

Coping with Triggers CBT Worksheet

Name:

- Explore how to avoid dangerous triggers for substance use.
- Learn how to cope with some unavoidable triggers.
- Identify your coping strategies with triggers.

1.) Coping with individual triggers

Once you identify your triggers for substance use, the next important step is to know how to cope with these triggers. You may find some triggers relatively easy to cope with, whereas you might need someone's help on some others.

The basic strategies to cope with triggers are as follows:

- Try to avoid and/or eliminate triggers from your life
- If the triggers are unavoidable, find alternative ways to prevent them from acting on your substance use

2.) Finding out feasible coping strategies with triggers

It is particularly important to find ways to cope with triggers that are concrete and feasible. The following principles should be taken into consideration when you try to identify your coping strategies with triggers.

- "Not doing (something)" should not be set as your coping strategy. Alternatives of "not doing (something)" must always accompany. Remember the "dead man's rule" – whatever a dead man can do should not be a coping strategy. For example, if a party on Friday nights is a trigger for you, "not going out for a party on Friday nights" can't be a coping strategy because even a dead man can do that. Instead, you should set the strategy like "going back home by 6:30 pm on Friday nights" or "going out for dinner with my wife on Friday nights."
- Your coping strategies must be realistic and feasible. Don't make them too challenging to continue.
- Trying something new or seeking somebody's help could be considered.

The following table shows an example of the triggers and coping strategies. The levels of difficulties in implementing the coping strategies are represented by numbers from 1 (easy) to 5 (difficult). Please note that this is just an example. Coping strategies and the levels of difficulty are different from person to person.

Triggers for substance use	Coping strategies	Difficulties to Implement 1 (easy) – 5 (difficult)
Drinking out after work	1. Going to a sports club instead of going out for drinking	3
	2. Responding as “drinking alcohol is stopped by the doctor’s order” when a friend asks you out for drinking	2
	3. On paydays when I often drink out, meeting up with my wife near my workplace and going for a dinner	3
Having a sizable amount of cash	1. Always keeping no more than 300 pesos in my wallet	3
	2. Making my wife check the content of my wallet every morning	2
	3. Not having an ATM card with me	1

List some of the strongest triggers for you.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write down your coping strategies and the levels of difficulties to implement for each trigger that you mentioned above. Please take account of the principles that you learned. Remember the “dead man's rule” and avoid writing “not doing something” as a coping strategy.

Triggers for Substance Use	Coping Strategies	Difficulties to Implement 1 (easy) – 5 (difficult)
1.	1. 2. 3.	
2.	1. 2. 3.	
3.	1. 2. 3.	

Share and discuss your answers.

- Always be prepared to use your coping strategies to triggers for substance use.
- Remember the “dead man's rule” – whatever a dead man can do can't be a coping strategy

Source: PATIENT'S WORKBOOK FOR COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY SESSIONS.
 Intensive Treatment and Rehabilitation Program for Residential Treatment and Rehabilitation
 Centers for Drug Dependents (INTREPRET)