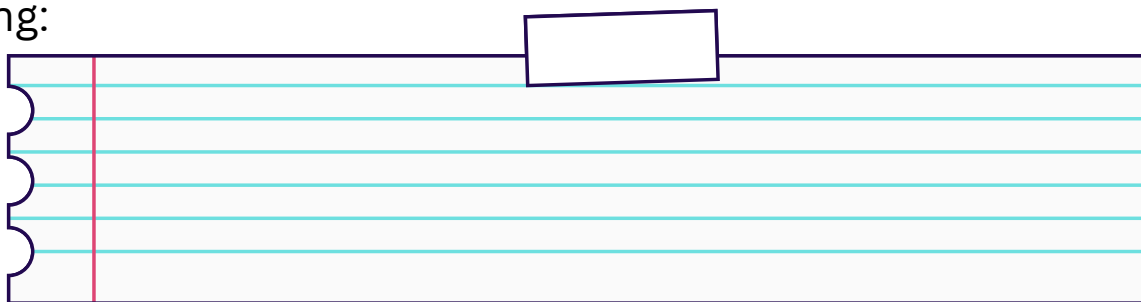


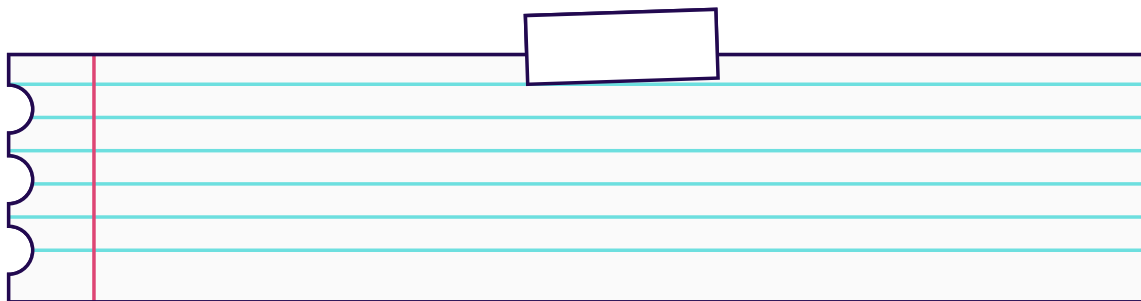
COPING WITH Cravings

The following coping strategies can be used to help you manage cravings. They are also effective in dealing with other urges, such as the urge to self-harm. The goal is not necessarily to make you feel better, but to get you through the craving.

Activities: Do something active (physical movement). You can do something productive (such as painting a room in the house, organizing a closet, fixing a car) or nonproductive (i.e., moving furniture, walking around the yard, running up steps). The main goal is involvement. List a few activities you can see yourself doing:



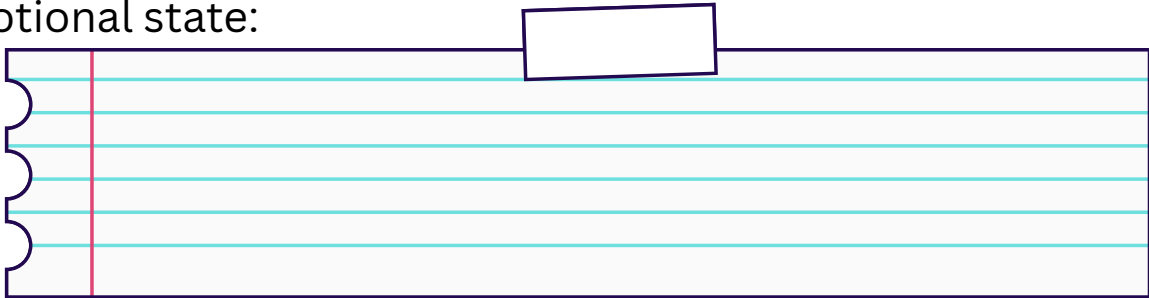
Contributing: Do something (big or small) to contribute to the world (i.e., volunteer, write a letter to a friend, give bottles of water to the homeless, etc.) List a few ways you can contribute:



Comparisons: Use this technique to gain perspective. Compare yourself to someone in a worse situation. For example, think about a person in a developing country who doesn't have enough to eat or someone who lost their home in a tornado. You can also think about a time you were worse off.

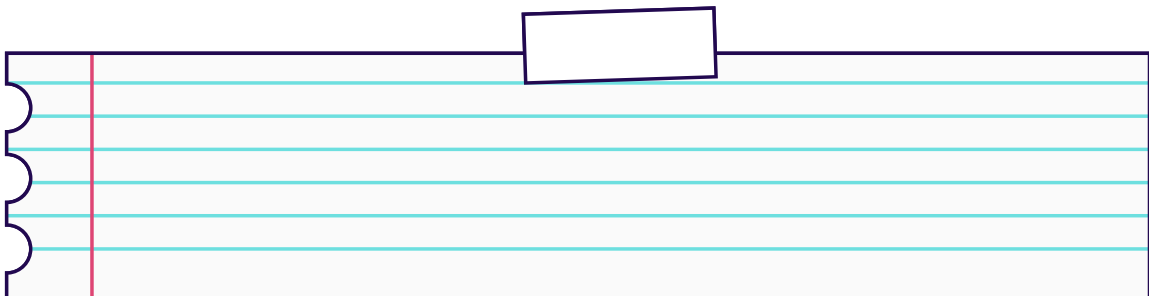
COPING WITH CRAVINGS (CONT.)

Emotions: Change your emotional state. This does not necessarily mean a switch from a negative emotion to a positive one. (For example, you can change sadness to anger.) Try listening to music, watching a comedy, or reading a sad story. List some techniques you can use to change your emotional state:



Thoughts: Fill your mind with thoughts. For example, think about a loved one or a happy memory. Imagine a peaceful place, such as a forest, and fill your mind with vivid details (the way the breeze feels on your skin, the sound of the leaves rustling, the light filtering through the treetops, the birds chirping, etc.) You can also count ceiling tiles, read a magazine, recite poetry, sing a song, or do a crossword puzzle.

Additionally, consider reflecting on the negative consequences of using or think about the benefits of not using. List some thoughts that will distract you from the urge to use:



COPING WITH CRAVINGS (CONT.)

Push Away: Visualize yourself putting your craving in a box and pushing it out of sight. Write your craving down on a piece of paper and throw it away or burn it. You can even imagine your craving right in front of you; reach out and physically shove it. Talk to your craving and label it. Say that it's your disease talking and that you're not going to give in.

Sensations: Expose yourself to intense physical sensations.

Sight: bright light, something colorful

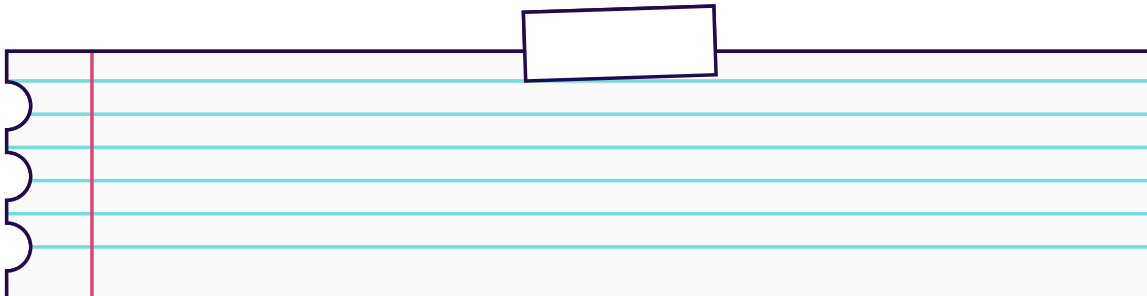
Sound: loud music

Smell: strong perfume

Taste: sour candy, spicy cinnamon gum

Touch: cold ice cube, snap to the wrist with a rubber band

List some other intense physical sensations:



In addition to the above techniques, attend 12-meetings, talk to your sponsor (or supportive friends in recovery), see a counselor/therapist, meditate, practice breathing exercises, and read recovery literature. Keep in mind that you will be better prepared to handle a craving if you are taking care of your physical, spiritual, and emotional health on a regular basis.