

Session 4: Coping with Cravings and Urges

Adapted from: Carroll, K. (1998). *A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach: Treating Cocaine Addiction*. NIDA. Pages 53-54.

Coping With Cravings and Urges

Reminders:

- Urges are common and normal. They are not a sign of failure. Instead, try to learn from them about what your craving triggers are.
- Urges are like ocean waves. They get stronger only to a point, then they start to go away.
- If you don't use, your urges will weaken and eventually go away. Urges only get stronger if you give in to them.
- You can try to avoid urges by avoiding or eliminating the cues that trigger them.
- You can *cope* with urges by -
 - Distracting yourself for a few minutes.
 - Talking about the urge with someone supportive.
 - "Urge surfing" or riding out the urge.
 - Recalling the negative consequences of using.
 - Talking yourself through the urge.

Each day this week, fill out a daily record of craving and what you did to cope with craving.

Example :

Date/Time	Situation, thoughts, and feelings	Intensity of Craving (1-100)	Length of Craving	How I Coped
Friday, 3 pm	Fight with boss, frustrated, angry	75	20 minutes	Called home, talked to Mary
Friday, 7 pm	Watching TV, bored, trouble staying awake	60	25 minutes	Rode it out and went to bed early
Saturday, 9 pm	Wanted to go out and get a drink	80	45 minutes	Played basketball instead

