

# **Jammed Triggers: Changing the Trajectory**

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## Triggers

### **Dr. Chad Coren:**

Any high-risk situation that sparks off a thought, feeling or action to use \_\_\_\_\_  
(one's drug or behavior of choice).

### **Summit Behavioral Health:**

A trigger is any form of stimuli that initiates the desire to engage in addictive behavior.

## Triggers II

### 12-Step programs



People



Places



Things

## Triggers III

- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Social environment
- ▶ Emotional Factors
  - ▶ Stress
  - ▶ Fear
  - ▶ Frustration
  - ▶ Depression
  - ▶ Anxiety
  - ▶ Anger

## Triggers IV

- ▶ **Hungry**
- ▶ **Angry**
- ▶ **Lonely**
- ▶ **Tired**

Or the newly coined **HANGRY!**

## Triggers V

- ▶ Overconfidence
- ▶ Mental or physical illness
- ▶ Social isolation (loneliness)
- ▶ Sex/relationships
- ▶ Promotion or a new job
- ▶ Reminiscing (good ol' days)
- ▶ Glamorizing past usage
- ▶ Social situations where the addiction of choice is available

## Triggers VI

- ▶ Sex/relationships
- ▶ Promotion or new job
- ▶ Complacency or over-confidence
- ▶ Boredom
- ▶ Undiagnosed or untreated physical or mental health problems

**Final slide  
with triggers**

- ▶ All the other things we haven't mentioned yet
  - ▶ Death or trauma in the family, or community
  - ▶ Sensory Stimuli (aftershave, popcorn, stale cigarette smoke)
  - ▶ And what else?



**So what's  
next?**

The person either **engages** in the addictive behavior or **does not engage** in the addictive behavior.

What determines whether the person engages or abstains, OR performs some action to reduce the risk of the behavior?

(Harm reduction?)

## **Gambling triggers worksheet**

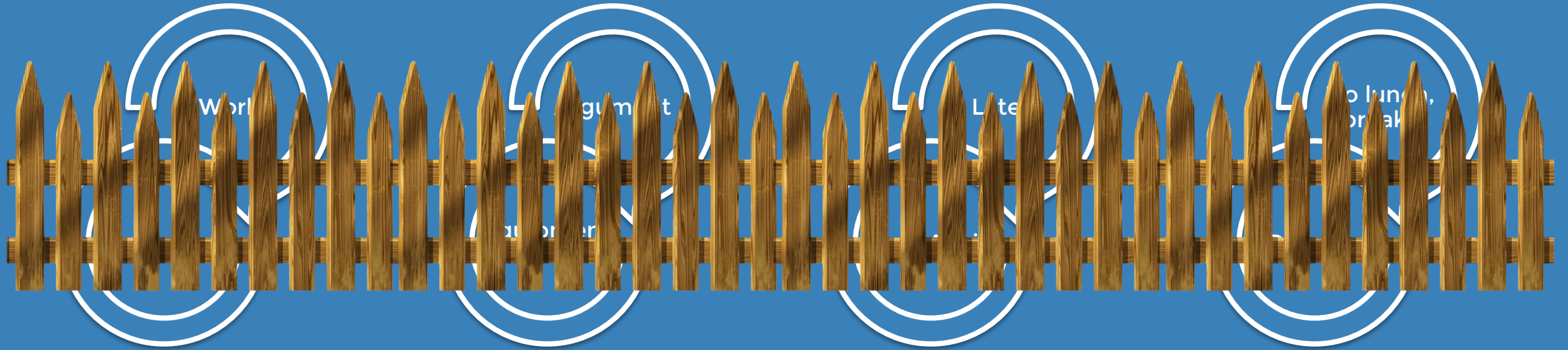
### **Describe a situation when I gambled recently**

- ▶ What did I do earlier in the day?
- ▶ What did I do an hour before gambling?
- ▶ What did I do 30 minutes before gambling?
- ▶ What did I do 5 minutes before gambling?
- ▶ Feelings?
- ▶ Mood?

## **Building a fence around the temptation**

- ▶ Discover the links or triggers in the chain leading to the addictive behavior.
- ▶ Build a fence around the impulse (temptation).
- ▶ Control the impulse by managing urges, negative emotions, and cognitive expectations that lead to the gambling.
- ▶ What is the sequence of events leading up to the behavior?

# Building a fence around the temptation



# Gambling triggers worksheet II



**Urge intensity scale: 0-2 minimal; 3-4 moderate; 5-6 intense; 7-8 overwhelming**

## High Risk Situations

Marlatt and George identified a “high-risk” situation as any situation which poses a threat to the individual’s sense of control and increases the risk of potential lapse or relapse.

- ▶ Negative emotional states
- ▶ Interpersonal conflict
- ▶ Social pressure

## Terminology

- ▶ Abstinence
- ▶ Harm reduction
- ▶ Lapse
- ▶ Relapse
- ▶ Urge
- ▶ Crave
- ▶ Urge surfing

## **Abstinence:**

- ▶ The fact or practice of restraining oneself from indulging in something.

## **Harm reduction:**

- ▶ A set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences of addictive behaviors.



### Lapse:

- ▶ First slip after a period of abstinence or controlled use. This may be precipitated by an unexpected high-risk situation. The person is unable to cope effectively.

### Relapse:

- ▶ A deterioration in someone's state of health after an improvement.



## **Slip: A lapse**

Two common negative beliefs about a slip.

- ▶ A slip justifies giving up altogether.
- ▶ The client does not start back at the pre-contemplation stage of change, but can return immediately to the highest stage following the slip.

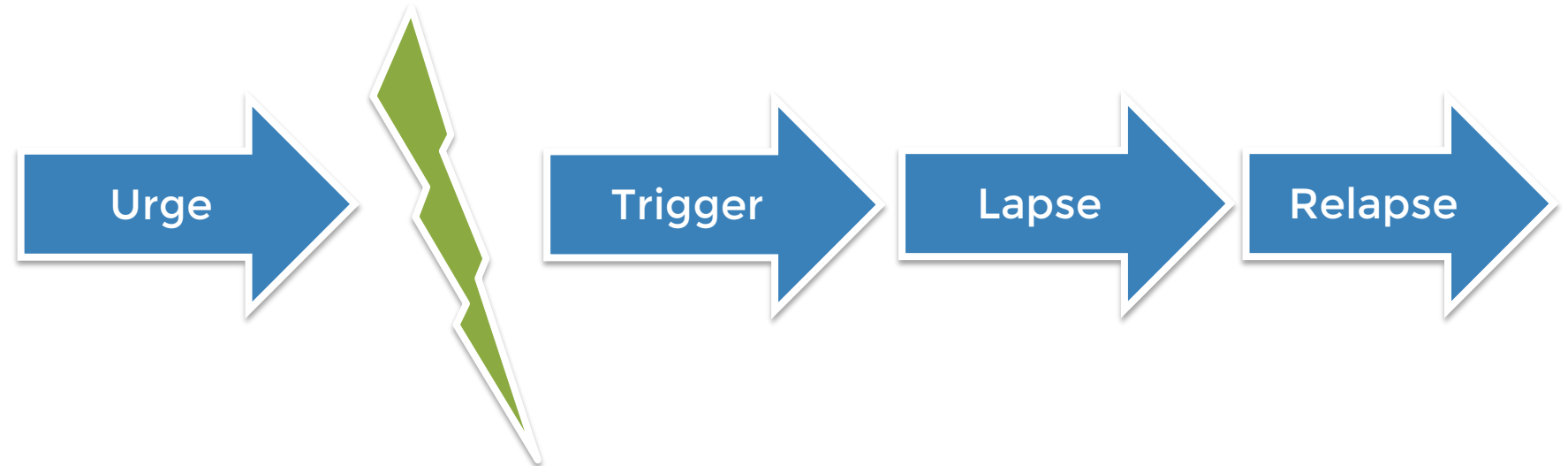
## Terminology v

### Urge:

- ▶ A strong desire or impulse.

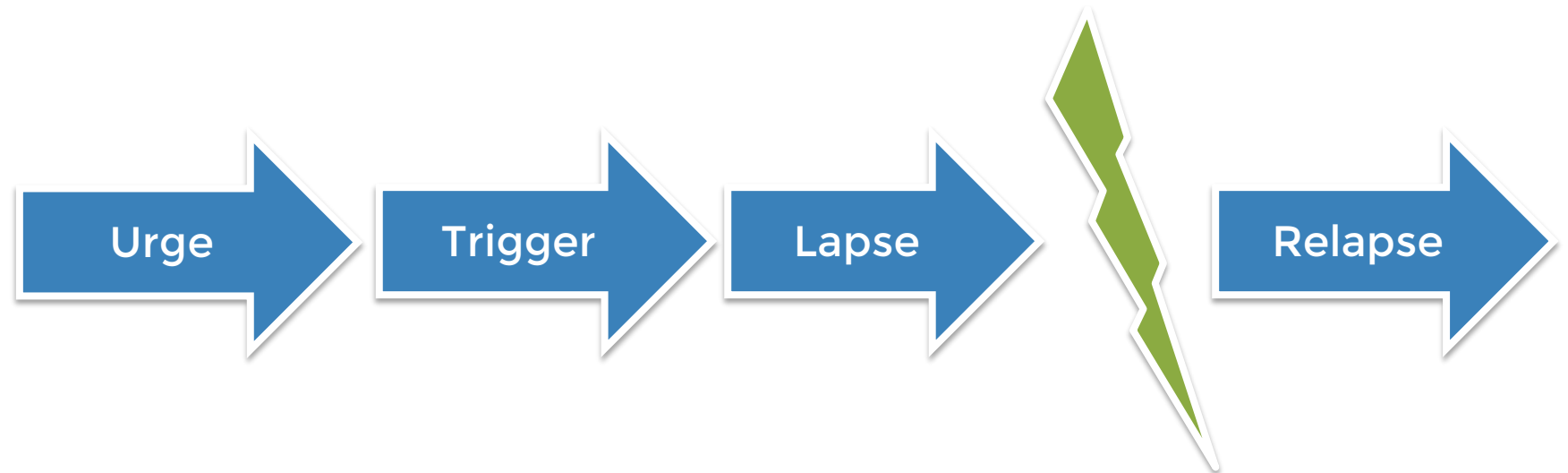
### Urge surfing:

- ▶ Riding out the wave of a craving or urge.



## Using the slip

- ▶ Description of the slip.
- ▶ Negative thoughts related to the behavior.
- ▶ Consequences of the negative thoughts.
- ▶ Challenges to the negative thoughts.
- ▶ New ways of thinking and feeling.
- ▶ Plan for the next step.



## Relapse Prevention

### Purpose:

- ▶ To maintain abstinence, once attained.
- ▶ To facilitate changes in personal habits and lifestyles so as to reduce risk of physical disease and psychological stress (balanced lifestyle).

## Relapse Prevention

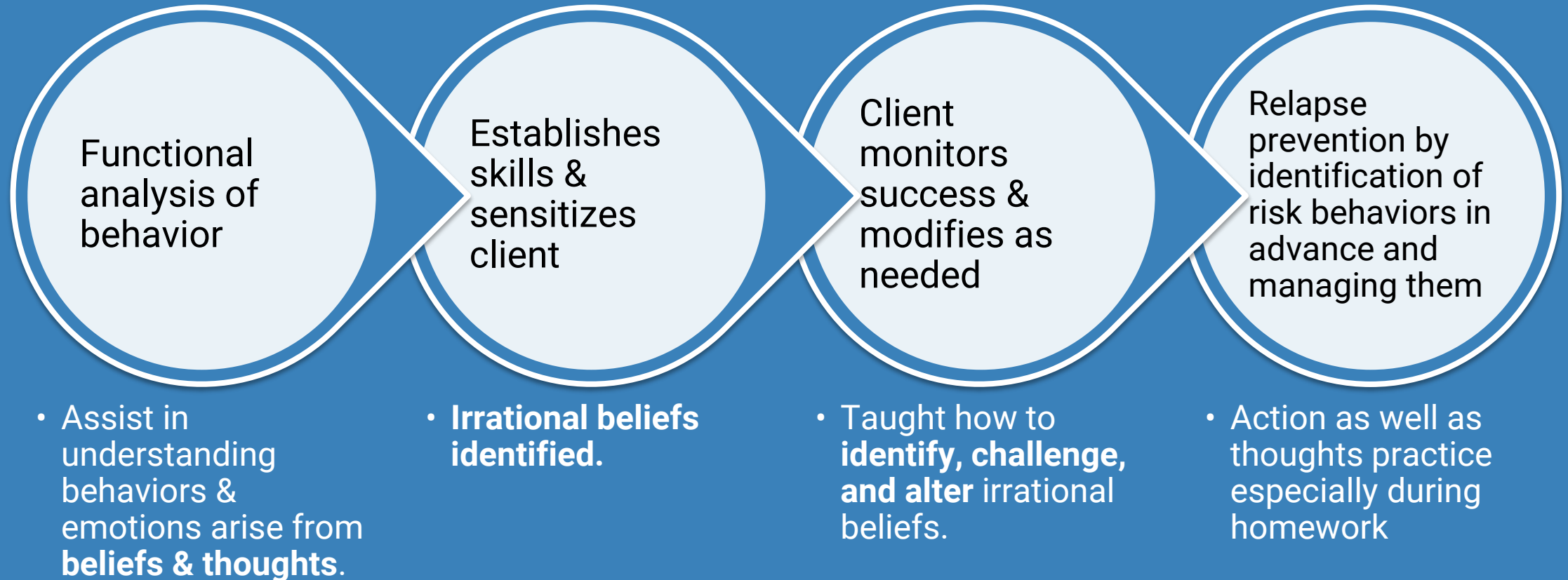
Relapse prevention requires knowledge the person uses to avoid, resist, or prevent (reduce harm) the future use of addictive substance or behavior.

- ▶ Knowledge of triggers:
  - ▶ What they are
  - ▶ When they might occur
  - ▶ How to handle them

## Relapse Prevention II

- ▶ Where cessation of the behavior is usually addressed through the therapy, the **maintenance** portion of recovery is managed by the client.
- ▶ Relapse prevention techniques equip the client with behavioral self-management skills instead of the client just relying on his or her own **willpower**.

# CBT change process





# Functional analysis

Triggers: What sets Me up to Gamble?	My thoughts <u>before</u>	My feelings <u>before</u>	Gambling: What did I do?	Positive things that then happened	Negative things that then happened
Going home from work on payday	All work & no play, can't stand this!	Bored	Pulled into gambling venue	No longer bored	Lost money I couldn't afford
Argument with spouse	He doesn't appreciate me	Annoyed	Stormed out & drove down to slots	Chatted with friends playing and staff	Felt guilty and lost too much

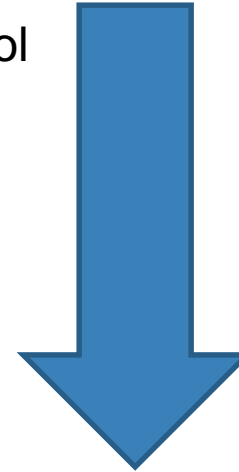
Willpower or self-control draw from a limited pool of mental resources that can run out, be exhausted.

## Ego Depletion

Energy for  
mental activity



Self-control



# Ego Depletion

- ▶ **Inducing a positive mood can:**
  - ▶ Buffer impairing effects of ego depletion.
  - ▶ Offer faster recovery from ego depletion.
  - ▶ Improve ability for self-regulation.

# Cognitive Restructuring



## Self-efficacy

Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives.

*Bandura, Albert (1994). In V.S. Ramachandran (ED.) Encyclopedia of human behavior (vol. 4, pg. 71-81) New York: Academic Press.*

### The four main sources of influence regarding one's self-efficacy are:

- ▶ Mastery
- ▶ Modeling
  - ▶ The competencies of others that a person views as proficient in that behavior
- ▶ Social persuasion
- ▶ Mood
  - ▶ (Somatic or emotional state) plays a part in judging one's own capabilities

## Self-efficacy III

### Self-efficacy beliefs:

- ▶ Cognitive processes
- ▶ Motivational processes
- ▶ Affective processes
- ▶ Selection processes

## Recap

- ▶ Triggers
- ▶ Slips
- ▶ Relapse
- ▶ Relapse prevention
- ▶ CBT tools and functional analysis
- ▶ Self-efficacy



# Questions?

**Thank you for participating in  
this workshop today.**

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