



SMART Tool

KEY FACTS ABOUT URGES AND CRAVINGS

Urges and cravings are a normal consequence of changing any behaviour. Any time we give up something that has become a habit, we will experience strong urges and cravings. We each have different experiences of urges. We might experience overwhelming thoughts and feelings of wanting to return to old practices that brought short-term relief.

Urges and cravings are often triggered by situations associated with the behaviour of concern. This is because, over time, we develop associations when we do something at the same time or in the same situation. For example, if we always have a coffee when we wake up, it's likely that we will experience urges or cravings for coffee if we don't have it at that time.

Urges and cravings are like stray cats. The more we feed them, the more they will keep coming back. If we stop feeding them, eventually they will go away.

Urges and cravings are time limited. Even though we sometimes think they last forever, they can generally pass over time, sometimes in just seconds or minutes.

Even though they may feel unbearable, urges and cravings can be tolerated. There is nothing life-threatening about an urge or craving. Rather than struggling and trying to suppress an urge or craving, accepting and allowing them to be there without struggling with them can help them pass more quickly.