

SESSION 11: Coping With Triggers



Welcome and Review (10 minutes)

SAY: Welcome back, everyone!

Today, we are going to talk about coping with triggers.

Before we start, let's spend a few minutes going over what we discussed last time. I will try to answer any questions you may have.

DO: Briefly summarize previous session.

DISCUSS: What questions do you have about our last session?

SAY: Let's talk about how things went with the action plan you made last time.

DISCUSS: What went well? What didn't go so well?

SAY: Now let's talk about how things went with the other things you tried at home.

DISCUSS: What went well? What didn't go so well?

Objectives (2 minutes)

SAY: Coping with triggers can help you change your health habits and stick to those change. Triggers are things in your life that you react to in a certain way—without even thinking about it. Today, we will talk about:

- Some unhealthy food shopping triggers and ways to cope with them
- Some unhealthy eating triggers and ways to cope with them
- Some triggers of sitting still and ways to cope with them

Finally, you will make a new action plan.

What is a Trigger?

SAY: Let's start by talking about what a trigger is.

- Triggers can be sights, smells, sounds, or feelings that you react to in a certain way, without even thinking about it. They can also be people, places, activities, or situations.
- Some triggers are helpful. For instance, when you touch something very hot, you let go.
- But other triggers are harmful. These include triggers that keep you from reaching your eating and fitness goals.

Let's look at an example. Please turn to "Marta's Story" in this module's handouts.

DO: Read (or ask a volunteer to read) the first four paragraphs of the story.

SAY: Again, this is what Marta does almost every workday.

ASK: What are some of the things in Marta's life that trigger her to act in unhealthy ways?

ANSWER:

- Being sleepy triggers Marta to have coffee. This in turn triggers her to eat something unhealthy (pastry).
- Feeling stressed triggers Marta to eat and drink something unhealthy (chips and beer). It also triggers her to lie on the couch instead of being active.
- Seeing a vending machine triggers Marta to want to eat a snack, even if she might not be very hungry.

How to Cope with Unhealthy Shopping Triggers (12 Minutes)

SAY: Let's start by talking about how to cope with unhealthy shopping triggers.

DISCUSS: What triggers you to buy unhealthy food items?

DO: Write the triggers on a flip chart or white board, if you are using one.

DISCUSS: What are some ways to cope with these triggers?

UNHEALTHY SHOPPING TRIGGER	WAYS TO COPE
Being hungry	<input type="checkbox"/> Have a snack before shopping <input type="checkbox"/> Shop after a meal
I feel sad/anxious/stressed/mad	<input type="checkbox"/> Put off the shopping trip until you feel better <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a short walk first
It's on sale or I have a coupon for it	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't get fooled by sales! <input type="checkbox"/> Don't clip coupons for unhealthy items
It looks tempting	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay away from tempting parts of the store (chips, candy, sweets)
Impulse buys	<input type="checkbox"/> Shop with a list and stick to it
It's for my spouse, kids or grandkids	<input type="checkbox"/> Show your love in a healthy way

SAY: We've talked about how to cope with unhealthy shopping triggers. Now let's talk about eating triggers.

DISCUSS: What triggers you to make unhealthy choices about eating?

DO: Write the triggers on a flip chart or white board, if you are using one.

DISCUSS: What are some ways to cope with these triggers?

UNHEALTHY EATING TRIGGER	WAYS TO COPE
Being hungry	<input type="checkbox"/> Eat something healthy, like an apple
I feel sad/anxious/stressed/mad	<input type="checkbox"/> Ease your feelings in healthy ways like taking a walk or talking with a friend or family member
I like to nibble on this while I watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/> Just take a small amount, don't eat out of the container/bag
I feel bored	<input type="checkbox"/> Try a new activity, work a puzzle, call a friend to do something
I feel lonely	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact your friends or family
Unhealthy foods are easy to get or make	<input type="checkbox"/> Stock up on healthy items that are easy to get or make, like baby carrots.
I don't want to waste food	<input type="checkbox"/> Freeze the leftovers

How to Cope with Triggers for Sitting Still

SAY: We've talked about how to cope with unhealthy shopping and eating triggers. Now let's talk about some triggers of sitting still.

DISCUSS: What triggers you to sit still, instead of being active?

DO: Write the triggers on a flip chart or white board, if you are using one.

DISCUSS: What are some ways to cope with these triggers?

UNHEALTHY SITTING TRIGGER	WAYS TO COPE
I'm tired	<input type="checkbox"/> Get more sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Take a short nap
I feel sad/anxious/stressed/mad	<input type="checkbox"/> Ease your feelings in healthy ways like taking a walk or talking with a friend or family member
My joints/feet hurt	<input type="checkbox"/> Find ways to be active that are easy on your body
I always lie on the couch and watch TV after dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride a stationary bike while you watch TV <input type="checkbox"/> Be active during ads

Setting goals: Plan for Success (10 minutes)

SAY: Please turn to your Action Plan Journal.

Review the concept of SMART goals (only if needed).

SMART goals are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

Decide:

Specific: What will you do and where will you do it

Measurable: How will you know that you met your goal

Achievable: Is this something you can do between now and the next session

Relevant: Does this relate to your overall goals

Time-bound: When, how long and how often will you do it

Give people about 5 minutes to think about and write down SMART goals for diet, physical activity, and stress management/self-care.

ASK: Does anyone feel comfortable sharing one of their SMART goals? Then identify each component of SMART or encourage additional editing if components are missing (i.e. if the person says "I will walk three times this week" encourage them to add the where and how long to this to make it more specific and time-bound.

Summary and Closing:

SAY: Between now and the next session, please complete "How to Cope with Triggers". Write your own ideas in the column that says "Other Ways to Cope." Check off each idea you try.

I'd also like you to complete "My Triggers". What triggers you to shop and eat in unhealthy ways? What triggers you to sit still, instead of being active? And how will you cope with these triggers? You can use "Common Triggers" for ideas.

DO: Answer questions as needed.

SAY: We have come to the end of our meeting. Today, we discussed coping with triggers. We talked about:

- Some unhealthy shopping triggers and ways to cope with them
- Some unhealthy eating triggers and ways to cope with them
- Some triggers of sitting still and ways to cope with them

DISCUSS: Do you have questions about anything we talked about today?

SAY: Next time, we'll talk about the things you tried at home, including your action plan. We'll also talk about _____.

Thank you for coming to this session. Remember to bring your Participant Notebook to the next session.