

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New Counselor
- Treatment Plan Reviews
- Dealing with Triggers & cravings
- Trigger-Thought-Craving-Use
- Thought Stopping Techniques

Phone Numbers (515)

Donna 280-4902

Nicole 280-4903

Suzette 280-4906

HOURS:

Methadone Dosing Hours:

Monday-Friday 6:30-8:15

Saturday 7:00-8:15

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:15-3:30

Friday 8:15-10:30

Methadone Monthly

7TH EDITION

SEPTEMBER 2006

New Counselor

Welcome Nicole Cunningham to United Community Services Inc. as a methadone counselor. Nicole is a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor and holds a bachelors degree in psychology and human services. Nicole began her work with United Community Services in July 2006.

If you come in for take homes on Monday, Wednesday, or Saturday it is likely that Nicole is your counselor.

If you come in on Tuesday or Thursday it is likely Suzette is your counselor.

If you have any questions on who your counselor is please contact either Nicole at 515-280-4903 or Suzette at 515-280-4906.



Never Forgotten

REMINDERS:

Treatment Plan Reviews need to be done on a regular basis. Your counselor will inform you when your review is due; however, it is your responsibility to schedule an appointment with your counselor to do the review.

DO YOU HAVE ANY THING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE PUBLISHED IN METHADONE MONTHLY?? POEMS, STORIES, ART WORK, TOPICS . . .

Contact Nicole at 515-280-4903 or put a suggestion in the suggestion box.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO COUNT YOUR DOSES BEFORE LEAVING THE CLINIC!



Dealing with Triggers and Cravings

Relapse is a process that begins with a trigger. Dealing with triggers and cravings is an important part of recovery. While methadone will assist you with reducing your cravings for opiates, methadone does not assist with other substances of use. Learning how to deal with all of your triggers and cravings is important for your recovery.

What is a trigger? Almost anything can be a trigger. A person, place, thing., emotional state, or time of day could all be a trigger for you. Some triggers may seem obvious while others are more subtle. The definition is: A stimulus which has been repeatedly associated with the preparation for, anticipation of, or use of drugs and/or alcohol. Triggers vary between each person.

What are some of your triggers?

What particular triggers may pose a risk in the near future?

Trigger-Thought-Craving-Use

The Losing Argument

If you decide to stop drinking or using but at some point end up moving toward using substances, your brain has given you permission by using a process called relapse justification. Thoughts about using start an argument inside your head—your rational self versus your substance-dependent self. You feel as though you are in a fight, and you must come up with many reasons to stay abstinent. Your mind is looking for an excuse to **use** again. You are looking for a relapse justification. The argument inside you is part of a series of events leading to substance **use**. How often in the past has your substance dependence lost this argument?

Thoughts Become Cravings

Craving does not always occur in a straightforward, easily recognized form. Often the **thought** of using passes through your head with little or no effect. But it's important to identify these thoughts and try to eliminate them. It takes effort to identify and stop a **thought**. However, allowing yourself to continue thinking about substance **use** is choosing to relapse. The further the thoughts are allowed to go, the more likely you are to relapse.

The “Automatic” Process

During addiction, triggers, thoughts, cravings, and **use** seem to run together. However, the usual sequence goes like this:

TRIGGER → THOUGHT → CRAVING → USE

Thought Stopping

The only way to ensure that a **thought** won't lead to a relapse is to stop the **thought** before it leads to **craving**. Stopping the **thought** when it first begins prevents it from building into an overpowering **craving**. It is important to do it as soon as you realize you are thinking about using.

Thought Stopping Techniques

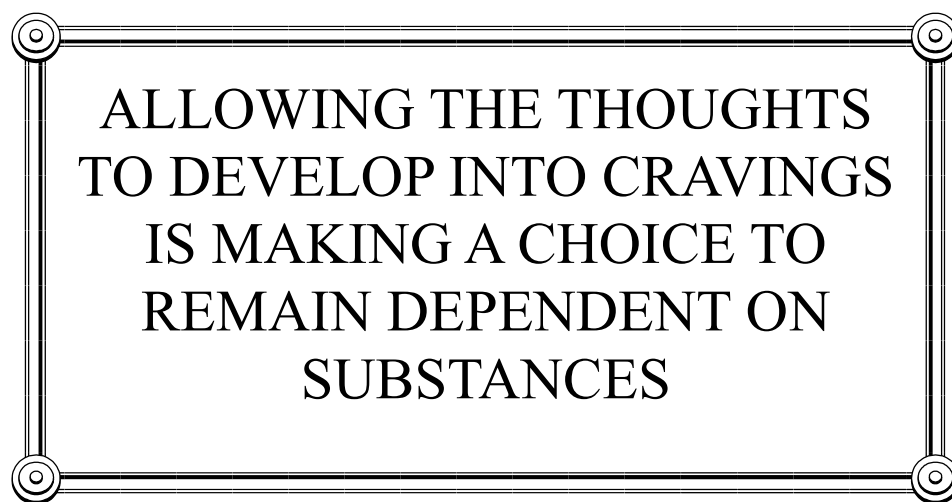
A New Sequence

This process is not automatic. You make a choice either to continue thinking about using (and start on the path toward relapse) or to stop those thoughts.

Thought-Stopping Techniques

Try the techniques described below, and **use** those that work best for you:

- **Visualization.** Imagine a scene in which you deny the power of thoughts of **use**. For example, **picture** a switch or a lever in your mind. Imagine yourself actually moving it from ON to OFF to stop the using thoughts. Have another **picture** ready to think about in place of those thoughts.
- **Snapping.** Wear a rubberband loosely on your wrist. Each time you become aware of thoughts of using, snap the rubberband and say, “No!” to the thoughts as you make yourself think about another subject. Have a subject ready that is meaningful and interesting to you.
- **Relaxation.** Feelings of hollowness, heaviness, and cramping in the stomach are cravings. These often can be relieved by breathing in deeply (filling lungs with air) and breathing out slowly. Do this three times. You should be able to feel the tightness leaving your body. Repeat this whenever the feeling returns.
- **Call someone.** Talking to another person provides an outlet for your feelings and allows you to hear your thinking process. Have phone numbers of supportive, available people with you always, so you can **use** them when you need them.



This information was taken from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Treatment Matrix Model of Treatment.