

MANAGING CRAVING:

TOP TIPS TO MANAGE CRAVINGS:

Strong feelings of cravings will pass with time. They may come and go.

You may have developed some habits you associate with 'treats' or use to reward or comfort yourself.....remind yourself of Pavlov who conditioned his dogs to relate the sound of a bell to the appearance of food (anticipation of reward). What are your 'bells' (triggers) that increase your craving? Try to identify these so you can be more prepared to meet them and manage them helpfully.

What is craving like for you? Cravings or urges are experienced in a variety of ways by different people. For some, the experience is primarily experienced in their bodies – for example: “I just get a feeling in my stomach...I feel empty and want to fill myself up”...or “my heart races” ...or “I start smelling it”. For others, craving is experienced more in their thoughts – for example: “I need it now” ...”I must have it” ...”I’m not going to deny myself”...or “I’m bored” or “I’m drepressed...or frustrated...or angry” or “I will not deny myself...”.

Now try to identify your experience of craving so you can spot when this happens earlier next time and deal with this more helpfully.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How long does craving usually last?
- How do I try to cope with it?
- What can I do differently next time?

Keep a daily diary for a week of your experiences of craving – review what you can learn from this record as to when your sensation of craving is high, medium or low. Consider which cues or triggers are behind the level of intensity.

Then ask yourself:

- What can I do to avoid some of these cues?
- What can I do to manage some of these cues?

The following strategies may be helpful for managing craving:

DISTRACTION – distract yourself away from the thoughts, feelings and cues or triggers.

TALK ABOUT YOUR CRAVING – talk to someone who will listen and understand.

WRITE IT DOWN – write down your thoughts and feelings about the craving.

EXPERIENCE IT ANYWAY – accept the feelings as normal and remind yourself **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ACT ON THEM AND THE FEELINGS WILL PASS.**

REMIND YOUR SELF OF THE NEGATIVES – think about the negative consequences of over-eating.

USE HELPFUL SELF TALK – talk to yourself in a helpful supportive way.

LIST YOUR STRATEGIES TO MANAGE CRAVINGS:

CRAVING TRIGGER OR CUE	STRATEGIES