

Facilitator Guide: Log Your Urges

Introduction: Why Tracking Urges Can Help

You Say:

"Urges are a normal part of recovery. They come and go—and they don't last forever. By tracking urges, you can learn a lot about your patterns, triggers, and what strategies work for you.

Today we'll introduce the **Urge Log** tool. It's something you can use to better understand your urges and gain more control over how you respond to them."

Key points to highlight:

- Urges are **temporary**, often lasting only **10–20 minutes**.
- Recording them can reveal **patterns**—what triggered them, how long they lasted, and what helped.
- It helps participants become **more intentional and less reactive**.

Step 1: Introducing the Urge Log Tool

You Say: "The Urge Log is a simple chart where you record information about an urge:

- What triggered it?
- How strong was it?
- How long did it last?
- What did you do in response?
- What helped you coped—or what might help next time?

It's not about judging yourself, it's about noticing what's happening so you can respond more skillfully."

Facilitator's Role:

- Describe the tool using examples from the SMART Handbook or screen-share the form.
- Emphasize that urges are **not failures**—they're opportunities to practice.
- Note that even recording an urge **after giving in** can provide helpful insight.

Step 2: Brainstorming Together

You Say: "Let's think together: What kinds of situations tend to lead to urges? What has helped you manage them before—or what might help next time?"

Prompt examples:

- Triggers: boredom, conflict, certain places or times
- Strategies: talking to a friend, going for a walk, breathing exercises, distraction techniques

You can write responses on a whiteboard, flip chart, or shared screen.

Step 3: Encouraging Personal Use During the Week

You Say: "If this tool resonates with you, try using it throughout the week. You don't have to fill it out perfectly. Even one or two entries can help you notice patterns and gain more insight."

Optional Reflection Questions:

- What might you learn from tracking your urges?
- How can this tool help reduce the power urges have over you?
- When might be a good time to try using it?

Facilitator Quick Tips:

- Reassure participants that urges are expected and manageable.
- Encourage realistic use—consistency is more helpful than perfection.
- Log the urges that resulted in a return to the behavior you're trying to change. Lapses happen- understanding them might help reduce them.

Summary

The **Urge Log** is a practical tool that helps participants build awareness, recognize patterns, and practice managing urges in real time. Using it even a few times can lead to meaningful insights and greater confidence in recovery.

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