may help you achieve your goals. Misuse it, and it will create difficulties that will keep you from becoming the kind of person that you might like to be. It may be of help for you to talk with a professional counselor about ways to deal effectively with your expression of anger as an emotion. Some individuals find that anger is a mask for fear, and once they understand that important distinction, they can move forward in making more healthy choices.

When you are angry, ask yourself, "Am I really afraid of something happening, or not happening?" It is normal for people to feel angry or mad, but it is also important for people to feel sad, to feel glad, and to feel afraid. Don't let anger become an emotion that blocks the healthy expression of all of the emotions you might feel. Hopefully, these thoughts and suggestions will help you further explore when anger is helping you, and/or when anger hurts you.

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http://www.uwec.edu/counsel/pubs/boyum.htm

Coping With Loneliness

Author ***Cathleen Henning***

Accepting it and moving on when the time is right

Loneliness may be painful and even frightening, and it may indicate a need for introspection. Have you been feeling lonely for a long time? Perhaps it's time to make some changes; it is possible to feel less alone. Loneliness is not a sign that you have failed or that you will never have people in your life. It may take effort to change the way you feel, but you can do it.



Accept it. There are many steps you can take to help yourself feel less alone, but before you take those steps, stop and think about how you are feeling. Loneliness is an emotion, and, as with other uncomfortable emotions, we often want to get rid of it as soon as possible. Sometimes, though, these kinds of emotions may be learning tools. Before rushing to eliminate loneliness, think about how you came to feel this way. Changes are most likely in order, but think about the changes that will suit your individual needs.



Sometimes, too, no change will eliminate loneliness. People may feel lonely even when surrounded by loving friends and family. Time may be the only solution. You are not flawed for feeling lonely, and, if you accept the feeling, you will find that it is not as uncomfortable as you first thought.



Remember, too, that being alone and feeling lonely are not the same. If you are alone these days but enjoying it, then don't feel as if you must change because other people don't understand. Do, however, be sure that you have a support system and that you are available to friends and family.



Reach out. If you had people to contact, you may be thinking, then you wouldn't be lonely. Sometimes, though, when we are immersed in loneliness, we may forget about all of our options. First, think about everyone you know and have ever known. Maybe you think a certain friend or relative wouldn't want to hear from you. Think again -- you may be surprised. Try contacting them and see what happens next. Be sure, however, to have a list of possible contacts, just in case the first doesn't go as planned. Think of old friends, too. You don't even have to tell them you're contacting them because you're lonely. Just reach out and communicate, and you'll start to feel better. Second, if you

truly believe friends and family aren't an option, then reach out to people you don't know. You're already on the Internet, and your options here are endless -- from chat rooms to forums to games to pen pals.



Help someone else. A great way to spend time with people and feel good about your contribution to the world is by volunteering. If your anxiety disorder is keeping you from volunteering in a traditional way, use your imagination. Even going into an online chat room and talking to someone else who is lonely is a significant way to help. If you are ready to volunteer outside your home, look to places that will be anxiety-friendly: church, hospitals, daycare or pre-schools, and nursing homes, are some examples.



Pursue your interests. Meet people who like to do what you like to do by becoming involved in your hobbies and interests. If you already have a hobby, such as knitting, that tends to be solitary, look for local classes or groups where you can meet other people as well as learn more about your craft. If you've thought about an interest for a long time but have never followed through, consider starting now. Look at your local newspaper for classes, groups and meetings, if you need ideas. Take a nature walk. Attend a lecture at a local museum. Take a cooking class. If you're not sure what your interests are, just start participating until you find what you love.



Join or start a support group. Look around for a support group. Ask your therapist, check the local newspaper, and contact local hospitals. If there aren't any for anxiety, try a depression group. Consider starting your own support group if you can't find one; you'll be helping yourself and other people. If you need a place to have meetings, contact local churches, which often have space.

If you're not sure how to cope with your loneliness and you feel that it's making you depressed, talk to your therapist about it (or get a therapist if you don't have one). Talking about it may help you explore other issues or come up with unique ways to cope with your individual feelings.

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10 TIPS FOR HEALTHY SLEEP

1

Keep a regular sleep schedule. Our sleep-wake cycle is regulated by a rhythm in our brain and the body's needs to balance both sleep time and wake time. That is also why it is important to keep a regular bedtime and wake-time, even on the weekends when there is the temptation to sleep-in. Individuals should not alter their sleep routine s by more than 1 hr.

2

Avoid caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant, which means it can produce an alerting effect. Depending on the dose, caffeine products, such as coffee, tea, colas and chocolate, remain in the body on average from 3 to 5 hours, but they can affect some people up to 12 hours later. Even if you do not think caffeine affects you, it may be disrupting and changing the quality of your sleep. Avoiding caffeine within 6-8 hours of going to bed can help improve sleep.Reduced caffeine can result in more restful sleep.

3

Avoid nicotine. Nicotine is also a stimulant. Smoking before bed makes it more difficult to fall asleep. When smokers go to sleep, they experience withdrawal symptoms from nicotine, which can cause fitful sleep. Nicotine can cause difficulty falling asleep, problems waking in the morning, and may also cause nightmares. Difficulty sleeping is just one more reason to quit smoking.

4

Avoid alcohol. Although many people think of alcohol as a sleep aid because of its sedating effect, it actually disrupts sleep, causing nighttime awakenings. Consuming alcohol leads to a night of less restful sleep. Nix the nightcap.

5

Don't eat or drink too much close to bedtime. Eating or drinking too much may make you less comfortable when settling down for bed. It is best to avoid a heavy meal too close to bedtime. Also, spicy foods may cause heartburn, which leads to difficulty falling asleep and discomfort during the night. Try to restrict fluids close to bedtime to prevent nighttime awakenings to go to the bathroom, though some people find milk or herbal, non-caffienated teas to be soothing and a helpful part of a bedtime routine. If you are going to eat, carbohydrates like breads and cereal may help to relax the body.

6

Exercise at the right time promotes sleep. Exercising regularly makes it easier to fall asleep and contributes to sounder sleep. However, exercising sporadically or right before going to bed will make falling asleep more difficult. In addition to making us more alert, our body temperature rises during exercise, and takes up to 6 hours to begin to drop. A cooler body temperature provides the signal that it is time to sleep. Finish your exercise at least 3 hours before bedtime. Late afternoon exercise is the perfect way to help you fall asleep at night.

7

Use relaxing bedtime rituals/routines. A relaxing, routine activity right before bedtime conducted away from bright lights sends a signal to your body that it is almost time to go to sleep and will make it easier to fall asleep. Avoid arousing activities before bedtime like working, paying bills, engaging in competitive games or family problem-solving activities. Try an activity that is relaxing, such as soaking in a hot tub, reading or listening to music, or having a massage. Some studies suggest that soaking in hot water (such as a hot tub or bath) before retiring to bed can ease the transition into deeper sleep, but it should be done early enough that you are no longer sweating or over-heated. If you are unable to avoid tension and stress, it may be helpful to learn relaxation therapy from a trained professional.

8

Create a sleep-promoting environment. Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep – cool, quiet, dark, comfortable and free of interruptions. Also make your bedroom reflective of the value you place on sleep. Check your room for noise or other distractions, including a bed partner's sleep disruptions such as snoring, light, and a dry or hot environment. Consider using blackout curtains, eyeshades, earplugs, "white noise" (fan), humidifiers and other devices. Make sure your mattress is comfortable and supportive. Have comfortable pillows and make the room attractive and inviting for sleep, but also free of allergens that might affect you and objects that might cause you to slip or fall if you have to get up during the night.

9

Associate your bed with sleep only. Use your bed only for sleep to strengthen the association between bed and sleep. If you associate a particular activity or item with anxiety about sleeping, omit it from

your bedtime routine. For example, if looking at a bedroom clock makes you anxious about how much time you have before you must get up, move the clock out of sight. Do not engage in activities that cause you anxiety and prevent you from sleeping, i.e.: homework, bill payment, and workouts.



Limit sleep time in bed. If you do not fall asleep within 15-20 minutes of going to bed and turning out the lights, it is best to get out of bed and do another relaxing activity until you are feeling sleepy again. If anxiety about something you need to do prevents you from sleeping, it is sometimes helpful to jot down notes in a "worry" or "to do" book. Nap during the day only when needed to maintain alertness and plan on napping 20-30 minutes.

*Material adapted from numerous freeware sources

Coping with Cravings

Deciding to reduce or stop alcohol or other substance use can lead to cravings, especially in situations that feel challenging or high-risk. Learning to manage urges and temptations is an important part of supporting long-term recovery. Cravings can occur at different levels of intensity and can be thought of as existing along a continuum, as illustrated below.



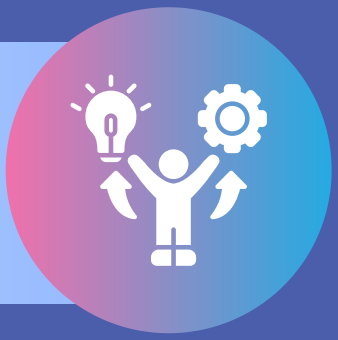
There are several strategies you can use to manage cravings for alcohol and other substances. Remember, cravings do not last forever and will decrease in number and strength over time.

Try some of the following suggestions to help you cope:

Behaviour (What I Do)	Cognition (What I Think)
Self-monitor: Write down your thoughts and feelings.	**Normalize the craving:** "I am experiencing an urge to drink/use drugs. It's okay to feel this way."
Seek support: Talk to someone you trust about what you're experiencing.	**Use imagery:** Visualize the craving as a wave that rises and falls, and imagine riding it out.
Distract yourself: Do an activity unrelated to substance use.	**Thought stopping:** Picture a STOP sign to interrupt urges or unhelpful thoughts.
Substitute another behaviour: For example, eat something or drink a non-alcoholic beverage.	**Positive self-talk:** Say things like, "I can cope with this," or "I've made progress and I don't want to undo it now."
Leave or change the situation: Step away or adjust your environment to reduce temptation.	**Consider consequences:** Remind yourself of the negative effects of using alcohol or other drugs.
Relaxation: Take deep breaths (in through your nose, out through your mouth) to help calm yourself.	**Focus on benefits:** Think about the benefits of not using alcohol/drugs and staying on track with your goals.

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STRUCTURED COPING SKILLS EXERCISE FOR MAINTAINING RECOVERY



Practice Exercise

Create a plan for managing urges or temptations to use substances. Be as specific as possible about the steps you would take.

Describe a recent situation where you felt strong urges or cravings.

Using your example above, plan ways to manage urges or temptations in a similar situation in the future. Who could you reach out to for support?

What activities or strategies could you use to distract yourself or cope in the moment?

What positive messages or self-talk could you use to encourage yourself?

Is there anything else you could do to support yourself in this situation?

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Dealing with Cravings: The Four Steps, Plus One

(*Adapted from In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts by Gabor Mate)*

These four steps should be practiced whenever you have a craving - even daily. Find a quiet place to write. You might want to carry a notepad with you at all times to help with the process.

Step One: Relabel

When we relabel, we give up the language of need. I say to myself, "I don't need to have a drink right now; I'm only having a craving. It's not a real need but a false belief. I may have a feeling of urgency, but there is actually nothing urgent going on."

Be aware of the sense of urgency that has taken hold and relabel it as a part of addiction rather than reality. **The point of relabeling is not to make the craving disappear - it's not going to, at least not for a long time, since it was wired into the brain long ago.** Paying attention to the urge and the relabeling can rewire the brain.

Step Two: Reattribute

In Reattribute you learn to blame your brain. "This is my brain sending me a false message." In this step you see where the craving is coming from. "Because they are wired into my brain and because they are easily triggered whenever I'm stressed or tired or unhappy or bored." The urge says nothing about you as a person; it's not a character weakness. You can take responsibility now.

Step Three: Refocus

In the Refocus step you buy yourself time. Although the craving to have a drink, drive to the casino or smoke some dope is powerful, it's only temporary. It will pass and you have to give it time to pass. **It's not how you feel; it's what you do that counts**. It's not about having "free will", it's about having "free won't".

Rather than giving into the craving, find something else to do. Your first goal can be small: buy yourself just fifteen minutes. Be sure to find something to do that you enjoy. Physical activity is often helpful.

The purpose of Refocus is to teach your brain that it doesn't have to obey the craving. It can exercise the "free won't." It can choose something else.

If you cannot hold out for the fifteen minutes that's okay. Make it five minutes and record it in your journal as a success. This is not a race you have to win, but a marathon you are training for.

Step Four: Revalue

This step could also be called Devalue. Its purpose is to help you see just what has been the real impact of the addiction in your life: disaster.

The addictive mind has been fooled into making the object of your craving (alcohol, drugs or gambling) most important. In the Revalue step you see your craving for what its worth: worse than nothing. "What has this craving done for me?" you ask. It has caused me to spend money, to be away from the ones I love, to do things that I later regretted. It has wasted my time. It has made me lie and cheat and to pretend to myself and everyone close to me.

Be aware as you write this out - and write it out several times a day if necessary. Be specific: what has been the value of the urge in your life? What happened yesterday when you allowed the urge to rule you? What happened last week? Will it happen today? Pay attention to what you feel when you remember these events. Be aware. That awareness will be your guide.

Step Five: Re-create

Life up until now has created you. You've been acting on messages wired into your brain. It is time to re-create: to choose a different life. You have values. You have passions. You have goals, talents and strengths. In your heart there is love and you want to connect that with the love in the world, in the universe. As you relabel, reattribute, refocus and revalue you are releasing patterns that have hurt you. Instead of using alcohol, drugs or gambling to try to soothe yourself, feel love or escape pain: what is the life you really want? What do you choose to create?

Write down your values and goals. See yourself living with integrity, being able to look people in the eye with compassion for them and for yourself. Re-create. Are you afraid you will stumble? Of course you will: that's called being a human being. And then you will take four steps-plus one-again.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Our bodies respond automatically to stressful situations and thoughts by becoming tense. The opposite relationship also works: a good way of relaxing the mind is to deliberately relax the body.

In a progressive muscle relaxation each muscle group is tensed in turn, and the tension is then released. This relaxes the muscles and allows you to notice the contrast between tension and relaxation.

Relaxation should be enjoyable so if any part of the exercise is too difficult skip it for the moment. If you have any injuries you may wish to leave out that part of the exercise.

Preparation

Lie down flat on your back, on a firm bed, a couch, or on the floor. Support your head and neck with a pillow or cushion. Alternatively sit in a comfortable chair with your head well-supported. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.

Instructions

Focus your attention on different parts of your body in sequence. Go through the sequence three times:

1. *Tense & release: Tense that body part, hold it for a few moments, then relax*
2. *Lightly tense & release:Tense that body part with just enough tension to notice, then relax*
3. *Release only: Just pay attention to each muscle group and decide to relax it*

Recommended sequence

1 Right hand & arm
(clench the fist & tighten the muscles in the arm)

2 Left hand & arm

3 Right leg
(tense the leg, lifting the knee slightly)

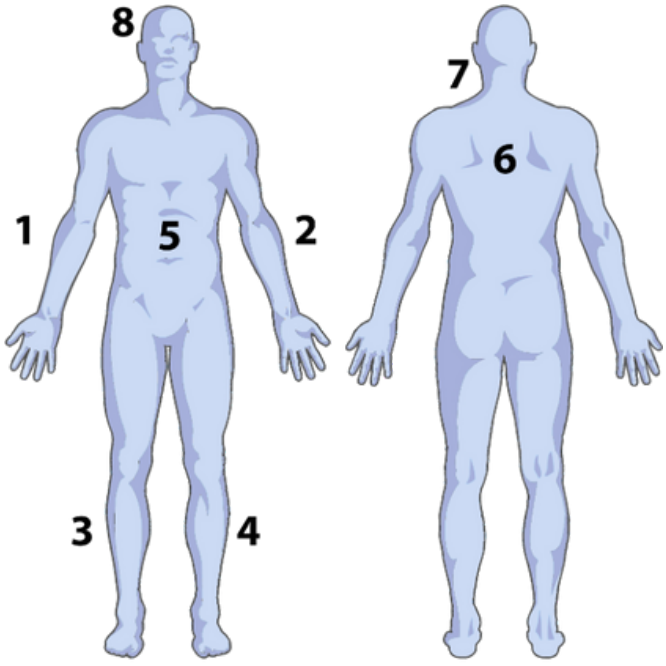
4 Left leg

5 Stomach & chest

6 Back muscles
(pull the shoulders back slightly)

7 Neck & throat
(push the head back slightly into the pillow/surface)

8 Face
(scrunch up the muscles in your face)



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Thinking Traps That Sound Positive, But Are Not Helpful

Not all positive thoughts are helpful—some positive thoughts can also be distorted, they can serve as ways to avoid discomfort, responsibility, or reality. A return to substance use can be influenced by these 'positive' distorted thoughts. The key to recovery is honesty—not just in our actions, but in our thinking.

- Based on the work of Dr. David Burns

Distorted "Positive" Thought	Why It's a Trap (Distortion)	Healthy CBT Reframe
"I deserve a reward."	Rationalizes returning to substance use or indulgence.	"I deserve health and peace. I can reward myself in better ways."
"One time won't hurt."	Minimizes the consequences.	"One time can restart the cycle. I want to stay free."
"I can control it this time."	Overestimates self-control; common before returning to use.	"If I've lost control before, I need to stay vigilant—not test myself."
"It helps me relax / cope."	Romanticizes the substance/behavior.	"It may numb me now, but it makes things worse later."
"I've been doing so well—I can handle a little."	Slippery slope logic.	"Success doesn't mean immunity. Staying away from alcohol/drugs is how I stay strong."
"Other people do worse things."	Compares to avoid responsibility.	"This is about my health, not others' mistakes."
"I can quit anytime."	Illusion of control. Often denial.	"If that were true, I wouldn't need to prove it. Let me focus on abstaining."

Why positive distortions are traps in addiction:

- They reduce guilt, making returning to substance use seem like a reasonable choice.
- They block insight, preventing the person from seeing the bigger pattern.
- They delay change, by promoting procrastination, denial, and magical thinking.
- They feed into euphoric recall— focusing only on the pleasurable effects while forgetting the pain and consequences that followed.

CBT Technique to Challenge Positive Distortions

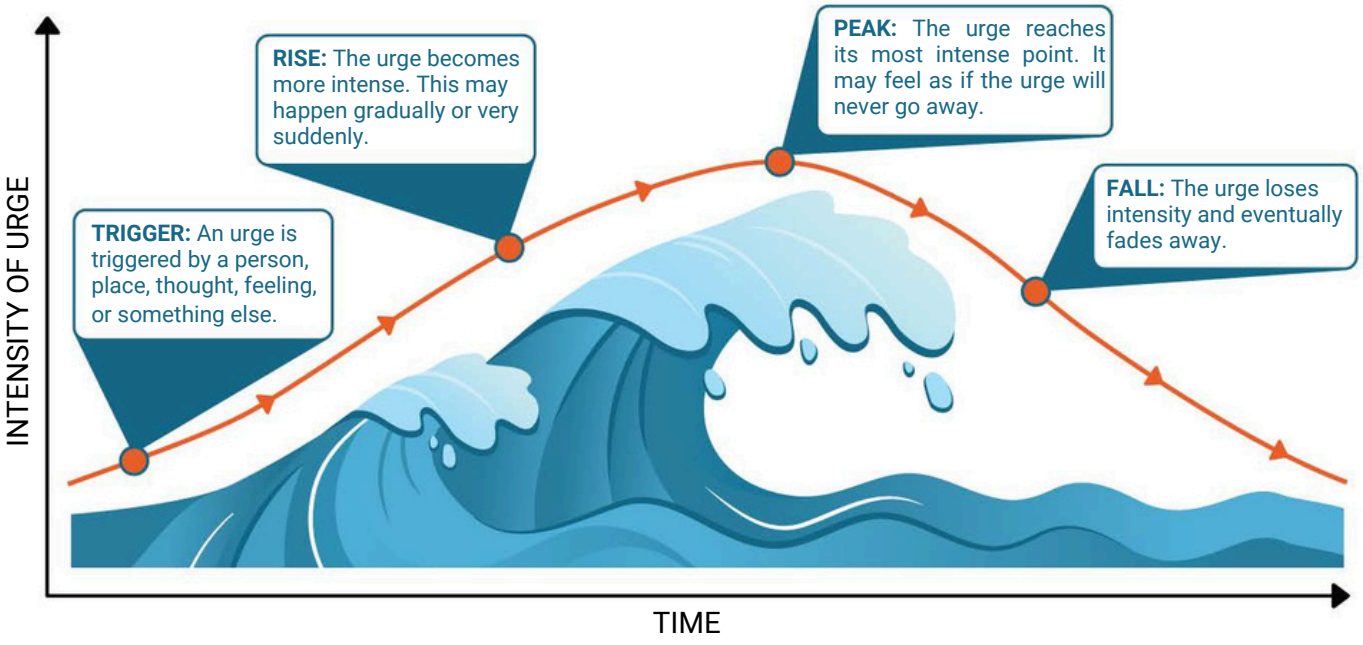
Use a 3-Step Thought Catch-Check-Change:

1. Is it completely true?
    a. (e.g., “Can I really control it, or am I fooling myself?”)
2. Where does this thought lead me?
    a. (e.g., “If I follow this logic, will it help or hurt me?”)
3. What’s a more honest thought?
    a. (e.g., “I want relief, but this isn’t the way to get it.”)

Urge Surfing

Urge surfing is a technique for managing your unwanted behaviors. Rather than giving in to an urge, you will ride it out, like a surfer riding a wave. After a short time, the urge will pass on its own.

This technique can be used to stop or reduce drug and alcohol use, emotional reactions such as "blowing up" when angry, gambling, and other unwanted behaviors.



How to Practice Urge Surfing

1. Acknowledge you are havinganurge.
2. Notice your thoughts and feelings without trying to change or suppress them.
   Note: *It is normal to feel somediscomfort during an urge.*
3. Remind yourself…

- It is okay to have urges. They are natural reactions to addictions and habits.
- An urge is a feeling, not a "must." I can have this feeling and choose not to act.
- Some discomfort is okay. I don't have to change it.
- An urge is temporary. Like any other feeling, it will pass on its own.

Other Skills

Managing Triggers

Use coping skills to reduce the power of triggers. Know your triggers ahead of time, and have a strategy or skill prepared for each one.

Examples: *deep breathing if stressed, eating if hungry, leaving a location if it is high risk*

Delay & Distraction

Do something to take your mind off the urge. Every minute you delay increases the chance of the urge weakening on its own.

Examples*: go for a walk, listen to music, call a friend, read a book, practice a hobby*

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