

TRICK OR TREAT?

If you use a substance or behaviour (for example food items, alcohol, drugs, gambling etc.) as a means to `treat` or reward yourself, or as a comfort, then you may be `tricking` yourself into maintaining your habit!

Do you remember Pavlov and his dogs and how they learnt to associate the sound of a bell (Stimulus or `trigger`) to start anticipating the availability of food by salivating (response)?

The dogs learnt this association over time and it became a habit (stimulus-response).

Think about your own unhelpful habit/s and whether you have developed a similar response to how you sometimes use the habit in relation to certain `triggers`. Remember a `trigger` can be a situation, a person or people, a memory, an image, an emotion or feeling – e.g. anger, depression, boredom, anxiety, frustration etc.

Think about whether your `family` had specific rules about treats when you were a child. What rules do you hold about treats?

Make a list of some of the typical triggers and list the types of things you think you use unhelpfully as `treats` or ways to avoid or manage `difficult` thoughts/feelings/moods.

`TRIGGERS`	What I use to manage or avoid

Now consider what you wanted to gain or avoid from using these types of things in the initial moments:

I wanted to gain or avoid.....

Consider your short term alternatives to using these things that you could use next time these `triggers` appear:

`TRIGGER`	Next time I will.....

How else could you `treat` yourself instead?

Consider what else you could do to reward or treat yourself in your day to day life.

Make a list of these activities or things that you would experience as a `reward`:

MY ALTERNATIVE HEALTHY REWARDS OR `TREATS`