Handout: Coping with Withdrawal

The formal practice of mindfulness can help us develop a greater sense of non-reactivity so that thoughts and feelings become more manageable. This way, we are better able to handle life's challenges, including withdrawal and cravings.

CRAVINGS/URGES

Cravings and urges may take a little longer to go away than other withdrawal symptoms, but the longer you are abstinent, the less frequent and less intense they become. Try these tips to manage your urges and cravings:

- SOBER
- Take a few short, deep breaths
- Remember that the urge will pass
- Leave the situation
- Call a supportive friend or family member

IRRITABILITY

- Take a few slow, deep breaths and reconnect with the breath
- Engage in a pleasurable activity
- Soak in a hot bath

HUNGER

- Make a personal survival kit that includes straws, cinnamon sticks, coffee stirrers, toothpicks, sugarless gum, sugarless candy, or fresh vegetables
- Drink water and low-calorie drinks

DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING

- Allow time to prepare for a task and work up to it
- Take a brisk walk
- Simplify your schedule for a few days
- Take frequent breaks

SADNESS OR FEELING DOWN

- Schedule pleasurable events such as going to a movie, shopping, or visiting a friend
- Talk to a supportive friend or family member
- Be kind to yourself
- Tell yourself that you will get through this
- Reward yourself for working hard at quitting
- Get plenty of rest
- Accept the feeling; don't dwell on it

FATIGUE

- Get an adequate amount of sleep each night
- Pace yourself
- Try not to push yourself; ask for help