

HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)

Often, cravings hit when we are experiencing one of the above physical experiences or emotions. If you start to have intense craving ask yourself if you need to eat, rest, exercise or talk to someone. Often this can be enough to work your way through the craving to the other side. In the early days, sweet foods and drinks can help, as the body craves the sugar it once got through alcohol. Have a few sweeties handy!

SOBER (Stop, Observe, Breathe, Examine, Reset)

Cravings will pass but it is useful to have strategies that help. Using mindfulness techniques can help support you to stay in the present moment and to let the cravings pass. Using the above as a way of checking in with yourself, stopping and listening to what is going on for you, remembering to breathe and to ask yourself 'what am I feeling right now?' Sitting with this and then choosing to reset yourself in your efforts to stay sober. This can successfully combat those feelings of autopilot, that often happen before drinking/using. Please also see links for mindful breathing exercises.

Play the tape forward

Playing the tape forward is fast forwarding past the initial relief and reward you feel from drinking/using and working that through to the consequences. The consequences: what will happen if you drink or use, are usually the main reasons why you have chosen to change your behaviours. These often include health reasons, difficulties with friends and family or work, and quality of life. Playing the tape forward can be an effective way of supporting your choice to stay sober.

Euphoric recall

Euphoric recall is a term that means recognising you are only remembering the good bits about drinking or using, which often haven't been fully present in life for a long time. This can also be described as having 'rose tinted glasses' about your drinking/using. If you are struggling with cravings – ask yourself, am I only thinking about/remember and expecting the good things that used to happen what I drank/used? Is this likely to happen now or is it more likely that I will be disappointed and regret this decision?