


Foreword

These pages are re-formatted content from *Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention — Rolling Admission (MBRP-RA)*¹, pages 105–160.

A few adaptations were done:

- Separation of reading content and handouts:
 - all sessions are meant to be printed as a single booklet, and given to participants when they first come;
 - handouts on the last few pages (marked with the  symbol) are to be given out as separate sheets for writing into.
- Addition of the sections *Basic Feelings/Needs We All Have* (pp. 20, 43) from Non-Violent Communication website.
- Wording was adjusted slightly in Session 7 where the values diagram handout was split off the values text.
- The *Startup Packet* is was slightly restructured for print.

The formatting was originally created for the Czech translation (brzdime.cz). English text was now put back into the L^AT_EX skeleton. The hope is that other translations may use the structure to avoid the tedious formatting work, producing a localized and good-looking booklet with relative ease. Ask your local L^AT_EX expert for help.

Václav Šmilauer

lessstress.cz

¹ C. Roos & al: *A Clinician's Guide to Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention — Rolling Admission (MBRP-RA)*, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

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GETTING STARTED

0.1 About Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention

Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP) is a program designed to prevent relapse, in prevention of or recovery from addiction — in the wide sense (repeated behavior leading to significant harm and distress), including:

- substance addictions (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, medicaments);
- addictive behaviors:
 - external: food, work, sport, sex, pornography, gambling, self-harm, shopping, ...;
 - internal: frequent self-criticism or devaluation of others, aggressiveness, anxiety, submissiveness, ...

Mindfulness is being aware of our present moment experience (such as how we feel or what is going on around us) in an open and nonjudgmental way.

MBRP is a structured training of the skill of mindfulness using various guided exercises. The ability to stay oriented in one's experience as it unfolds reduces the likelihood of relapse — falling back into the addictive behavior.

MBRP can help you:

- Be more aware of relapse triggers.
- Respond/cope with triggers (not just react).
- Work with difficult emotions in healthy ways.
- Be kinder and more compassionate towards yourself.
- Develop a lifestyle that promotes long-term recovery.

Research of mindfulness and MBRP

Research shows that learning and practicing mindfulness...

- ▼ Reduces the odds of relapsing to alcohol or drug use.
- ▼ Reduces urges/cravings to use alcohol or drugs.
- ▲ Improves emotional well-being.

Research results are described in articles referenced at XXX.

Structure

The MBRP programme has three pillars, main components. They are all recommended, but also voluntary.

Formal mindfulness practices: regular (e.g. daily) practice with guided meditation recordings, in dedicated time.

Informal practices: bringing mindfulness into activities and situations throughout your daily life.

Support group meetings: sharing the experience, support from the group, regularity and structure for the practice. Groups are facilitated by a trained professional.

0.2 Formal Practices

There are 12 guided meditations altogether, listed below. Each session recommends practices for the next week.

- All recorded meditations are available at PracticeMBRP.com, you can play them on a computer or phone.
- You can also download and use the recordings in other suitable ways (offline from the phone, MP3 player, mindfulness app)

It is beneficial to establish regularity of the practice, a routine. Example practice routines:

John: *I listen to a 5- or 10-minute audio-guided mindfulness exercise about 6 days a week. I practice before breakfast in the morning. I sit in a chair. Practicing at the same time every day helps me remember to practice. I go to the website PracticeMBRP.com on my smartphone and play the recordings from there. I make mindfulness practice a part of my life because it helps me be more aware of what is going on and helps me stay on track with my recovery.*

Emily: *I listen to a 10 or 15-minute audio-guided mindfulness exercise about 5 days a week. I practice at night after I shower and put on my pajamas. I sit in my bed and use pillows to support my back. I play the recordings from a MP3 player I borrowed from my therapist. I also use headphones to block out other noise. When I stick to a regular practice routine, I feel more grounded and I am better able to deal with stress that comes up in my life.*

Audio-guided exercises

Mindful Check-in: Check-in with yourself. Notice what's going on in your body and mind. Then, focus your attention on your breathing. The Mindful Check-in is a core exercise in this program that we practice at the beginning of every session. This a good practice to listen to on a regular basis. Of course, mix it up too and listen to other exercises, such as the one's below.

Body Scan: “Scan” your body and bring a curious awareness to sensations you notice.

SOBER Space: Go through the steps of the SOBER: Stop, Observe, Breathe, Expand, Respond.

Urge Surfing: Practice mindfully “surfing” or riding out the experience of an urge or craving.

Breath Meditation: Focus your attention on the breath. When your attention wanders, gently bring your focus back to the breath again and again.

Mountain Meditation: Use visualization to develop a sense of strength and stability.

Kindness Meditation: Send thoughts and feelings of kindness and compassion to yourself and others.

Mindful Movement: Bring a curious awareness to sensations in your body as you engage in gentle movements and stretches.

Mindful Walking: Bring a curious awareness to sensations in your body as you walk.

Meditation on Thoughts: Practice mindfully observing thoughts that pass through your awareness.

0.3 On-The-Go (informal) Practices

You can use on-the-go practices at any moment of your daily life.

Mindful Moments: At random times during your day, *pause* and...

- Take a few mindful breaths to slow down
- Take 1 minute to mindfully check-in with yourself (“*How am I feeling right now?*”)

Mindful Coping: When challenging situations come up, such as arguments, difficult emotions, craving to use...

- Use mindfulness to cope
- Use the SOBER Space: is an *on-the-go* mindfulness practice that you can do anywhere, anytime because it is brief, simple, and flexible. It is described on page 13 in detail.

Mindful Activities: When you are engaging in daily activities, such as eating, chores, showering, brushing teeth, walking...

- Bring a curious attention to the present moment
- Connect with your 5 senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste)

0.4 Common challenges

It is completely okay, normal, and common to experience the challenges listed below. These challenges are *not* “bad” or “wrong” in any way. These challenges are simply part of the process. You *can* work through these challenges and stick with your practice. Here are some tips for working through the different types of challenges that come up.

“My mind won’t stop wandering.” It is totally normal and common to experience a wandering mind and have lots of thoughts come up during mindfulness practice. That is just what the mind does; it wanders. You don’t need to stop thoughts or push them away. Do your best to just notice what your experience is with a sense of curiosity and nonjudgment (*“Oh look at that, there my mind goes again”*). Sometimes thoughts can be “racing” or “intrusive” to the point it is very distressing. In these moments, see what it’s like to bring a sense of acceptance and kindness to your experience (*“Hmm, what would it be like to just notice these thoughts and let them be, instead of fighting them or criticizing myself?”*).

“I feel restless and can’t sit still.” It is common and totally okay to feel restless while practicing. This can be a physical restlessness and/or a mental restlessness. See what it’s like to notice the restlessness with a sense of curiosity (*“Hmm, what does this actually feel like?”*), rather than judging yourself or trying to force the restlessness to go away. You can also mix in mindful walking and mindful movement into your practice, instead of only practices where you sit still.

“I feel sleepy or fall asleep when I practice.” It’s okay if you fall asleep. No worries! Getting sleepy is more likely to happen when lying down. Try practicing sitting upright instead, or practicing with your eyes open or half open (softly gazing downwards in front of you).

“I can’t do this” or “I’m not doing it right.” It is totally normal to have thoughts like this where we start to doubt ourselves and our ability to practice mindfulness. Try to gently acknowledge these thoughts with a sense of curiosity and kindness. (*“Oh, look at that, there’s that doubt coming up again”*). Keep in mind that there is no such thing as doing a practice “right” or “wrong.” There is simply doing a practice and seeing what comes up for you. If your mind wanders a lot or you have difficulty focusing, that is totally okay and normal.

“I don’t feel any better. What’s wrong with me?” When we practice, it is common to feel a desire to feel better or to judge ourselves for how we feel. See if you can pause and acknowledge that desire to feel different (*“Oh wow, look at that, I am putting pressure on myself to feel different than how I feel”*). See what it’s like to give yourself permission to just feel the way you are feeling in the moment. Mindfulness practice involves bringing a sense of acceptance towards our experience, instead of pressuring ourselves to feel better or different.

“I keep forgetting to practice.” It is completely normal and okay to forget to practice and to have times when you are busy or get sidetracked from your practice. This happens to all us. Even if you have missed several days or weeks of practice, you can always get back on track at any time and start practicing again. The key is to commit to regular practice for the long-run and to keep coming back to your practice again and again. Remember that you don’t need to take huge chunks out of your day to practice mindfulness. Just 5 or 10 minutes of practice a day, goes a long way! Doing little bits of practice each day is like giving your brain a little “recharge” each day, which keep your brain strong and healthy. You can also set an “alarm” on your smartphone to remind you to practice.

Why stick with it?

Think about your *brain*!

Our brains literally continue to grow and form new connections all throughout our lives, even as adults. We are not simply born with one brain that stay the same all of our lives. Rather, our brain is constantly changing depending on what experiences we have and what information and skills we learn about and practice. Whenever we learn or practice something new, like a skill, new connections are formed in the brain. The more and more we practice a skill, the stronger these connections become. The fancy word to describe changes in the brain is called neuroplasticity.

Your brain is like a muscle that can be strengthened through hard work and practice. Just like exercising your body makes your body stronger, exercising your brain with mental exercises like mindfulness actually makes your brain stronger. Research shows that regular practice of mindfulness actually changes people brains and strengthens the areas of the brain involved in managing stress and emotions. These studies also show that people's stress levels go down with regular practice of mindfulness.

Remember, you have the ability to change your brain. Mindfulness is a science-backed tool you can use to change your brain and boost your coping power.

Session 1

MINDFULNESS VS. AUTOMATIC PILOT

Key Concepts

“Automatic pilot” is when we are not aware of what we are doing. We just do things automatically.

When we have urges or cravings to use alcohol or other drugs, we often go into automatic pilot. We just *react* without awareness.

Mindfulness is the opposite of automatic pilot. When we are mindful, we are fully aware of what we are doing in the moment.

Mindfulness helps us step out of automatic pilot mode and make more conscious choices (such as when we have an urge or craving to use)

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- SOBER Space.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in with yourself.

Mindful Coping: Try doing the SOBER Space when challenges come up.

Mindful Activities: Try mindful eating. For each meal, take one mindful bite. Bring your full attention to your food and the experience of eating.

Handouts

- SOBER Space for feelings 2×;
- My Practice Log.

1.1 SOBER Space

The SOBER Space is an *on-the-go* mindfulness practice that you can do anywhere, anytime because it is brief, simple, and flexible.

It can be used in a stressful situation, if you are upset, or when you are experiencing urges or impulses to engage in unwanted behavior. It can also be used when things are going well, when you are having fun, or any other time you want to more fully “show up” to appreciate the present moment. It can help you step out of “automatic pilot” and be more aware and mindful in your response.

S Stop. Remember to stop or “pause” to do this exercise. This is the first step in stepping out of automatic pilot.

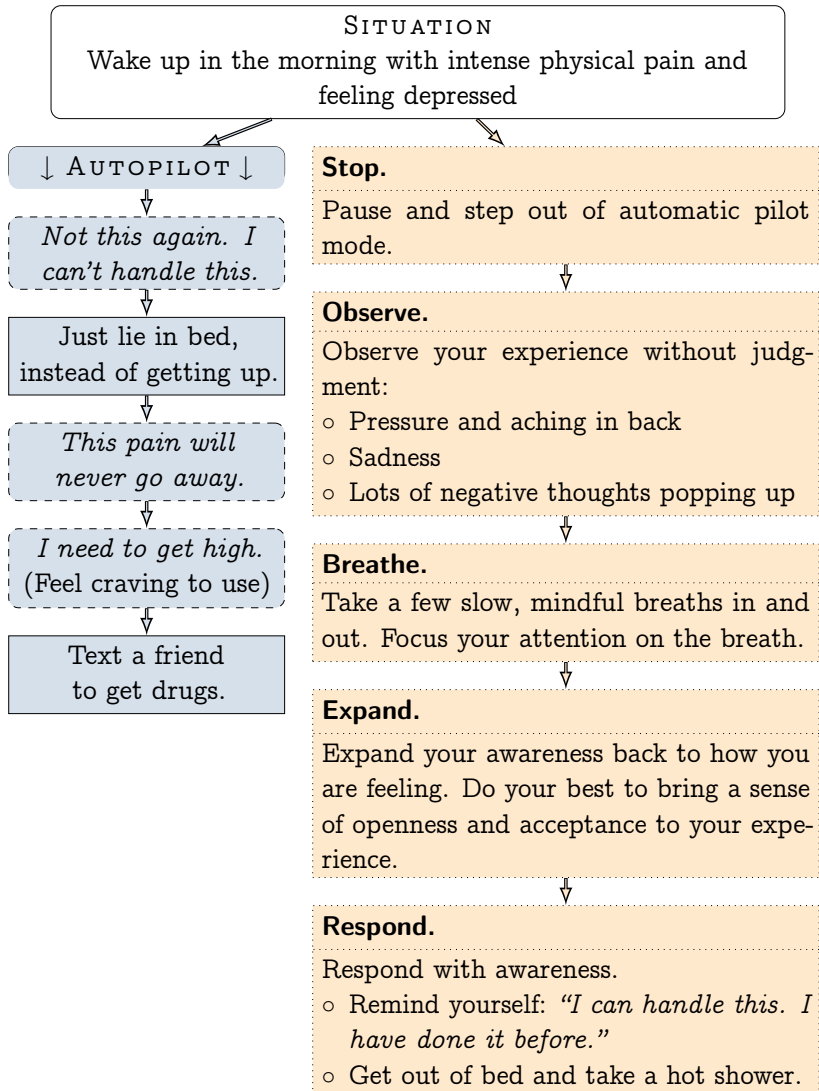
O Observe. Observe what is going on in the moment, both around you and inside of you (body sensations, emotions, and thoughts). Try to observe with a sense of curiosity and nonjudgment.

B Breathe. Notice the sensations of the breath in your body as you take a few slow breaths in and out.

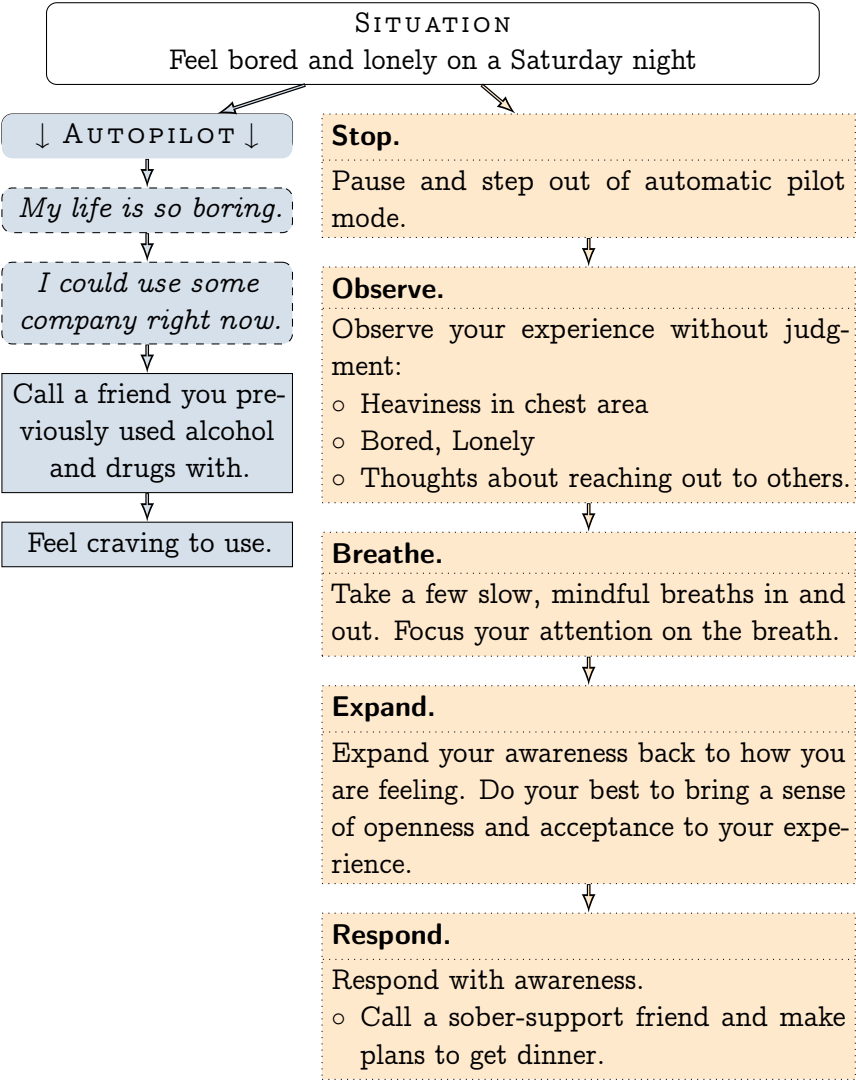
E Expand. Expand your awareness beyond just the breath to your whole body and then to the whole situation you are in.

R Respond. Respond to the situation with awareness, rather than reacting automatically. Recognize that you have choices for how to respond. Think about what you need and how you can take care of yourself.

1.2 SOBER Space for feelings: pain and depression



1.3 SOBER Space for feelings: boredom and loneliness



Session 2

EMOTIONS AS VISITORS

Key Concepts

Challenging emotions (anxiety, sadness, anger) can trigger an urge to use alcohol or drugs. We may turn to alcohol and drugs to avoid or escape our emotions.

Mindfully accepting emotions means allowing ourselves to feel our emotions in the moment, instead of trying to escape our emotions. It means acknowledging emotions (not ignoring them) with a sense of openness, curiosity, and nonjudgment.

Challenging emotions are like “visitors” or “guests.” They visit us and then pass by. They are temporary. Challenging emotions can also be helpful when they visit. ... *treat each guest honorably. / They may be clearing you out / for some new delight [...] Because each has been sent / as a guide from beyond.* (*The Guest House Poem*).

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- Mindfulness of Emotions (with *Guest House* Reading).

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in. Notice any emotions you might be feeling with a sense of openness and acceptance.

Mindful Coping: Try doing the SOBER Space when difficult emotions come up. Practice accepting your emotions and allowing yourself to feel your emotions.

Mindful Activities: Try mindful showering or bathing. Bring your full attention to the activity of showering or bathing. Connect with your 5 senses.

Handouts

- My Practice Log.

2.1 The Guest House Poem

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
They may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
Because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Rumi

2.2 Some Basic Feelings We All Have²

Feel free to use the following list as a inspiration for expanding the vocabulary of feelings which you can recognize and name:

When needs “are” fulfilled:

- Amazed
- Confident
- Energetic
- Glad
- Inspired
- Joyous
- Optimistic
- Relieved
- Surprised
- Touched
- Comfortable
- Eager
- Fulfilled
- Hopeful
- Intrigued
- Moved
- Proud
- Stimulated
- Thankful

When needs “are not” fulfilled:

- Angry
- Confused
- Disappointed
- Distressed
- Frustrated
- Hopeless
- Irritated
- Nervous
- Puzzled
- Sad
- Annoyed
- Concerned
- Discouraged
- Embarrassed
- Helpless
- Impatient
- Lonely
- Overwhelmed
- Reluctant
- Uncomfortable

² <https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/learn-nonviolent-communication/feelings/>.

Session 3

SELF-COMPASSION

Key Concepts

Self-compassion is about being kind, gentle, and understanding towards ourselves. Self-compassion helps us work through from setbacks and slips in the recovery process.

Self-compassion means not judging ourselves when we are upset or having a hard time. We can pause and tell ourselves *“It’s okay to feel upset. I am doing the best I can.”*

All human beings struggle. No one is perfect. When we practice self-compassion, we can tell ourselves: *“I’m not alone feeling this way. We all go through hard times.”*

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- Kindness Meditation.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in with yourself.

Mindful Coping: Try doing the **SOBER** Space when challenges come up. Practice being kind and compassionate to yourself.

Mindful Activities: Try mindful teeth brushing. Bring your full attention to the activity of brushing your teeth. Connect with your 5 senses.

Handouts

- My Practice Log.

Session 4

RESPONDING (NOT REACTING) TO TRIGGERS

Key Concepts

Triggers are persons, places, or things that bring about an urge or craving to do something, such as using substances

Triggers can “set off” a chain of sensations, thoughts, and emotions, that are part of the overall craving experience. Using the SOBER Space helps us be more aware of both the triggers itself as well as the sensations, thoughts, and emotions that come up.

Using the SOBER Space helps us respond to triggers with awareness, instead of reacting automatically. Using the SOBER Space helps us make conscious choices in the moment that make it less likely we will use substances when triggered.

The SOBER Space is flexible and can be used in different ways. In some cases, you may only have time to quickly “Stop” and then walk away from a trigger (person offering you drugs). Then, when you are somewhere else, you can go through the entire SOBER to continue coping with the situation and any craving you may still be experiencing.

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- SOBER Space.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in.

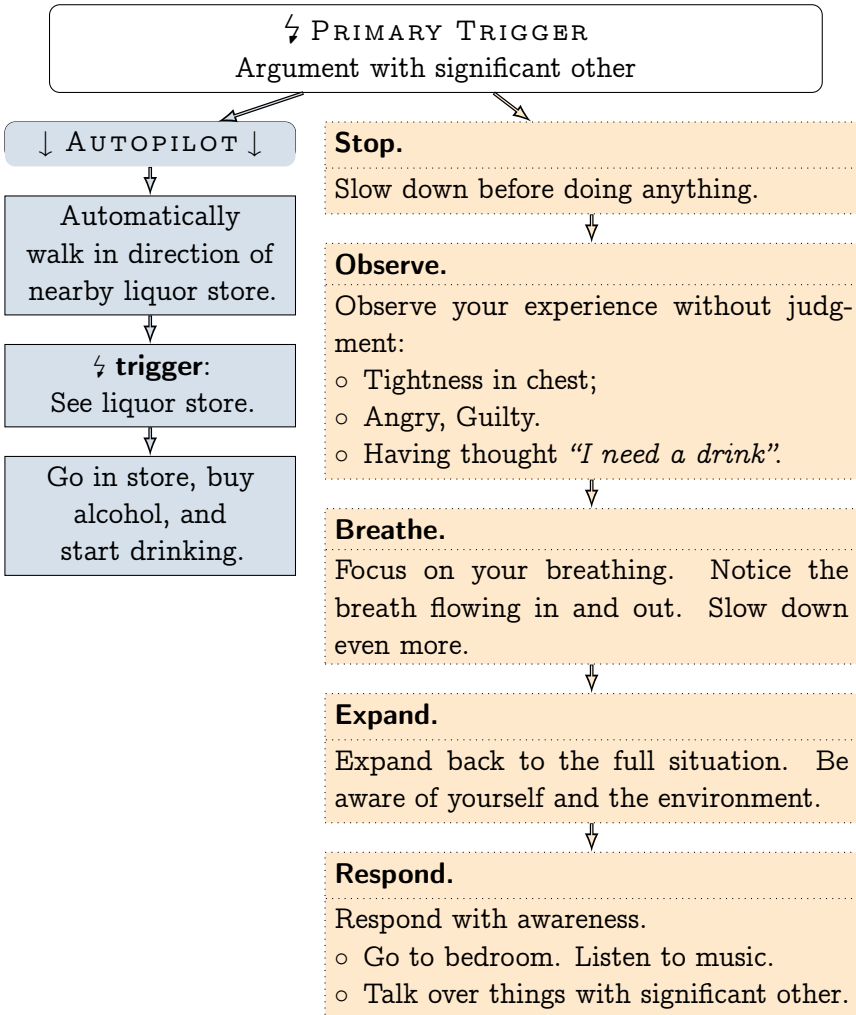
Mindful Coping: Practice the SOBER Space when challenges or triggers come up.

Mindful Activities: Try mindful hearing during your day. Pause and just take in the sounds around you. Try this when you are outdoors. Try this when you are indoor too. Another options is to try mindful hearing with music. Play a song that you enjoy and practice paying close attention to what the song sounds like.

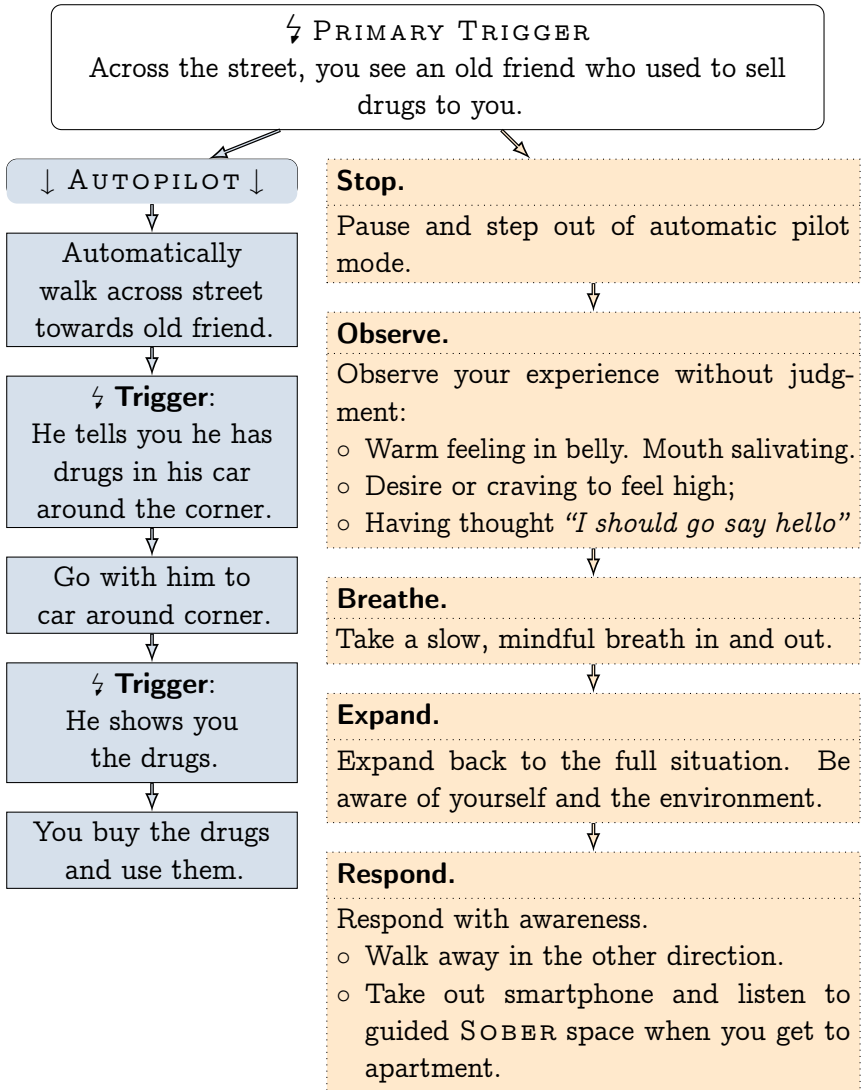
Handouts

- SOBER with trigger 2×;
- My Practice Log.

4.1 SOBER Space for triggers: argument



4.2 SOBER Space for triggers: old friend



Session 5

SEEING THOUGHTS AS THOUGHTS

Key Concepts

Thoughts are words or images that pass through our minds. Thoughts often “pop up” automatically. Just like our lungs breathe and our heart beats, our mind thinks. That is just what it does.

Our thoughts are not necessarily true, and we don’t always need to believe in or “buy into” our own thoughts.

Automatically believing in or acting upon our thoughts (ex. *“I can’t deal with this. Getting high would make things a lot better”*) can lead to substance use.

Mindfulness can help us see our thoughts as just thoughts, instead of truths or commands. Mindfulness can help us “step back,” notice thoughts as they come up, and respond to these thoughts in healthy ways that prevent substance use.

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in with yourself.

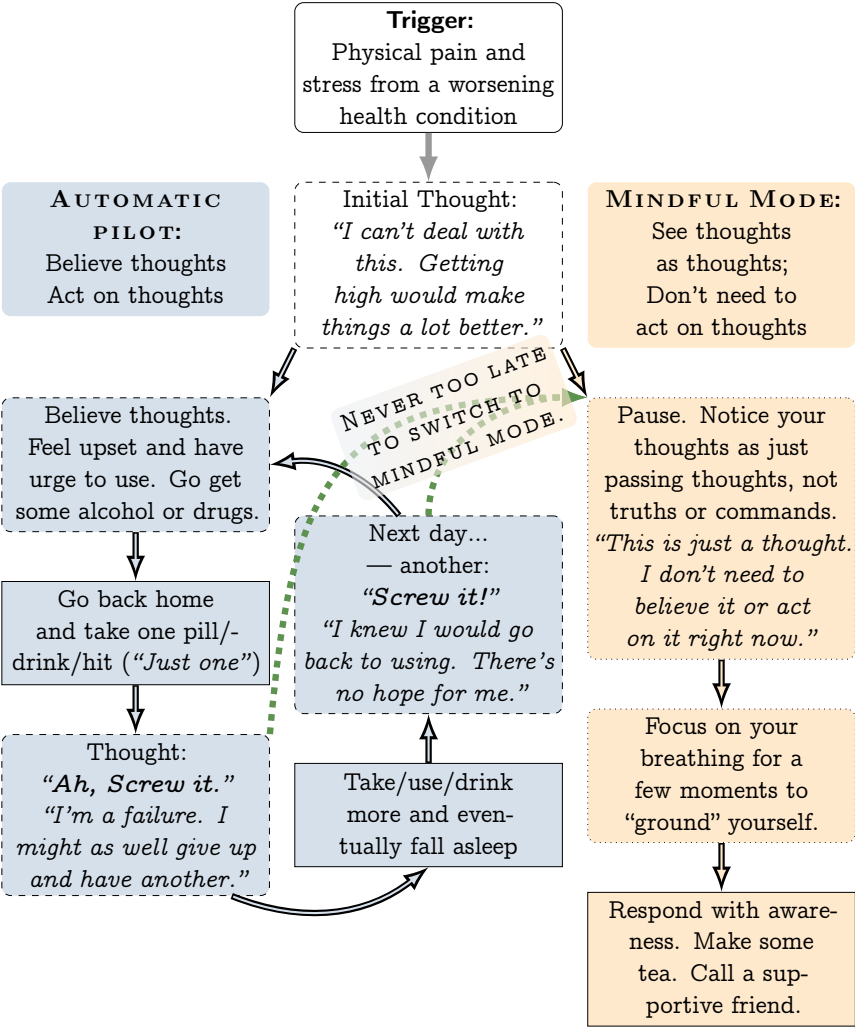
Mindful Coping: Try doing the SOBER Space when challenges come up.

Mindful Activities: Try mindful walking. Bring your full attention to the activity of walking. Notice the sensations in your body as you walk.

Handouts

- My Practice Log.

5.1 The Role of Thoughts in the Relapse Cycle



Session 6

SURFING THE URGE

Key Concepts

Urges or cravings to use are like ocean waves. They rise, reach a peak, and eventually pass by.

Mindfulness helps us slow down and be curious about the experience of an urge/craving. We can pause and ask ourselves *“Hmm, what does this urge actually feel like right now? In my body? In my mind?”*

Mindfulness helps us mindfully “surf” or “ride out” urges, instead of fighting urges or trying to get rid of them. We can practice bringing a sense of openness and acceptance toward the experience of an urge in the moment.

Mindfulness can also help us be more aware of what we might need and how we can take care of ourselves when we have an urge or craving. We can pause and ask ourselves: *“What do I really need right now?”*

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- Urge Surfing.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in with yourself.

Mindful Coping: Practice the SOBER Space when challenges or urges come up.

Mindful Activities: Try mindful looking. Pause and take in all the sights around you. Notice colors, shapes, lighting, and shadows. Try this when you are outdoors. Try this when you are indoors too.

Handouts

- My Practice Log.

Session 7

FOLLOWING YOUR VALUES

Key Concepts

Personal values are principles and beliefs we have about how we want to live our life and what kind of person we want to be.

Our values are like a compass or map that guide and direct us in life. Our values can inform the choices we make in daily life – both big and small.

When we are on automatic pilot, we might act or react in ways not in line with our values. When we are mindful, we can be aware of our actions and act in ways that are in line with our values.

Recovery is about following our values and finding a sense of meaning and purpose in our lives. Getting in touch with our values can give us the strength to do what is important to us, even when distress and discomfort come up.

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- Values Meditation.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in with yourself.

Mindful Coping: Practice the SOBER Space when challenges come up. Consider your values and how you can make a mindful choice in line with your values.

Mindful Activities: Practice mindfulness while doing a daily chore, like washing the dishes or folding laundry. Bring a curious awareness to what you are doing in the moment. Connect with your senses (e.g., sights, sounds, touch, smell).

Handouts

- My Personal Values;
- My Practice Log.

7.1 My Personal Values

Deep down inside, what is important to you? What do you want your life to stand for?

Personal values are principles and beliefs we have about how we want to live our life and what kind of person we want to be. Values are directions we keep moving in. Values are an ongoing process. For example, if you want to be a loving, caring, supportive partner, that is a value – an ongoing process.

The following are areas of life that are valued by some people. Not everyone has the same values, and this is not a test to see whether you have the “correct” values. There may be certain areas that you don’t value much; you may skip them if you wish.

Family. What sort of brother/sister, son/daughter, uncle/aunt, family member do you want to be? What personal qualities would you like to bring to those relationships? What sort of relationships would you like to build? How would you interact with others if you were the ‘ideal you’ in these relationships?

Marriage/couples/intimate relations. What sort of partner would you like to be in an intimate relationship? What personal qualities would you like to develop? What sort of relationship would you like to build? How would you interact with your partner if you were the ‘ideal you’ in this relationship?

Parenting. What sort of parent would you like to be? What sort of qualities would you like to have? What sort of relationships would you like to build with your children? How would you behave if you were the ‘ideal you’ as a parent?

Friendships. What sort of qualities would you like to bring to your friendships? If you could be the best friend possible, how would you

behave towards your friends? What friendships would you like to build?

Career/employment. What do you value in your work? What would make it more meaningful? What kind of worker would you like to be? If you were living up to your own ideal standards, what personal qualities would you like to bring to your work? What sort of work relations would you like to build?

Education/personal growth and development. What do you value about learning, education, training, or personal growth? What new skills would you like to learn? What knowledge would you like to gain? What further education/learning appeals to you? What sort of student would you like to be? What personal qualities would you like to apply?

Recreation/fun/leisure. What sorts of hobbies, sports, or leisure activities do you enjoy? How would you like to relax/unwind? How would you like to have fun? What sorts of activities would you like to do?

Spirituality. Spirituality means different things to everyone. It may be connecting with nature, or it may be participation in an organized religious group. What is important to you in this area of life?

Citizenship/environment/community life. How would you like to contribute to your community or environment, e.g. through volunteering, or recycling, or supporting a group/charity/cause/political party? What sort of environments would you like to create at home, at work, in your community? What environments would you like to spend more time in?

Health. What are your values related to maintaining your physical well-being? How do you want to look after your health, with regard to sleep, diet, exercise, smoking, alcohol, etc.? Why is this important?

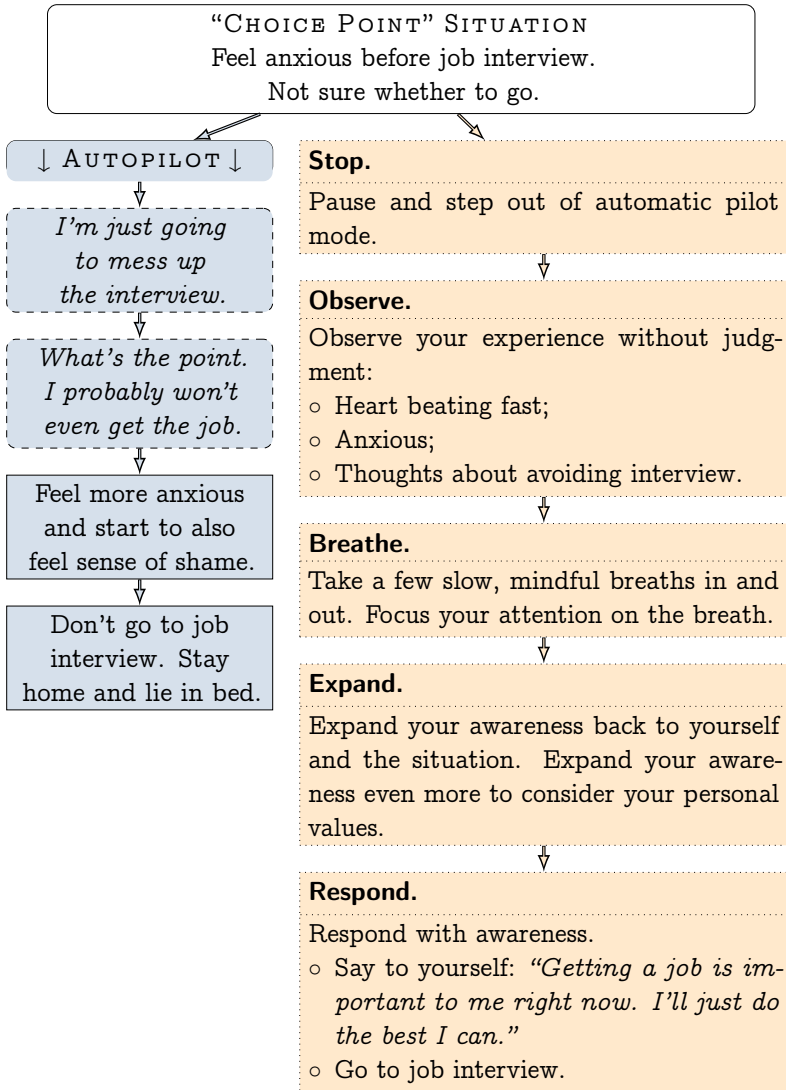
7.2 SOBER Space for Values

The SOBER Space is an *on-the-go* mindfulness practice that you can do anywhere, anytime because it is brief, simple, and flexible.

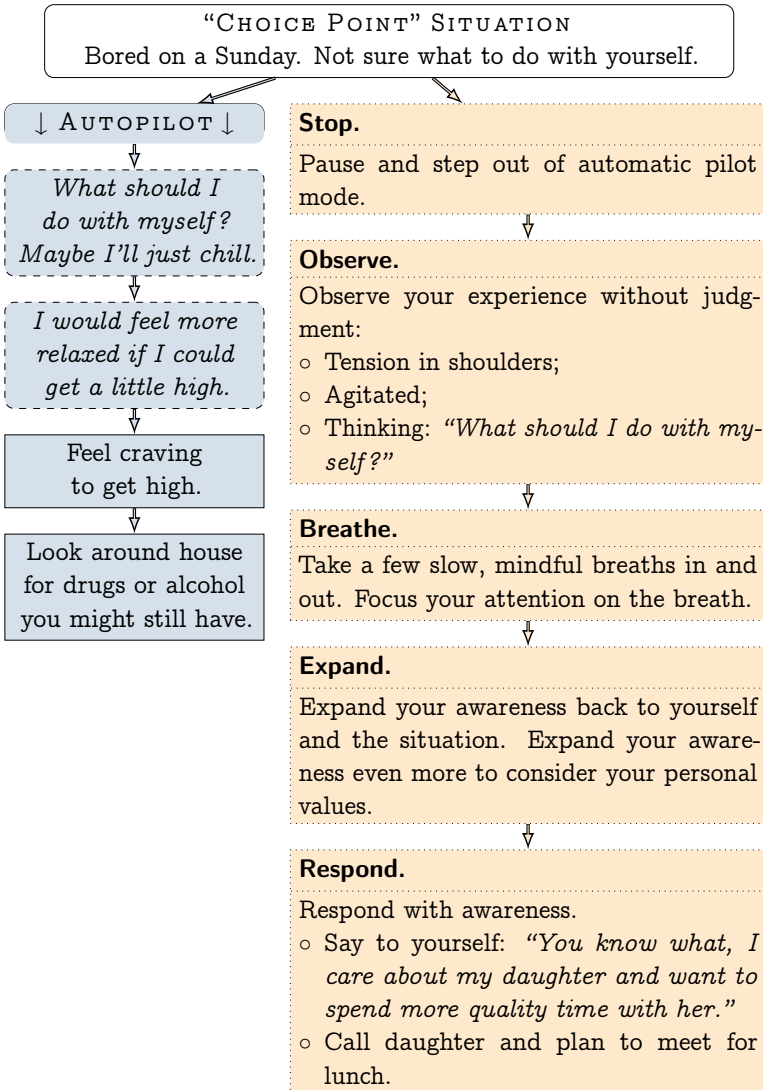
You can use the SOBER Space as a way to make mindful choices and follow your values and goals.

- S Stop.** Remember to stop or “pause” to do this exercise. This is the first step in stepping out of automatic pilot.
- O Observe.** Observe what is going on in the moment, both around you and inside of you (body sensations, emotions, and thoughts). Try to observe with a sense of curiosity and nonjudgment.
- B Breathe.** Notice the sensations of the breath in your body as you take a few slow breaths in and out.
- E Expand.** Expand your awareness to your body and the situation. *Expand your awareness even more to consider your values.*
- R Respond.** Respond to the situation with awareness. *How can your values guide you in responding to the situation?*

7.3 SOBER Space for values: anxiety



7.4 SOBER Space for values: boredom



Session 8

EXPLORING YOUR NEEDS

Key Concepts

We can turn toward substance use because we are just trying find a way to meet our needs in the moment. These include wholesome and healthy needs that we all have as human beings, like the need to feel safe, to get some relief, to feel in control, connect with other people, or to feel happy and alive.

Substance use does not actually deliver on their promise. In the long-run, substance use does not fulfill our needs. Of course, it's completely understandable that we turn towards substance use. As human beings, we all can turn to the wrong things to meet our needs. Having an urge to use substances or seeking out substances is not “bad” in any way. In those moments we are just trying to take care of ourselves and meet our needs, like any other human being.

Mindfulness helps us look “beneath” the initial urge for substances and explore deeper needs we may have in the moment. When we have an urge, we can pause and ask ourselves: *“what do I really need right now?”* Recognizing what we actually need in the moment helps us make wise choices, instead of automatically turning to substances.

Formal Practice

Do your best to listen to an audio-guided mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Go to PracticeMBRP.com to access the exercises. Try to practice at the same time each day (such as before breakfast).

We recommend focusing on these audio-guided exercises over the next few days/week:

- Mindful Check-In;
- Exploring Your Needs Meditation.

On-the-Go Practice

Mindful Moments: At random times, pause and mindfully check-in with yourself.

Mindful Coping: Try doing the SOBER Space when challenges or urges come up. Think about your needs. Ask yourself: *“What do I really need right now?”*

Mindful Activities: Try practicing mindfulness of nature when you are outside. Bring a curious awareness to different aspects of the natural environment, such as the sky, clouds, the wind, plants, trees, or animals.

Handouts

- My Practice Log.

8.1 Some Basic Needs We All Have³

Feel free to use the following list as a inspiration for expanding the vocabulary of needs which you can recognize and name:

- Autonomy
 - Choosing dreams/goals/values
 - Choosing plans for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values
- Celebration
 - Celebrate the creation of life and dreams fulfilled
 - Celebrate losses: loved ones, dreams, etc. (mourning)
- Integrity
 - Authenticity
 - Creativity
 - Meaning
 - Self-worth
- Interdependence
 - Acceptance
 - Appreciation
 - Closeness
 - Community
 - Consideration
 - Contribute to the enrichment of life
 - Emotional Safety
 - Empathy
 - Honesty (the empowering honesty that enables us to learn from our limitations)
- Love
- Reassurance
- Respect
- Support
- Trust
- Understanding
- Physical Nutrutrance
 - Air
 - Food
 - Movement, exercise
 - Protection from life-threatening forms of life: viruses, bacteria, insects, predatory animals
 - Rest
 - Sexual expression
 - Shelter
 - Touch
 - Water
- Play
 - Fun
 - Laughter
- Spiritual Communion
 - Beauty
 - Harmony
 - Inspiration
 - Order
 - Peace


³ <https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/learn-nonviolent-communication/feelings/>.

[illegible]

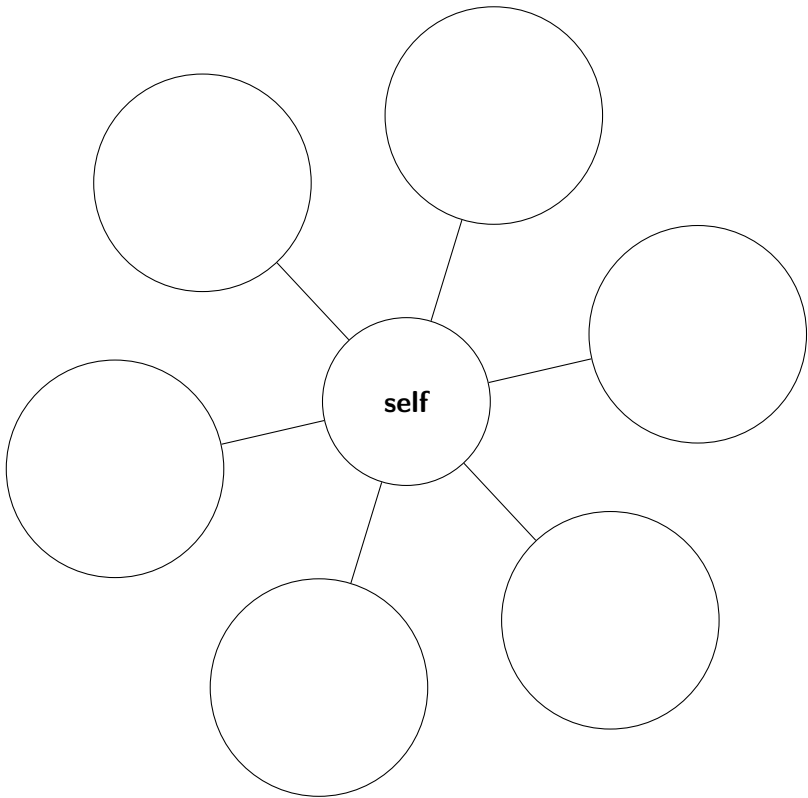
Write your own example. Think about a type of situation that brings about an automatic reaction. How can you use the SOBER space in the situation? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.

SITUATION	
↓ AUTOPILOT ↓	Stop.
1. thoughts feelings : actions :	Observe. body feelings. mind :
2. thoughts feelings : actions :	Breathe.
3. thoughts feelings : actions :	Expand. body feelings. mind :
4. thoughts feelings : actions :	Respond.
5. thoughts feelings : actions :	

Think about a *trigger* that brings about an urge or craving to use alcohol or other drugs. How can you use the SOBER space in the situation? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> PRIMARY TRIGGER</div>	
<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;">↓ AUTOPILOT ↓</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">1. thoughts : feelings : actions :</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2. thoughts : feelings : actions :</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">3. thoughts : feelings : actions :</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">4. thoughts : feelings : actions :</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px;">5. thoughts : feelings : actions :</div>	<div style="background-color: #fde9d9; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Stop.</div> <div style="background-color: #fde9d9; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Observe. body : feelings : mind :</div> <div style="background-color: #fde9d9; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Breathe.</div> <div style="background-color: #fde9d9; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Expand. body : feelings : mind :</div> <div style="background-color: #fde9d9; padding: 5px;">Respond.</div>

Use this diagram to help you look at your personal values. In each blank circle, fill in a value you hold. You do not have to use every circle, and you may add more circles as needed. For help thinking about your values, take a look at the questions in Session 7.



How many times per week I listen to an mindfulness exercise:

We recommend listening to a mindfulness exercise on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Regular practice will keep your “mindfulness muscle” strong over time.

The time of day I usually will practice is:

Here are some example times of day to practice that work for other people:

- In the morning: before breakfast, after showering, when getting ready
- At night: after putting on pajamas, during nighttime unwind routine
- Midday: during lunch break

How am I going to access the audio-guided exercises? [?] . . .

I will practice in the following location:

Here are some potential options: (1) Bedroom, (2) On the bus (with headphones), (3) Car (while parked), (4) Office, (5) Outside.

I will practice in the following position/posture:

We recommend sitting upright, rather than slouching. For the options below, use pillows as needed to support your back.

1. Sit in a chair with feet on floor
2. Sit on couch in a cross-legged position or with feet on floor
3. Sit on a bed in a cross-legged position
4. Sit cross-legged on the floor (maybe with back against wall)

Lying down is an option too. However, it can be easier to get sleepy in this position. If you get too sleepy lying down, then try sitting upright in one of the positions listed above.

What are your personal motivations for practicing mindfulness? Check one or more of the options below. Or, write in your own personal motivations.

- ☐ My recovery matters a lot to me
- ☐ Self-care is an important part of my life
- ☐ I want to boost my ability to handle stress in my life
- ☐ I am willing to try something new
- ☐ I like that mindfulness is backed by research
- ☐ I recognize that mindfulness has helped other people in recovery
- ☐ I want to learn effective coping strategies
- ☐ I value my mental health as much as my physical health
- ☐ I want to live a healthy and balanced life
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐