

DEALING WITH CRAVINGS AND URGES

Cravings or overwhelming urges to use drugs & alcohol are common when people have used a lot. Cravings can feel overwhelming and without ways of managing they often lead to using.

It is important to remember that cravings and urges are time limited - and will disappear with time. There are several recommended ways of dealing with cravings and the one you choose may depend on how you feel and the situation that you are in.

Urge Surfing: Try to think of an urge or craving as an ocean wave that begins as a small crest, grows in intensity until it reaches a peak and then breaks to wash to the shore line. Imagine yourself riding the craving wave with the knowledge that it will diminish. The more you practise urge surfing, the better you will become at riding out the urge or craving. It is also likely the feelings that triggered the craving in the first place will become less intense the better you get at coping with situations without using.

Distraction: Often the simplest solution is to just do something else that will distract you from thinking about drugs. However, you may feel that you do not have access to alternative activities or resources. Let's explore some of the possibilities.

List some activities or things you could do to distract yourself from an urge or craving.

List some possible scenarios	List some distracting activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids fighting • Pay day • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go outside with a cup of tea and take some calming breaths • • Watch a gripping Netflix show or something similar • Have a long shower or relaxing bath •

Talking it through: Sometimes giving voice to a feeling or thought makes it easier to deal with. Practise talking through your feelings of craving with someone close to you who can understand and support you in your attempts not to use.