Session 6: Riding the Wave: Cravings Have a Beginning, a Middle, and an End

PHASE 1 — FOUNDATION: SURRENDER AND STABILIZATION (WEEKS 1–2) · WEEK 2 — UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 6 handout (Craving Ladder) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

A craving feels like it will last forever while it is rising. It will not. A craving is like a wave: it builds, it peaks, and then — whether we feed it or not — it comes down. Our job is not to argue with the peak. Our job is to buy the minutes until the peak passes. We do that with delay, distance, people, and our craving ladder. In this session we practice riding the wave and we build a craving ladder: a written plan for what to do as a craving climbs.

- Minutes, not forever The decision is never 'never use again' in a craving moment; it is 'not in the next 15 minutes — and then we will see.' Stacking those decisions is how days are built.
- The body first Cold water, movement, food, a walk, a shower — physical state changes move craving faster than arguments do. Week 2 builds the daily version of this.
- Tell somebody at the rise, not the fall A craving reported at a 4 is a conversation; reported at a 10 it is an emergency. Early honesty is the skill.

Goals for this session

☐ I can describe craving as a wave that rises, peaks, and falls rather than a state that only use can end

☐ I can demonstrate two in-the-moment skills — urge surfing/delay and the 3-call rule

☐ I can set a personal craving rating and response for scores of 4, 7, and 10

Check-in

How long do you believe a craving lasts if you do not feed it — and what has your own experience actually shown?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. What is your earliest body signal that a craving is building?

2. What has helped a craving pass in the past, even partially?

3. Who are your three calls — by name? If you cannot name three people yet, who in this room or program could become one?

4. What do you usually tell yourself at the peak, and what truer sentence could answer it?

Session 6 — Skill Practice

Practice in the room: facilitator leads a 3-minute urge-surfing exercise using a mild current urge or a remembered one at low intensity — breathe, locate it in the body, rate it, watch it for 90 seconds, re-rate it aloud in pairs. Then everyone writes their Craving Ladder in their workbook: at 4 I will ____; at 7 I will ____; at 10 I will ____ and go to ____.

My Craving Ladder — At 4 out of 10, I will:

At 7 out of 10, I will:

At 10 out of 10, I will (and I will call):

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ This week, log every craving of 5 or above: time, trigger, peak rating, what you did, and how long until it fell by half. Bring the log — it becomes raw material for your relapse-prevention work in Week 6.

My log for the week:

Day / date	What happened — what I did	Notes

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.