

Internal Triggers

“Trigger”- Understood as “a stimulus that elicits a reaction” (APA dictionary, [2019](#))

Listed below are examples of thoughts, behaviors and feelings that can lead us to breaking our abstinence if we do not have a plan to manage them

IRRATIONALTHOUGHTS:

- ❖ I am not a compulsive overeater
- ❖ I got this: Over confident in my recovery
- ❖ A little bit won't hurt
- ❖ I can skip a meal or eat off schedule without any adverse effects
- ❖ If no one sees it, it doesn't count
- ❖ I'll start tomorrow
- ❖ I deserve it
- ❖ I don't feel well so I can eat whatever is “appealing” until I feel better
- ❖ Someone made this dish especially for me. I can't say “no.” I don't want to hurt their feelings
- ❖ My food plan “is not working” therefore I can rewrite it
- ❖ If I lose weight I will be happy
- ❖ I can depend on others for my happiness and security
- ❖ I should be getting what I want in a relationship
- ❖ I can get people to change if I just work at it
- ❖ I am not good enough, it won't work, I don't deserve to get better
- ❖ OA can't help me. I'll never get better

QUESTION: What have I learned from steps 1 and 2? What do you think higher power's will is for me regarding these irrational thoughts?

FEELINGS

- ❖ Angry
- ❖ Defiant
- ❖ Frustrated
- ❖ Afraid
- ❖ Lonely
- ❖ Grief
- ❖ Sad
- ❖ Depressed
- ❖ Despair
- ❖ Guilt
- ❖ Disappointed
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Shame

QUESTION: What action(s) can I take to change this feeling?

LIFE EVENTS

- ❖ Death of a loved one
- ❖ Loss of home (fire, flooding, foreclosure etc.)
- ❖ Moving
- ❖ Job interview
- ❖ Job loss
- ❖ Job hunting
- ❖ Demotion
- ❖ Divorce
- ❖ Marriage
- ❖ Having a child
- ❖ Parenting issues
- ❖ Pandemic
- ❖ Chronic pain from an illness/injury

QUESTION: What actions can you take to navigate this type of life event without overeating?

BEHAVIORS

- ❖ Lying
- ❖ People pleasing
- ❖ Perfectionism
- ❖ Worrying
- ❖ Infidelity
- ❖ Breaking the law (or getting caught)
- ❖ Stealing
- ❖ Gossiping
- ❖ Over doing, over working, overcompensating
- ❖ Poor at self –care or helping others at the expense of ourselves
- ❖ Trying to control or change people without success
- ❖ Depending on people for my emotional security and happiness
- ❖ Poor time management:running late,falling behind
- ❖ Procrastinating
- ❖ Skipping a meal, missing a meal, going outside the food plan
- ❖ Overspending

QUESTION: How does this behavior make me feel and what would my higher power have me do instead?

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN TO MANAGE INTERNAL TRIGGERS

Instructions

1. Go through the list of internal triggers and check any triggers that affect you and add any that are not on the list.
2. Describe what happened and your reaction to those triggers.
3. Write out how you would manage one or two of your triggers from each section and what coping strategies you would use.
4. **Example of actions you can take to work with triggers**
 - ❖ Be sure to eat at your regularly scheduled times;
 - ❖ Talk to recovered OA folks about your thoughts/feelings and get feedback on how to deal with them
 - ❖ Seek outside help to better manage your finances or do a spending plan, consult a debt consolidator, get a different job
 - ❖ Manage your time by planning better. Take a class on time management
 - ❖ Seek conscious contact with your higher power throughout the day asking for God's will for you and the power to carry that out without picking up
 - ❖ Say prayers each day asking God to remove dishonesty, destructive or irrational thinking and do what HP would have you do instead
 - ❖ Meditate
 - ❖ Attend meetings on emotional sobriety and how to get free of dishonest and co- dependent behaviors in relationships, attend al anon
 - ❖ If you do not have a sponsor, get one
 - ❖ Get outside help