

TOOL: TRIGGER RESPONSE PLANNING

Objective: To narrow down your most dangerous triggers and pre-plan a response.

Trigger Response Planning Tips: Consider the following when creating your trigger response plans:

Mental Preparation: Mentally prepare yourself for encountering the trigger. Visualization techniques, where you imagine yourself successfully handling the situation, can be particularly effective.

Immediate Coping Mechanisms: Know your go-to coping mechanisms and engage them at the first sign of the trigger.

Have a Support Plan: Include whom to contact if you feel overwhelmed. It could be a friend, family member, therapist, or support group member.

Exit Strategy: Always have an exit strategy for high-risk situations. Know in advance how you can leave a situation if it becomes too challenging.

Practice Assertiveness: Be prepared to assert your needs and boundaries. This might involve declining invitations, asking people not to consume substances around you, or leaving a situation if necessary.

Flexible and Adaptable Approach: Be ready to adapt your plan as needed. If a particular strategy isn't working, be open to trying something different.

Reflect and Refine Post-Encounter: After encountering and responding to a trigger, reflect on what happened. What aspects of your plan worked well? What could be improved? Refine your plan based on these insights.

WHY PRE-PLANNING TRIGGER RESPONSE IS SO IMPORTANT

Enhances Preparedness: Pre-planning equips you with a clear set of actions to take when faced with a trigger. This preparedness can significantly reduce feelings of being overwhelmed or caught off-guard.

Reduces Relapse Risk: Having a strategy in place makes you less likely to act impulsively in response to a trigger. This can significantly diminish the risk of relapse.

Builds Confidence and Control: Knowing you have a plan to manage triggers effectively can boost your confidence and sense of control over your recovery journey. It reinforces the belief that you can navigate through challenging situations.

Facilitates Quick and Effective Decision-Making: Thinking clearly and making rational decisions can be challenging when encountering a trigger. A pre-planned response provides a ready-made decision path, reducing the mental load during high-stress moments.

TOOL: TRIGGER RESPONSE PLANNING (CONTINUED-1)

Encourages Proactivity Instead of Reactivity: Pre-planning promotes a proactive approach to your recovery, where you actively manage your environment and responses rather than merely reacting to situations as they arise.

Supports Continuous Learning and Adaptation: Planning and revising your responses to triggers is a learning experience that can lead to deeper insights about your triggers and how you handle them. This continuous learning is a cornerstone of effective long-term recovery.

Write down each trigger rated five or above. For each of these, write down a response plan or strategy to deal with it.

Example

Trigger	Risk Rating: 9
<p><i>ATTENDING A SOCIAL EVENT WHERE ALCOHOL IS SERVED.</i></p>	
<p>Pre-planned Response</p> <p><i>BEFORE ATTENDING AN EVENT, I WILL REAFFIRM MY COMMITMENT TO RECOVERY. I HAVE COME A LONG WAY. MY LIFE IN RECOVERY IS MUCH BETTER THAN WHEN I WAS DRINKING, AND I DON'T WANT TO JEOPARDIZE MY SOBRIETY.</i></p> <p><i>I WILL LET MY SUPPORT SYSTEM KNOW THAT I MAY NEED SOME HELP DURING THE EVENT AND INSURE THAT I HAVE SOMEONE TO CALL IN CASE OF TROUBLE.</i></p> <p><i>I WILL KNOW WHAT TIME I WILL LEAVE THE EVENT IN ADVANCE. IF THE EVENT BECOMES OVERWHELMING, I WILL LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.</i></p> <p><i>I WILL PRACTICE DECLINING ALCOHOL. IF OFFERED A DRINK, I WILL SAY, "NO THANKS, I'M NOT DRINKING TONIGHT."</i></p> <p><i>AFTER THE EVENT, I'LL REFLECT ON IT AND LEARN WHAT I COULD DO BETTER TO HANDLE SOCIAL EVENTS IN MY RECOVERY.</i></p>	

TOOL: TRIGGER RESPONSE PLANNING (CONTINUED-2)

Trigger	Risk Rating:
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Pre-planned Response	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; height: 250px;"></div>	

Trigger	Risk Rating:
<div style="border: 1px solid blue; height: 50px;"></div>	
Pre-planned Response	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; height: 250px;"></div>	

TOOL: TRIGGER RESPONSE PLANNING (CONTINUED-3)

Trigger	Risk Rating:
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Pre-planned Response	
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Trigger	Risk Rating:
<div style="border: 1px solid blue; height: 50px;"></div>	
Pre-planned Response	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; height: 250px;"></div>	

TOOL: TRIGGER RESPONSE PLANNING (CONTINUED-4)

Trigger	Risk Rating:
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Pre-planned Response	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; height: 250px;"></div>	

Trigger	Risk Rating:
<div style="border: 1px solid blue; height: 50px;"></div>	
Pre-planned Response	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; height: 250px;"></div>	