

HANDOUT HEALTHY DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

Healthy distraction means choosing to focus your mind on something positive until the painful feelings and/or cravings are less intense. Then, you can explore the feelings when you feel safer and more grounded. This may be when you are with a supportive friend, family member or therapist. The following are healthy types of distractions that can be used as an alternative to unhealthy distraction, such as using drugs or alcohol.

- Exercise
- Do a craft or hobby
- Clean your house or apartment
- Call or visit a friend
- Paint a picture
- Cross-stitch or needlepoint
- Create a newspaper collage
- Take a walk
- Play computer or video games
- Do gardening
- Write a letter
- Make index cards with inspirational quotes
- Read through inspirational index cards
- Make a list of things to do to cope with feelings
- Make a list of things to do instead of use drugs and alcohol
- Watch a funny movie
- Read a book
- Journal
- Listen to inspirational music
- Imaging what your life could be like in 5 or 10 years
- Go to the store and read funny greeting cards
- Tell yourself it's okay to put problems aside temporarily
- Put your worries and problems in an imaginary box for now
- Count to 100
- Do crossword puzzles
- Go to a bookstore
- Take a hot bath or shower
- Gently snap a rubber band on your wrist
- Throw ice cubes into a tub or sink
- Pray or meditate
- Go to a 12-step meeting
- Look at store windows
- Go to a religious service
- Do a relaxation or imagery exercise
- Focus your entire attention on doing something simple like washing your hands, folding paper, etc. Be aware of every single step and/or movement you make.