

CLIENT HANDOUT 4.6

Exercise on Identifying Triggers
Individual and Group Session 2

Part of this program involves completing readings and homework exercises prior to your sessions. These are intended to help you

- Prepare for your sessions
- Take an active role in changing your behavior
- Evaluate your progress

In the first exercise you weighed the costs and benefits of changing. Now we want to help you identify what is triggering or associated with the behavior you want to change.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN COMPLETING THIS EXERCISE

Because the behavior you want to change has come to play a major or large role in your life, you may need to make some lifestyle changes. Take a look at the following areas in your life:

- **Availability:** If the things that prompt your behavior are readily available, you may want to change your environment.
- **Activities:** If you spend a lot of time engaging in the behavior, you may need to find other ways to spend your time.
- **Relationships with peers:** In some cases, a change in social relationships may be necessary to change behaviors. If you decide that associating with certain people is too risky, then you might decide that a change in your circle of friends is necessary.

The following questions and general categories of triggers are intended to help you complete this exercise.

Questions:

- Where and when does your behavior occur?
- What other people are present on these occasions and how do they affect your behavior?
- What do you accomplish by engaging in the behavior? That is, what purpose does it serve for you?

General Categories of Triggers:

- **Emotional State** (e.g., angry, depressed, happy, sad)
- **Physical State** (e.g., relaxed, tense, tired, aroused)
- **Presence of Others** (e.g., when the behavior occurs are certain people present?)
- **Availability**
- **Physical Setting** (e.g., work, party, ex-spouse's house)
- **Social Pressure** (e.g., are you forced or coerced into doing things you don't want to?)
- **Activities** (e.g., work, working at home, playing sports, watching TV, playing cards)
- **Thoughts** (e.g., remember times you engaged in the behavior)

You are now ready to complete this exercise!

(cont.)

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EXERCISE

Describe **two general types of situations** that have triggered the behavior you want to change.

One thing that can help you to identify triggers and consequences related to changing is to think about real experiences you have had.

TRIGGER SITUATION 1

Briefly describe **ONE** of your **high-risk trigger situations**.



Describe the types of **CONSEQUENCES** usually associated with this situation. Consider both **NEGATIVE** and **POSITIVE** consequences, and whether they occur right away or are delayed.



(cont.)

TRIGGER SITUATION 2



Briefly describe **ONE** of your **high-risk trigger situations**.

Describe the types of **CONSEQUENCES** usually associated with this situation. Consider both **NEGATIVE** and **POSITIVE** consequences, and whether they occur right away or are delayed.


