**Mindful Craving Check-In**

When recovering from addiction, we need to frequently HALT and check in with ourselves to detect early signs of triggers that create cravings. HALT stands for four common relapse triggers:

* H = Hunger
* A = Anger
* L = Loneliness
* T = Tiredness

The point of the mindful craving check-in is to increase self-awareness by stopping to “check in” with ourselves with regard to hunger, anger, loneliness, and tiredness. We check in with ourselves to become aware of how we are feeling emotionally, mentally, and physically, so that cravings do not sneak up and overwhelm us.

**To practice the mindful craving check-in, follow these steps:**

1. To begin, close your eyes, or find a spot on the floor to stare at.
2. Begin by attending to your breath. Notice its qualities, what it feels like. Breathe in, and breathe out, noticing how your abdomen rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale.
3. Body Awareness: Now extend this awareness of the breath to your entire body, being present with your whole body and noticing any sensations. Do not judge these sensations, just notice anything happening in your body. Maybe you feel some relaxation in some area, or some tension. Maybe there is some discomfort, or another particular sensation. Just be with these experiences. Now, maintaining open awareness, begin to notice any indications of fatigue or tiredness that might be present in your body. Without judgment, just notice these sensations. … Next, bring your attention to your abdomen, noticing any hunger sensations that might be present. One again, without judgment, just observe what is going on in this area of your body.
4. Emotional Awareness: Now shift your attention to your emotions, and any feelings you may be having, no matter how subtle or strong. Do not judge these emotions, simply notice and accept their presence. Check in with yourself regarding any anger or loneliness that might be present, and stay with your emotions for a moment. You may notice the experience of multiple emotions at once, or no emotions at all, or even numbing. This is okay, we are just taking an inventory of what is there.
5. Thought Awareness: Finally, shift you awareness to your thoughts. Without becoming attached to any of your thoughts, or getting wrapped up in them, simply notice them. Notice them as they arrive, observe them as they play out, and allow them to leave without trying to push them away or cling to them. Stay with your thoughts for a moment, becoming fully aware of any thoughts related to cravings, anger, or other negative emotions.
6. When you are ready, slowly and gently open your eyes and re-enter the room.

**A few mindful check-in tips:**

* The entire exercise should only take a few minutes, as it is meant to be a short formal practice.
* If you feel comfortable with closing your eyes during this practice, this is recommended. If not, find a place on the floor to gently focus your eyes on.
* It is recommended this technique be practiced daily, especially during recovery.

(Adapted from Stahl, B. & Goldstein, E. (2010). A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook. New Harbinger Publications, Inc.: Oakland, CA.)