

TRIGGERS

Triggers are people, objects, feelings, and times that cause cravings. For example, if every Friday night you cash a paycheck, go out with friends, and use drugs, the triggers would be the following:

- ➡ Friday night
- ➡ After work
- ➡ Money
- ➡ Friends who use
- ➡ The bar or club



Your addicted brain associates the triggers with drug and alcohol use. As a result of constant triggering and using, **one trigger** can cause you to move toward drug or alcohol use.

The trigger ➡ thought ➡ craving ➡ use cycle feels overwhelming.

An important part of treatment involves stopping the craving process. The first and easiest way to do that is this:

1. **IDENTIFY TRIGGERS**
2. **PREVENT EXPOSURE TO TRIGGERS WHENEVER POSSIBLE** (for example, do not handle large amounts of cash).
3. **DEAL WITH TRIGGERS IN A DIFFERENT WAY** (for example, schedule exercise and an outside meeting for Friday nights).

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Remember, triggers will affect your brain and cause cravings even though you have decided to stop using drugs and alcohol. Your intentions to stop must therefore translate into behavior changes, which steer you clear of possible triggers.

1. What are some of the strongest triggers for you?

2. What particular triggers might be a problem in the near future?
