

A Clinician's Guide to

Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention

Rolling Admission

(MBRP-RA)

Corey Roos, PhD

Elena Stein, MS

Megan Kirouac, PhD

Sarah Bowen, PhD

Katie Witkiewitz, PhD

A Free, Open-Access Guide
for Offering MBRP in a Rolling Admission Format
in Addiction Treatment Settings

A NOTE ON SHARING THIS GUIDE

This guide is a free, open-access document licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License.

You may copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.

To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

For any questions about this guide, please email Corey Roos at corey.roos@yale.edu

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Corey Roos, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine.

Elena Stein, MS, is a licensed clinical psychology PhD candidate at University of New Mexico.

Megan Kirouac, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist at the New Mexico VA Health Care System.

Sarah Bowen, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Pacific University.

Katie Witkiewitz, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist and Regent's Professor in the Department of Psychology at University of New Mexico.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This guide is organized into several parts. When viewing this guide on a computer, you can click the links below to jump to a given part of the guide.

[Introduction](#)

[Part 1](#). *Walking the Talk* discusses the importance of developing a personal mindfulness practice as a clinician.

[Part 2](#). *Therapeutic Stance and Core Procedures* reviews the therapeutic stance or attitude that clinicians are encouraged to adopt, as well as core procedures in MBRP.

[Part 3](#). *Conducting MBRP-Rolling Admission (MBRP-RA)* outlines the ins and out of MBRP-RA, including information on core practices, introductory components at the beginning of sessions, and the process of facilitating and reinforcing outside practice in a rolling admission format.

[Part 4](#). *MBRP-RA Session-by-Session Guide* provides detailed guidance on each MBRP-RA session.

[Part 5](#). *Clinician Cheat Sheets* provides several “Clinician Cheat Sheet” handouts that clinicians can reference to remind themselves about core aspects of MBRP and the rolling admission protocol.

[Part 6](#). *Handouts* provides all the handouts for participants, including the startup packet of handouts that is given to newcomers at each session, as well as the session-specific handouts.

INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is a skill that involves being aware of one's momentary experience (i.e., physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, sensory perceptions, actions) in a curious, nonjudgmental, and accepting manner. Mindfulness-based programs aim to help individuals develop and strengthen the skill of mindfulness via guided mindfulness meditation practice. Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP; Bowen, Chawla, & Marlatt, 2010) is a group-based program aimed at reducing the incidence and severity of relapse among individuals recovering from substance use problems. The effectiveness of MBRP is supported by several randomized controlled trials (Bowen et al., 2009; 2014; Witkiewitz et al., 2014). MBRP includes eight weekly two-hour sessions delivered over 8 weeks. Additionally, MBRP is traditionally offered in a 'closed-group' or 'cohort-based' format in which the same group of individuals attend each session, without any new individuals entering the group throughout the course of the program.

The format of standard MBRP is not ideal for many real-world addiction treatment settings. First, two-hour sessions can be too long for many addiction treatment settings, which typically have 60- or 90-minute groups. Second, the closed group format is not feasible to implement because most addiction treatment settings primarily offer rolling admission groups (Wendt & Gone, 2017). In residential addiction treatment settings, it is often impossible to implement closed groups because individuals cannot wait for treatment and need to join the current groups that are offered at the agency.

MBRP-Rolling Admission (MBRP-RA) is an adaptation of MBRP that aims to address the above noted limitations in the original format of MBRP. Specifically, MBRP-RA: (1) includes *shorter sessions* (60- and 90-minute formats), instead of only 2-hour groups; and (2) can be implemented on a *rolling admission basis*, instead of being in a closed-group format. Research provides preliminary support for the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of MBRP-RA in both residential (Roos et al., 2018) and outpatient treatment settings (Witkiewitz et al., 2019).

'Rolling admission' means participants can join ongoing MBRP group sessions being offered at any point in time. Hence, with a rolling admission format, MBRP sessions will often have a heterogeneous group of participants, some who are completely new to MBRP, some who have completed just one or two sessions, and some who have completed many sessions already. Every session of MBRP-RA is designed to be accessible and engaging to participants, regardless of the degree of prior session attendance.

With a rolling admission format, participants do not need to wait for an "introductory session" to be offered, or for a new cohort of participants to be formed to start at the "introductory session" together. Instead, the beginning of all MBRP-RA sessions includes some introductory elements to orient newcomers to MBRP. At the same time, MBRP-RA is designed to keep prior attendees (e.g., participants who have already attended one or more sessions) adequately engaged.

Therefore, introductory material at each session is relatively brief and varied, which prevents prior attendees from becoming bored from listening to the same material over and over at the beginning of each session. Additionally, every MBRP-RA session includes new material, which keeps prior attendees continually engaged and motivated to attend groups. Conducting MBRP-RA is about finding the “sweet spot” in a given session, in which both introductory and new material are covered, and both the needs of newcomers and prior attendees are met.

This guide has been iteratively developed over many years, as we have continued to implement MBRP-RA in various addiction treatment settings. The design of MBRP-RA was particularly informed by ongoing MBRP-RA groups we have conducted in a short-term (30-day) residential addiction treatment setting. In this setting, we have offered MBRP-RA groups twice per week so that participants have the opportunity to attend all eight sessions during their stay. However, the timing of the delivery of MBRP-RA sessions is flexible. Offering sessions once per week may be more suitable in other contexts, such as outpatient treatment. Overall, the program described in this guide is intended to be flexible, and clinicians are encouraged to make modifications in program content and how and when it is delivered according to meet the unique needs of the individuals they serve.

References Cited in Introduction

- Bowen, S., Chawla, N., & Marlatt, G. A. (2011). *Mindfulness-based relapse prevention for addictive behaviors: A clinician's guide*. Guilford Press.
- Bowen, S., Chawla, N., Collins, S. E., Witkiewitz, K., Hsu, S., Grow, J., ... & Marlatt, A. (2009). Mindfulness-based relapse prevention for substance use disorders: A pilot efficacy trial. *Substance Abuse, 30*(4), 295-305.
- Bowen, S., Witkiewitz, K., Clifasefi, S. L., Grow, J., Chawla, N., Hsu, S. H., ... & Larimer, M. E. (2014). Relative efficacy of mindfulness-based relapse prevention, standard relapse prevention, and treatment as usual for substance use disorders: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Psychiatry, 71*(5), 547-556.
- Roos, C. R., Kirouac, M., Stein, E., Wilson, A. D., Bowen, S., & Witkiewitz, K. (2019). An open trial of rolling admission mindfulness-based relapse prevention (rolling MBRP): Feasibility, acceptability, dose-response relations, and mechanisms. *Mindfulness, 10*(6), 1062-1073.
- Wendt, D. C., & Gone, J. P. (2017). Group therapy for substance use disorders: a survey of clinician practices. *Journal of Groups in Addiction & Recovery, 12*(4), 243-259.
- Witkiewitz, K., Stein, E. R., Votaw, V. R., Wilson, A. D., Roos, C. R., Gallegos, S. J., ... & Claus, E. D. (2019). Mindfulness-based relapse prevention and transcranial direct current stimulation to reduce heavy drinking: A double-blind sham-controlled randomized trial. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 43*(6), 1296-1307.
- Witkiewitz, K., Warner, K., Sully, B., Barricks, A., Stauffer, C., Thompson, B. L., & Luoma, J. B. (2014). Randomized trial comparing mindfulness-based relapse prevention with relapse prevention for women offenders at a residential addiction treatment center. *Substance Use & Misuse, 49*(5), 536-546.

Part 1 Walking the Talk

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

“Walking the talk” means integrating mindfulness practice into your own life, while encouraging participants to do the same during groups. In fact, the single most effective way to get trained in teaching mindfulness to others is to regularly practice mindfulness in your own life. While this may seem like a lot to ask busy clinicians, this is truly the best way for any clinician to learn mindfulness and build a foundation of experience for teaching it to others. There is simply no replacement for genuine, first-hand practice of mindfulness.

Integrating mindfulness practice into your own life can provide additional benefits. For example, you may find that practicing mindfulness improves your own well-being in some way. After all, mindfulness practice is intended to be useful for many different types of individuals. This also fits in with the “practice together” model of teaching mindfulness to participants, in which participants and clinicians are “in the same boat” and can both benefit from learning and practicing mindfulness.

There are two primary ways to integrate mindfulness practice into your life: (1) Planned Practice, and (2) On-the-Go Practice.

PLANNED PRACTICE

Planned Practice involves making some sort of plan or schedule ahead of time about how you are going to fit mindfulness practice into your regular routine. Your Planned Practice might involve choosing certain days of the week and times of the day (e.g., Monday through Fridays at 8:30 am before breakfast) to set aside time to practice mindfulness, such as listening to a 10-minute audio-guided mindfulness practice from a mindfulness app. An effective strategy for sticking to a planned practice routine is to link your planned practice each day to a routine activity that you do at a relatively consistent time each day, such as eating breakfast, getting dressed in the morning, showering, or getting ready for bed. Linking a practice to an activity means consistently doing your planned practice before or after a specific daily activity. For example, one may choose to listen to a 10-minute audio-recording after showering in the evening each day. Or, one may choose to listen to a 10-minute audio-recording before breakfast each morning. The idea is to mentally link mindfulness practice to a daily activity to remind yourself to practice and to get in a rhythm in which mindfulness practice becomes part of your regular routine.

We encourage you to do your best to practice mindfulness on a daily or semi-daily (4 to 6 days a week) basis consistently over time. Overall, what is most important is to find a way of integrating mindfulness practice into your life in a realistic and sustainable way that works best for you. It is important to note that it is totally okay if you miss days of planned practice or have a brief hiatus in your planned practice because of work or life events. No one is perfect and life is busy and unpredictable. The key is to be flexible with the entire process, just like you would with any other healthy habit you might be trying to integrate in your life in the long-term. You always have the option of getting back on track with your Planned Practice again and again anytime you miss days or have a hiatus.

We strongly encourage you to download a high-quality mindfulness smartphone app with audio-guided mindfulness practices. Utilizing a mindfulness app can make it much easier to integrate planned mindfulness practice in your life. We have found that a *10-minute* audio-guided practice on a given occasion is a good go-to typical length of time to practice that works for most people. The mindfulness apps have several guided practices in the 10-minute range. We also strongly encourage you to mix it up and do longer practices when you can (such as when you are less busy), including practices ranging from 15- to 30-minutes. The mindfulness apps also have guided practices in the 15- to 30-minute range. During times when you are very busy, it is also perfectly fine to do a 5-minute guided practice. So, overall, 10-minutes is a good go-to typical amount of time to try to practice each occasion, and you can adjust that amount of time up or down depending on what is going on in your life.

The mindfulness apps we recommend include the following:

Paid Subscription Apps

The apps listed below cost money, but we think it is worth it. These are popular, widely used apps that make it a lot easier to develop and maintain a mindfulness practice, not just in the short-term, but also in the long-term. Of note, the paid subscription apps do also have some free content which is worth checking out and trying before buying an app.

Headspace

One of the leading mindfulness apps out there. Check out the “Basics Course,” which is very accessible and helpful. Includes lots of brief animated videos. Costs \$95 per year.

10% Happier

Another great mindfulness app. Does not focus on animated videos like. Has more real-life videos and interviews with mindfulness experts. Costs \$80 per year.

Calm

A popular mindfulness app. Check out the “21 days of Calm” course with. Has many different types of courses. Costs \$70 a year, but we think it is worth it.

MyLife

Another excellent mindfulness app. Somewhat simpler and easier to navigate than the others. Has lots of nice, short guided mindfulness meditations. Costs \$59 per year.

Free Apps

Mindfulness Coach

Another solid mindfulness app that was developed for veterans, but can be useful for anyone. Is completely free.

Insight Timer

Has a large (somewhat overwhelming) library of meditations. A great option that is free.

On-the-Go Practice

On-the-Go Practice is when you practice mindfulness on-the-go or “on-the-fly” in your daily life, without necessarily planning ahead of time. There are many ways to go about on-the-go practice, including: (1) *Mindful Moments* –taking brief mindful moments or “pauses” during your day to mindfully check-in with yourself, (2) *Mindful Coping* - practicing mindfulness to cope with challenging situations, and (3) *Mindful Activities* - practicing mindfulness during any type of daily activity, such as eating, doing chores, showering, brushing your teeth, walking, being in nature, or spending time with friends and family. We encourage you to engage in On-the-Go Practice on a daily or semi-daily basis.

We strongly encourage you to engage in both Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice. Both types of practice are equally important. Planned Practice is about strengthening or recharging your “mindfulness muscle” on a regular basis. And then On-the-Go Practice is about actually “flexing” and using this mindfulness muscle in your actual daily life.

Part 2
Therapeutic Stance and
Core Procedures

AN OPEN-HEARTED ATTITUDE

“OPEN HEART” captures the overall therapeutic stance or attitude we encourage you to adopt when leading MBRP. Having an “open-hearted” therapeutic attitude means relating to participants and their experiences with a sense of openness, curiosity, non-judgment, validation, and acceptance. We encourage you to do the best you can to continually adopt and model the open-hearted therapeutic attitude during interactions with participants, especially during the discussion phases of each session (which we will soon elaborate on further). In many ways the open-hearted attitude is similar, if not the same, as quality of mindful awareness (i.e., open, curious, and non-judgmental awareness of whatever is present). Hence, by adopting and *modeling* the open-hearted attitude during sessions, you can further assist participants in learning and embracing a mindful, “open-hearted” attitude towards themselves and their experiences. Here are some specific ways in which you can embody this open hearted attitude:

Nonverbal cues. Consistently make appropriate eye-contact, nod, and show other nonverbal signs of acknowledgement and validation when participants are expressing themselves, sharing comments, or opening up about challenging experiences.

Ask curiosity questions. Directly express genuine curiosity by asking participants questions about their subjective experiences or their personal perspectives.

“I’m really curious to hear. What came up for you during that practice we just did?”

“I’m curious to hear your personal thoughts on this. What does mindfulness mean to you?”

“You mentioned feeling relaxed. I’m curious, what did “feeling relaxed” actually feel like for you? What was going on in your mind and body in that moment?”

“I’m really interested in hearing more about what that was like for you. What did that sense of sadness feel like in your body? Where did you feel it most?”

“Hmmm, sounds like you noticed a lot of things. Just wondering, did you notice anything that felt especially new or unfamiliar?”

“You mentioned your mind wandered a lot and that at one point you were able to catch yourself and come back. What do you mean by that? What was it like to notice your mind wander and then come back to your breath?”

Thank participants for sharing. Make sure to consistently and clearly thank participants for sharing their experiences during sessions.

“Thank you for sharing with the group.”

“I really appreciate you sharing and opening up about your experience.”

“Thank you for that comment. That is really interesting.”

Provide genuine praise for effort. Focus on providing positive praise and feedback that is directed towards reinforcing effort, hard work, and willingness to engage (rather than outcome). The idea is to reinforce the *process* of change (i.e., the effort, hard work, and willingness it takes), rather than focusing on the outcome.

“Thank you all for participating in that practice.”

“I really appreciate the hard work you are putting in here.”

“Thank you for your willingness to try out these practices”

“Great work today!”

“Nice job sticking with your practice!”

Provide explicit statements that create a non-judgmental and accepting atmosphere. At times it helps to make explicit comments convey a sense of non-judgment and acceptance.

“Just so everyone knows. There are no wrong or right answers here. The idea is to have an open discussion and learn from one another.”

“Just keep in mind, that during mindfulness practice, there is no wrong or right way to feel during the practice. Whatever we are feeling is just what we are feeling.”

Normalize and validate struggles. Another way to convey an open-hearted attitude is to explicitly normalize and validate challenges that arise when practicing mindfulness. Normalizing and validating challenges serves to reduce the likelihood that participants will judge themselves, view challenges as failure, or think they are different from everyone else.

“Having lots of wandering thoughts during a practice is totally normal and okay. That is just what minds do – they wander. So, part of this practice is about getting to know how our minds work and being kind and gentle with ourselves when our mind may wander off again and again.”

“With mindfulness practice, we are not trying to make ourselves feel a certain way. We are practicing what it’s like to just notice what we are feeling in the moment with a sense of openness and nonjudgement. When uncomfortable or challenging feelings or thoughts come up during mindfulness practice, this is totally okay and does not mean we are doing anything wrong. However we are feeling in any moment is just how we are feeling in that moment.”

“Forgetting to practice or having trouble finding time to practice is a common and normal challenge that comes up. I am by no means perfect and have days when I don’t get to practicing. I try not to be too hard on myself through the whole process. Instead, I try to do the best that I can to re-commit to daily practice and get back on track the very next day.”

Avoid confrontation, argumentation, and “selling.” Having an open-hearted attitude as a clinician also means being patient and letting the learning process unfold gradually and organically. This means not confronting or arguing with participants when they say something that seems counter to the spirit of mindfulness, or is something you might disagree with. It is also very important to avoid “selling” participants on an idea or forcing them to see something a certain way. Think of yourself as more like a “guide” or “facilitator”, rather than an “expert,” “lecturer” or “salesperson”. A helpful strategy is to gently guide participants towards developing their own personal understandings. The real learning comes from participants’ direct experiences with mindfulness practice, and from the open, collaborative discussion. Try to support and guide participants through the process of engaging in daily practice and in actively reflecting on experiences and insights that arise from the practices.

“OPEN” PROCEDURES

“OPEN HEART” is also an acronym for remembering the key procedures in MBRP (provided in the word “OPEN”), as well as the core themes at the “heart” of MBRP (provided in the word HEART). First, we discuss the “OPEN” procedures. OPEN stands for **O**rient, **P**actice together, **E**licit Discussion, and **N**udge. Here, we discuss the details for each step.

Orient

The “O” in the “OPEN” acronym stands for “Orient.” Rather than just jumping into session activities, it is important to adequately orient participants to what they can expect to take place. This may involve orienting participants to: (1) MBRP as a whole (e.g., what it is all about and how MBRP sessions typically go), (2) the topic of a specific group session, and (3) specific activities within a session. Orienting participants serves to prevent participants from becoming confused or overwhelmed by unfamiliar content and activities in a group. As you might imagine, orienting participants is particularly important in rolling admission groups because newcomers may be present at any session. Whenever newcomers are present, you will need to orient them to the structure and focus of MBRP as a whole. In Part 3, we will discuss more details about ways to orient participants in the context of a rolling admission MBRP group.

Of note, it also may also be important to orient all group members to group expectations and rules (e.g., confidentiality, respect for others, raising hands before speaking, etc.) at the beginning of group therapy sessions.

Practice Together

The “P” in the “OPEN” acronym (which again describes the core procedures in MBRP) stands for “Practice Together.” Teaching mindfulness to participants involves a “practice together model” in which clinicians practice together with participants during each session. This model is in contrast to an “expert model” in which the clinicians “deliver” information or instructions to participants.

The “practice together model” is based on a fundamental stance that we are all fellow human beings who suffer and share many of the same challenging experiences in life (e.g., stress, negative emotions, mind wandering, craving, self-judgment, etc.). Thus, both clinicians and participants are viewed as “in the same boat” as fellow human beings who can benefit from practicing mindfulness together and engaging in honest, collaborative discussion about our experiences.

When you are leading a guided mindfulness practice, we encourage you to practice together with the participant. In other words, while leading the practice, do the best you can to also follow your own instructions and engage in the mindfulness practice, especially during moments of silence.

Leading and practicing a mindfulness practice at the same time can be challenging (and of course will not be exactly the same as doing a mindfulness practice yourself during your own personal practice). Again, just do the best you can, and trust that it will get easier over time. Overall, the key idea is that you should not be “checked-out” while leading a practice. The idea is to practice together with participants and to delve into the practice yourself as best you can while you are leading it.

It is important to note that practicing along with participants does not mean becoming so absorbed in the practice that you forget you are in a room with participants. Hence, while leading a practice, it is also important to occasionally taking moments to monitor the participants in the room. When leading a practice, your eyes can be opened or closed at various times, depending on what works for you. One option is to have your eyes half open and gaze down towards the floor and then occasionally open your eyes fully and look up to monitor what is going on in the group during the practice.

In some cases, it may be completely appropriate and useful to play an audio-guided mindfulness practice from a speaker during a group session and practice along with participants. In this way, you and the participants are literally practicing together. Playing an audio-guided practice during a session (rather than leading a practice) may be helpful in the early stages of learning MBRP and offering it to participants.

However, it is extremely important for you to develop your own ability to lead mindfulness practices yourself. Here are several guidelines for developing your skills in leading mindfulness practices with participants.

Developing Your Skills in Leading Mindfulness Practices

Keep practicing mindfulness yourself! The best way to develop your skills leading mindfulness practices is to continue practicing mindfulness yourself, especially with audio-guided practices led by other mindfulness teachers. (See Part 1 of this guide which provides information on developing your own mindfulness practice, including recommendations for which mindfulness apps to use). Hearing various teachers lead mindfulness practices will give you a sense of how different types of practices can be led, as well as different overall styles of leading mindfulness practices. Gradually, you can start to develop your own personal style of leading.

Study the example instructions. This guide provides sample instructions for each mindfulness practice. Take some time on your own to closely read through the sample instructions. However, we do not recommend directly reading from the instructions while leading mindfulness practices. Reading from instructions or a “script” can come across as inauthentic or mechanical. Instead, study the sample instructions thoroughly on your own time, and review them before groups when necessary. Then, when it comes time to lead a practice during a group, do the best you can, be yourself, and lead the practice in your own way and in your own style.

Make a simple outline to cue yourself. While we discourage you from reading directly from the sample instructions, it can be helpful to make a simple outline on a notecard to cue yourself or

remind yourself of the key steps when leading each practice. This can be particularly helpful in the early stages of learning MBRP and leading mindfulness practices.

Draw from your own experience. While practicing with participants, you can actually draw upon your own experience in the moment to inform what you might say at any given moment during a practice. For example, let's say you notice your own mind wandering in the moment. You might then say: "Notice if your mind might be wandering. Remember this is no problem at all. This is just what the mind does. When you notice your mind wander, simply come back to the breath, again and again." If you notice sensations of itching, you might say: "Notice any sensations in your body, perhaps itching sensations, or other sensations like tingling, warmth, or coolness." Or if you are feeling anxious, you might say: "Notice any emotions you may be feeling right now. Maybe anxiety, anger, or sadness. Or maybe something else."

Try writing sample instructions. As you deepen your understanding of mindfulness and MBRP, it can be fun and interesting to try to write your own instructions, in your own style or in a style that works best for the participants you serve. Again, the idea is not to write instructions in order to then read directly from them during a session. Rather, the exercise of writing instructions can help you really learn and memorize the core structure and intentions of a given practice at a deeper level, as well as think critically about the way you want to lead it. Writing your own instructions could also be useful for recording personalized audio-guided practices for the participants you serve.

Avoid perfectionism. Leading mindfulness practices can be anxiety-provoking. It is completely okay and understandable to experience anxiety, particularly when you are first learning to lead a mindfulness practice. Try to avoid perfectionism. There is no such thing as a "perfect" guided practice. When leading a practice, it is more important for it to come from a place of authenticity. Just be yourself and the rest will follow.

Other Tips for Leading Mindfulness Practices

Closing eyes is always optional. Avoid telling participants to close their eyes or making it seem like this is required for mindfulness practice. For example, at the beginning of a practice you might say something as simple as: "Your eyes can be open or closed." Or at times you may say, "Your eyes can be closed if you like. Another option is to keep your eyes somewhat open, maybe relaxing your eyes and gently gazing down towards the floor in front of you."

Encourage sitting up straight. In MBRP-RA groups, most participants will be sitting in chairs. It helps to provide some simple and gentle instruction about sitting up straight while practicing, such as: "Find a comfortable position for this practice, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side." You don't need to go into detail about posture. Often, just saying something short and simple about sitting up straight, in a gentle, nondemanding way (i.e., "maybe..." or "you might...") is sufficient. Participants will also often notice how you are sitting and mirror your posture. So, when starting a practice, you can deliberately adopt your own posture in front of the group as you are providing instruction about sitting up straight (e.g., scooch up in your chair a bit, sit up straight, place hands on lap, etc.). In some cases, participants may prefer to sit on the floor, with cushions if they are available, or

sitting against a wall. We generally encourage participants to sit while practicing, rather than lying down, because it can be easy to doze off and fall asleep while lying down. However, some participants may prefer lying down for health or pain-related reasons (or other reasons), and it is important to provide this option too.

Get familiar with “Mindfulness Language.” While there is no single correct way to lead mindfulness practices, there are certain words and phrases that tend to be useful when leading mindfulness practices. It can help to become familiar with some of the language and keep it in mind as you are leading practices. However, don’t worry about the language and don’t strain to craft the perfect sentence. It is more important to be yourself and be natural. Here are some key examples of types of mindfulness language.

Types of Mindfulness Language

	Words/Phrases	Full Example
Your “go-to” action word	<i>notice</i>	<i>“Notice what is going on in your body.”</i>
Other action words	<i>observe, bring your awareness to, pay attention to</i>	<i>“Bring your awareness to your breathing.”</i>
Supporting autonomy	<i>when you are ready, if you like, if you choose</i>	<i>“If you choose, you can close your eyes for this practice. Or have them open. Whatever works for you.”</i>
Gentle, encouraging language	<i>see what it’s like to, as best you can, you might try</i>	<i>“As best you can, accepting your experience in this moment. See what it’s like to be okay with your experience as it is.”</i>
Offering possibilities of what one’s experience could be (rather than telling participants what their experience is or should be)	<i>maybe, you may, you might, perhaps</i>	<i>“Maybe you notice sensations of warmth or tingling in this area of your body. Or perhaps you notice something different.”</i>
Present-moment language	<i>right now, this moment, moment to moment, present moment</i>	<i>“Notice how you feel right now in this moment.”</i>
Acceptance/non-judgment/self-compassion language	<i>allow, accept, sit with, be okay with, make room for, open up to, gently acknowledge, notice without judging</i>	<i>“Notice how you feel in this moment with a sense of openness and nonjudgment. As best you can, allowing yourself to just feel the way you are feeling.”</i>

Use “softeners” when using acceptance language. When using language to encourage participants to adopt an attitude of acceptance, non-judgment, and compassion towards their

experience, it is important to avoid language that is insensitive and blunt and that may come across as a command. For example, you would *not* want to say: “Don’t judge your feelings. Accept how you feel and move on.” It can be helpful to use “softeners” that make the instruction come across as an invitation, rather than a command. Softeners included phrases like: *see if you can, see what it’s like to, allowing yourself, try to, as best you can, explore what it’s like to, see if it’s possible to.*

Elicit Discussion

The “E” in the “OPEN” acronym stands for “Elicit Discussion.” A key task for the clinician is to elicit an open and collaborative discussion following a guided mindfulness practice. Overall, clinicians are encouraged to minimize lecturing and focus instead on eliciting discussion as a key method for promoting learning.

The “Elicit Discussion” step involves two kinds of discussions: (1) Experiential Discussion, and (2) Conceptual Discussion.

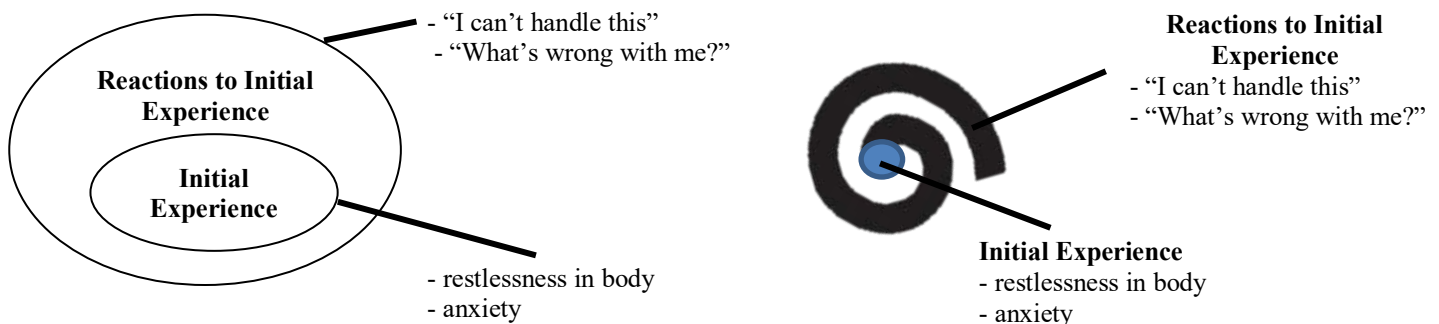
Experiential Discussion

The Experiential Discussion – often referred to as “inquiry” in mindfulness-based interventions – that follows a guided mindfulness practice focuses on asking questions about direct experiences (e.g., body sensations, thoughts, emotions, sounds, sights, smells, tastes, etc.) participants may have had during a mindfulness practice. Hence the go-to question for starting the Experiential Discussion is often: “What did you notice during the practice?” or other variations of this, such as: “What came up for you during the practice?” The purpose of eliciting discussion of this nature is to help participants become more aware of their direct momentary experiences. Specifically, your questions and comments during the discussion can help participants describe or put words to their experience. Your questions and comments during the Experiential Discussion can also assist participants in relating to their experiences with curiosity, nonjudgment, and acceptance. For example, when participants share challenging experiences (e.g., difficult emotions), you can model an attitude of curiosity, nonjudgment, and acceptance (e.g., Thank you for sharing your experience. I am curious to hear. What did that emotion of sadness feel like in your body?).

The Experiential Discussion is *not* about having participants talk about what they liked or didn’t like about the practice. Hence, avoid asking: “What did you think about the practice?” The Experiential Discussion is also *not* about having participants delve into details or stories about events in their lives. As best you can, try to keep the discussion focused on the direct experiences (e.g., body sensations, thoughts, emotions, sounds, sights, smells, tastes, etc.) that came up for participants during a mindfulness practice.

During the Experiential Discussion following any practice, it can be helpful to draw a diagram on the whiteboard that distinguishes between one’s *initial experience* and *one’s reaction to that*

initial experience. For example, you may draw one of the diagrams below on the whiteboard and elicit participant comments about the diagram. Both diagrams are similar, and you can mix it up and draw one diagram or the other from session to session. Of note, you do not need to draw these diagrams every single session. Rather, you can draw one of the diagrams from time to time and when it seems appropriate, such as when a participant comment during Experiential Discussion may lend itself nicely to discussion of initial experience vs. reactions to the initial experience. One of the key ideas to convey during discussion of the diagram is that we often have an initial experience of some kind (e.g., we notice restlessness in the body) and then the mind “goes off” or “spirals off” and starts generating reactions to the initial experience. It can be helpful for us to recognize and distinguish between initial experiences we have and then how our minds react to these experiences. We can bring a sense of curiosity toward our experiences as they unfold from moment to moment (including automatic reactions to initial experiences we notice), instead of being completely unaware of our experience and perhaps caught up in it to the point that we don’t even realize we are having certain reactions to our experience. Mindfulness practice is about being curious about how our mind works and noticing what arises in an open and nonjudgmental way (e.g., “Oh look at that, how interesting! There goes my mind again having reactions and judgments like it usually does”). The idea is not to take it personally or judge ourselves even more for reacting to our experience. Reacting and judging our experience is just what the mind does. Hence, another key idea to convey during the discussion of the diagram is that having reactions to our experience is completely normal and okay, and is just part of being human and having a mind.



Let’s take a look at an example of an Experiential Discussion in a MBRP-RA group:

- Clinician: Thank you all for following along with the mindfulness practice. Now I would like to open things up for discussion. First, I am really curious to just hear about what your experience was like. What did you notice during the practice?
[This is a good go-to question to start the Experiential Discussion]

- Participant A: Well, I noticed my breathing at first and then my mind started wandering off a lot.
- Clinician: I see. What happened next after you noticed your mind wandering? **[Asking ‘what happened next’ can be a good way to have participants elaborate on their experiences in the moment]**
- Participant A: Hmm, well I got a little frustrated with myself. Like I was doing something wrong. But eventually I came back to my breathing.
- Clinician: So you noticed maybe the emotion of frustration, then you had the thought: “I’m doing this wrong,” and eventually you became aware of your breathing again. **[Providing a reflection that summarizes what the participant noticed using phrases like “you noticed” and “you were aware of.” Also, differentiating between an emotion and thought]**
- Participant A: Yup.
- Clinician: Got it. Did anyone else in the group notice their mind wandering during the practice? Let’s see by a show of hands (clinician raises hand too) ...Aha, looks like lots of people noticed their mind wandering. **[Normalizing the experience of a wandering mind]** It’s so interesting how the mind works. Thoughts just kind of pop up automatically in the mind. Part of this practice is just noticing and getting familiar with how our minds work. **[Modeling curiosity]**. Thank you for sharing. Would anyone else like to share. What did you notice during the practice? **[Thanking the participant and then coming back to the go-to question to encourage others to share]**
- Participant B: “I noticed the sounds of the air conditioning. Oh, and at one point I heard the clock ticking too.”
- Clinician: “Huh, that’s so interesting. I didn’t even notice the clock ticking! **[some self-disclosure]** It’s interesting how there are lots of things going on in any moment and we can be aware of some things and not others. **[Again, modeling interest and curiosity]**. What else did you notice? Did any emotions come up for you? **[Asking about a particular aspect of experience]**
- Participant: “Not too many emotions, but I would say I feel a little sad today, so I noticed that.”
- Clinician: “Hmm, did you feel that emotion of sadness anywhere in particular in your body? **[Differentiating emotion from body sensations]**

- Participant: “I guess in my chest.”
- Clinician: “How would you describe that feeling in your chest?” [**Encouraging participant to use words to describe experience**]
- Participant: “Heaviness”
- Clinician: “Do you feel that heaviness right now?” [**Asking about the participant’s experience in that very moment**]
- Participant: “Yeah, I guess I do.”
- Clinician: “Well, I really appreciate you sharing and opening up about your experience [**Using genuine praise to reinforce the participant’s effort to notice and share his/her experiences**]

Keep in mind that not all discussions need to go exactly like the example above. This is just an example and is intended to provide some guidance on what kind of questions to ask and how to go about the process. It’s important to keep in mind that there is no need to try to get participants to say anything in particular. There is also no need to try to arrive at some profound statement or point during the experiential discussion. The key is to just practice being genuinely curious about what experiences participants have, ask a lot of curiosity questions, and see where the conversation naturally goes from there. Again, if participants don’t have a lot to say at certain times, that is completely okay, and it doesn’t mean you are doing anything wrong. We are simply inviting participants to explore their experiences and share it if they would like.

The Experiential Discussion can also be very different depending on many factors, such as whether it is a small group vs. a large group, and how long the session is. It is important to be flexible and to go about the Experiential discussion in a way that works for the particular circumstances. In some cases, there may be a lot of time to go in depth with several participants in a group. In other cases, the discussion may be briefer and just one or two participants may share a few comments.

During the Experiential Discussion, we encourage you as the clinician to actively participate in the discussion and share your experiences as well. In fact, some self-disclosure can be an effective way to model to participants how to describe one’s experiences. We encourage you to use your clinical judgment to disclose experiences in an appropriate way. For example, it is important that your own experience does not take over the discussion. It is also best to avoid sharing details about your personal life. Having said this, it is totally fine and in fact effective for you to open up about experiences during a mindfulness practice, such as body sensations, thoughts, emotions, and sensory perceptions (sight, sounds, smell, taste, touch).

Conceptual Discussion

Conceptual Discussion focuses on having an open, collaborative discussion about key concepts in MBRP and how they relate to recovery and the personal lives of each participant. The Conceptual Discussion is intended to *elicit* thoughts and ideas from participants, and to gently guide them toward their own personal understandings. Hence, asking key discussion questions to the group is a key strategy to use. Some brief lecturing or didactic instruction is involved as well. However, it is best to avoid too much lecturing. Here is an example Conceptual Discussion following the Mindful Check-In Practice (to be discussed later on in Part 3).

- Clinician: Ok, now I would like to talk more about the idea of what it means to mindfully check-in with ourselves. From your own perspective, what does it mean to mindfully check-in with yourself?”
- Participant A: Hmm. I guess for me checking in with myself is about trying to understand how I am feeling.
- Clinician: That makes a lot of sense. So, it might involve sort of pausing or slowing down and giving yourself a moment during your day to acknowledge how you feel.
- Participant A: Yeah.
- Clinician: What do you think could be the benefits of “mindful check- in breaks” during your day?”
- Participant B: I think taking more check-in breaks would help me be more aware of myself and where I am at.
- Clinician: Yeah, definitely. And more aware of what exactly?
- Participant B: Well, more aware of how I am feeling. Like, my mood. Or if I am upset or stressed about something.
- Clinician: Ah, yes. Good point. I’m curious how you think all of this relates to the process of recovery. What does ‘checking in’ with ourselves and being more aware have to do with substance use and the process of recovery?
- Participant B: I guess if I check-in with myself and am more aware of how I feel, I can figure out how to deal with things. I can know where I am at and do things to prevent myself from going down a path where I end up drinking.
- Clinician: Yeah, for sure. I like the way you put that. It sounds like what you are saying is that checking in with yourself can help you take care of yourself and make wise choices throughout your day. And this can sort of change the way your day goes and make it less likely that you will turn to drinking.

- Participant B: Yeah, exactly.

Keep in mind that not all Conceptual Discussions need to go like the example above. This is just an example and is intended to provide some guidance on what kind of questions to ask and how to go about the process. It's important to keep in mind that there is no need to try to get participants to say anything in particular. The key is to just provide participants a safe, open, nonjudgmental space to reflect on the material. Similar to the Experiential Discussion, it can also help to evoke a sense of genuine curiosity during sessions. In other words, you can express a genuine curiosity in wanting to understand what participants think about certain questions (e.g., "I'm really curious to hear what you think about this question here"). Again, if participants don't have a lot to say at certain times, that is completely okay, and it doesn't mean you are doing anything wrong. We are simply inviting participants to explore their own thoughts about the material and share it if they would like.

The Conceptual Discussion can also be very different depending on many factors, such as the size of the group and how long the session is. It is important to be flexible and to go about the discussion in a way that works for the particular circumstances. In some cases, there may be a lot of time to go in depth with several participants in a group. In other cases, the Conceptual discussion may be briefer and just one or two participants may share a few comments. Again, there is no singular perfect way to go about the Conceptual Discussion. The idea is to invite participants to share, evoke a sense of curiosity, and just let the conversation unfold naturally.

INTEGRATING EXPERIENTIAL AND CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

It is recommended to start out with the Experiential Discussion while the experience of a given practice is fresh in the minds of participants. The Conceptual Discussion is typically conducted after the Experiential Discussion. However, it is perfectly okay and in fact sometimes effective to integrate some Conceptual Discussion throughout the Experiential Discussion. In other words, the Experiential Discussion and Conceptual Discussion do not need to be completely separate. You do not need to rigidly stay in one type of discussion, but can rather flexibly and fluidly move between the two types of discussions as needed. For example, during Experiential Discussion you may take a brief dive into relevant Conceptual Discussion to follow-up on an experience a participant shared.

Nudge

The "N" in the "OPEN" acronym stands for "Nudge." This involves using strategies to gently "nudge" participants towards integrating mindfulness practice into their lives. The idea is not to "push" participants through forceful, punitive, or overly direct and persuasive means, but instead to more gently and gradually "nudge" participants towards developing intrinsic motivation and genuine personal commitment for practicing mindfulness. Hence, the discussion that occurs in the "Nudge" phase of sessions has the same "evocative" or "eliciting" spirit as the Experiential and Conceptual discussions.

The total time of in-person sessions is a rather small amount of time in the larger context of the participant's life. Developing a person mindfulness practice will help participants strengthen and maintain mindfulness skills in the long-run. As noted in Part 1 of this guide, there are two main ways that individuals can integrate mindfulness practice into their lives: (1) Planned Practice, and (2) On-the-Go Practice. Here, we review these two types of practice again.

Planned Practice is about making a plan or schedule ahead of time about how one is going to fit in mindfulness practice into one's ongoing routine. Planned Practice might involve choosing certain days of the week and certain times of the day (e.g., weekdays at 8:30pm before bed) to set aside time to practice mindfulness, such as listening to a 10-minute audio-guided mindfulness practice from a mindfulness app. Participants are encouraged to write down a plan or schedule alerts in their smartphone to remind them to practice at certain times. For MBRP-RA participants, daily or semi-daily (e.g., 4 to 6 days per week) practice is encouraged. However, what is most important is that participants integrate planned mindfulness practice into their lives in a realistic and sustainable way that works best for them at a given time. For MBRP-RA participants, a *10-minute* audio-guided practice on a given occasion is a good go-to typical length of time to practice that works for most participants. MBRP-RA participants can access audio-guided recordings of all the MBRP mindfulness practices at *PracticeMBRP.com*. The recordings can be directly played from the website or can be downloaded onto devices, such as a smartphone. The website also has recordings of different lengths, including practices in the 5-minute range and in the 15- to 30-minute range.

Sometimes participants may not have access to smartphones or other devices to access the website. For example, participants may not have a smartphone. Or, in residential treatment settings, sometimes participants are not allowed to use their smartphones. In these cases, clinicians and treatment agencies are encouraged to do the best they can to help participants gain access to audio-guided recordings, such as providing MP3 or CD players to participants, or having MP3 or CD players available for participants to "sign out" and use for a period of time.

On-the-Go Practice is all about practicing mindfulness on-the-go or "on-the-fly" in one's daily life, without necessarily planning ahead of time. There are many ways to go about on-the-go practice, including:

(1) Mindful Moments - taking brief mindful moments or "pauses" to mindfully check-in

- Taking a few mindful breaths.
- Taking 1 minute or so to mindfully check-in with oneself.
- Doing the SOBER Space for 1-minute or so as a way to pause and check-in.

(2) Mindful Coping - practicing mindfulness to cope with challenging or upsetting situations

- Using the SOBER Space to cope with any stressful or triggering situations that comes up (responding to the situation in a healthy way, instead of reacting).
- Mindfully riding out or "surfing" an urge as it comes and goes.
- Mindfully accepting and making room for physical or emotional discomfort.

- “Stepping back” and just noticing negative thoughts as they pass by, instead automatically getting caught up in your thoughts or believing them.

(3) Mindful Activities - mindfulness during any type of daily activity

- Bringing a curious awareness to the present moment during any type of daily activity, such as eating, doing chores, showering, walking, being in nature, or spending time with friends and family.

Participants in MBRP are encouraged to engage in both Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice on a daily or semi-daily basis (4 to 6 days per week). Both types of practice are equally important. Next, we describe three core tasks for “nudging” participants towards integrating mindfulness practice into their lives. These tasks include: (1) *Educating* participants about Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice, (2) *Motivating* participants to practice, and (3) *Facilitating* ongoing practice over time through reinforcement of practice and normalization of challenges.

Nudge Task 1: Educate

Educating participants about Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice is critical, particularly for newcomers. We recommend making a chart on a whiteboard as you engage participants in an interactive discussion about Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice. See the following Figure which provides an example of what the whiteboard might look like after completing an interactive discussion on mindfulness practice. First, you can make a chart on the whiteboard with “Planned Practice” on one side and “On-the-Go Practice” on the other side. It is always best to try to elicit the information from participants by asking questions, rather than simply provide the information yourself.

In regard to frequency of practice, encourage participants to practice both Planned Practice and On-the-Go practice on a daily or semi-daily basis. Using the term “semi-daily” is intended to convey the idea that daily practice is not a requirement. In general, avoid conveying the idea that anything less than daily practice is not worth it. Practicing several days per week, short of daily, is also great and may be preferable for some participants. Participants can always work their way up to more frequent practice over time.

Encourage participants to link their planned practice each day to a routine activity that they do at a relatively consistent time each day, such as eating breakfast, getting dressed in the morning, showering, or getting ready for bed. Linking a practice to an activity means consistently doing your planned practice before or after a specific daily activity. For example, a person may choose to listen to a 10-minute audio-recording after showering in the evening each day. Or, another person may choose to listen to a 10-minute audio-recording before breakfast each morning. The idea is to mentally link mindfulness practice to a daily activity to remind oneself to practice and to get in a rhythm in which mindfulness practice becomes part of one’s regular routine.

Example Notes on Whiteboard During Education about Mindfulness Practice

Planned Practice	On-the-Go Practice
Plan ahead, make a schedule, set aside time Ex. Every morning before breakfast PracticeMBRP.com to access recordings (most 10 min) Quiet space, use headphones Daily or semi-daily Planned Practice	Practicing “on-the-fly” in daily life How? (1) <u>Mindful Moments</u> – take a breath, pause, check-in (2) <u>Mindful Coping</u> – SOBER Space (3) <u>Mindful Activities</u> – Mindful eating, walking, etc. Daily or semi-daily On-the-Go practice

While engaging in the interactive discussion about practice, here are some other strategies to facilitate the discussion:

- Disclose details about your own Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice.
- Ask participants to share how they go about Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice.
- Direct participants’ attention to and review the various handouts, such as the “Key Concepts and Recommended Practice Handout,” the “Practice Log Handout,” or information on mindfulness practice in the Startup Packet for new participants.

Nudge Task 2: Motivate

There are several strategies for motivating participants to practice.

Strengthening our “mindfulness muscle.” One option is to talk about mindfulness practice as a form of exercise or mental training for strengthening the mind or strengthening one’s “mindfulness muscle.” This can help participants understand how and why regular mindfulness practice over time is important. In the same way we as human beings need to exercise our bodies for our physical health, we also need to exercise our minds for our mental and emotional health. Regular mindfulness practice keeps our “mindfulness muscle” strong over time. And most importantly, when our mindfulness muscle is strong, we are better able to cope with and work through challenges that come up in our lives.

Disclose your own motivations for practicing. It is perfectly okay to disclose your own motivations for practicing mindfulness, or how mindfulness is helpful in your own life. Doing this in an authentic way (without trying to “sell” mindfulness) can be an effective strategy for sparking participant’s own motivation to practice.

Elicit participants’ own motivations. Another strategy is to ask participants why mindfulness practice is important to them, or how mindfulness is helpful so far in their own lives. This can

elicit participants' own personal motivations and reasons for practicing. Eliciting participant's own motivations to practice is preferable, instead of lecturing on and on about reasons for practicing or trying to "push" participants to practice.

Briefly mention that mindfulness is backed by scientific research. You don't need to go into detail about the research or try to "sell" mindfulness by talking about the research evidence. Rather, it can be helpful to briefly mention that the effectiveness of mindfulness is supported by lots of research, including studies among people in recovery from substance use problems.

A little bit goes a long way. Using the phrase "a little bit goes a long way" can be motivating for participants. You can remind participants that practicing mindfulness doesn't have to take out huge chunks of time during one's day. You can express the idea that doing little bits of practice each day is a great way to practice. 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 disclose your own experiences about how doing little bits of mindfulness helps you during your day (e.g., "Just doing a few minutes of mindfulness practice makes a big difference in my day. It grounds me and makes me less 'snappy' towards others.")

Caring for our mind as much as our teeth. This is a somewhat strange way of motivating participants, yet it can be powerful. The idea is that in many ways we as people sometimes devote more time and energy towards taking care of our teeth than our minds. For example, we brush our teeth two or three times a day (a few minutes each time), and we might also floss or use mouthwash, or go to the dentist regularly. You can explain all this and pose the question to the group. Think how much time and effort you dedicate towards taking care of your teeth on an ongoing basis. What if we took the same amount of time and effort to take care of our minds on an ongoing basis?" From here you can see what participants say. You can add something like: "Shouldn't we take care our minds as much as, if not more, than we take care of our teeth?! Don't get me wrong, teeth are important. But our minds are also so important. Our mental and emotional health is so important and there are things we can do on an ongoing basis, like mindfulness practice, to improve and maintain our mental and emotional well-being."

Nudge Task 3: Facilitate

This task is about facilitating ongoing practice over time. This task has some overlap with the Motivate task, yet the focus is on facilitating continued practice once participants have started practicing. There are several ways to facilitate continued practice.

Inquire about ongoing practice efforts with a sense of curiosity. In MBRP groups, the idea is not to meticulously monitor how much practice each participant is doing. Rather, the idea is to take some time during sessions to inquire about ongoing practice efforts – both Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice – with a sense of openness and curiosity (e.g. "I'm really curious to hear, how has mindfulness practice been going for you guys? Would anyone like to share any experiences they have had with mindfulness practice over the last week?"). If participants only initially talk about one type of practice (e.g., only talk about On-the-Go Practice) then you can follow-up and specifically inquire about the other type of practice (e.g., I also curious to hear how it's been going with Planned Mindfulness Practice, such as setting aside time to listen to the

mindfulness audio-recordings. Would anyone like to share how that is going?). The idea with inquiring about ongoing practice efforts is not to get participants to say anything in particular. Rather, the idea is to simply be curious and interested in what experiences and observations participants had. Inquiring about ongoing practice also provides you a chance to reinforce practice efforts and respond to challenges participants might be experiencing (discussed next).

Reinforce any practice efforts with verbal praise. When inquiring about ongoing practice efforts, the most important task is to reinforce (via verbal praise) *any* ongoing efforts to practice. Reinforcing ongoing practice through verbal praise can be a powerful strategy for facilitating ongoing practice. Verbal praise can be short, simple, and genuine statements that praise the participants effort (not the outcome) to engage in practice (e.g., “That is awesome that you are practicing these mindfulness skills. Nice work!”). Make sure to provide genuine praise for any practice a participant engaged in, even if it is a relatively small or moderate amount. Avoid trying to “push” participants to practice more.

Explore specific moments of On-the-Go Practice. Sometimes it is easier to inquire about specific moments of On-the-Go Practice because participants may remember these moments more vividly in their memory. Additionally, generally participants tend to be more consistently engage in On-the-Go Practice, as compared to Planned Practice. For example, you might ask questions about the specific types of On-the-Go Practice, which again include: (1) Mindful moments, (2) Mindful coping, (3) Mindful activities. Here are some example questions.

“We have talked about how one way to practice mindfulness on-the-go is to take brief little “mindful moments” in daily life, such as pausing and taking a few mindful breaths. Would anyone like to share any experiences they have had taking mindful moments?”

“We have talked about how one way to practice mindfulness on-the-go is to use mindfulness as a coping skill during challenging situations. Would anyone like to share any experiences they have had using mindfulness to cope with a challenging situation?”

“We have talked about how one way to practice mindfulness on-the-go is to practice being mindful during activities, like when eating or showering. Would anyone like to share any experiences they have had with mindful activities in daily life?”

Restate the importance of regular Planned Practice. Because participants tend to more consistently engage in On-the-Go Practice and tend to have more difficulty sticking with Planned Practice, it is helpful to regularly make brief statements each session about the importance of Planned Practice. The “mindfulness as a battery” metaphor can be helpful for conveying the importance of regular planned practice. For example, you might say:

“You guys have been doing a great job practicing mindfulness on-the-go. Keep in mind that is also really important to do Planned Mindfulness Practice, such as having a routine in which you listen to a 10-minute audio-recording each day or several days a week. You can think of your mindfulness ability like a battery that needs regular recharging. Whenever you listen to an audio-recording as part of your routine you are recharging your mindfulness battery. Keeping your mindfulness battery fully charged is

so important because then you are prepared and ready to use your mindfulness abilities when challenging situations come up in your life.”

Normalize practice challenges. When reviewing ongoing practice efforts, participants may bring up various challenges they are experiencing while practicing, such as getting sleepy, feeling restless, having difficulty focusing, or wondering if one is doing the practice “right.” The most important thing is to normalize these challenges. You might share challenges you have experienced in your own practice as a way to normalize these challenges. You might refer participants to the “Common Challenges” handout in the startup packet. As appropriate you may also provide some simple feedback to participants about how to work through challenges when there may be a simple solution. For example, if a participant falls asleep every time they practice, you might recommend practicing in a sitting posture, instead of lying down, or practicing with one’s eyes open or half open with a soft gaze.

THE HEART THEMES

Now that we have covered the “OPEN” in the OPEN HEART acronym, we can turn to the “HEART.” This second part of the acronym captures the “heart” of MBRP, or the core themes in MBRP as a whole. HEART stand for **H**onoring our experience, **E**ngaging in life, **A**ccepting momentary experience, **R**esponding with awareness, and **T**houghts as Thoughts. The HEART acronym is for you as the clinician and is intended to remind you of the core themes in MBRP. You do not need to teach the HEART acronym to participants.

Here, we discuss each part of the HEART acronym.

Honoring our experience

Honoring our experience is about acknowledging our own experience (sensations, emotions, thoughts) in the moment as it is, instead of ignoring or denying our experience. Honoring our experience is about taking the time during our day to check-in with ourselves and fully notice what our experience is with a sense of curiosity and openness. Sometimes our experience can guide us in some way and inform us about what we need and how we can take care of ourselves. As the Guest House poem states, “Treat each guest honorably” and “Be grateful for whatever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.” Honoring our experience also involve kindness and compassion towards ourselves. Acknowledging our feelings and needs in the moment, and then doing the best we can to take care of ourselves, is a way of being kind and compassionate towards ourselves. As human beings we all have many types of needs, such as the need for water, food, safety, rest, sleep, physical activity, alone time, a way to express emotions, social connection, enjoyment, helps from others, mental stimulation, relief from physical and emotional discomfort, and a sense of meaning or purpose in life. Mindfulness is about taking the time to pause and really check-in with ourselves during our day to ask: “How am I feeling?” and “What do I need right now?” By doing this, we can be more aware of our needs and can take care of ourselves. Overall, honoring our experience, rather than denying our experience, is essential for practicing self-care.

Furthermore, as human beings, we all have various urges and impulses to do things which may not necessarily be in our best interest, such as eating junk food, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol or using drugs, isolating ourselves, trying to be around people all the time, or overworking. Honoring our experience is also about exploring and acknowledging our *full* experience in the moment beyond the initial urge or craving that rises to the surface. For example, this might involve noticing other sensations, thoughts, and emotions that are present along with the urge to use drugs. This might involve reflecting on other needs or desires we may have in the moment that go beyond the initial urge to use drugs. In a way, it is like exploring other needs that are hiding “beneath” the urge or that are “masked” or “covered” up by the urge to use drugs. When we are having an urge, we can pause and ask ourselves, “What do I really need right now? What am I really looking for right now?”

The mindfulness practices or activities in MBRP that particularly relate to the ‘Honoring our experience’ theme include the Mindful Check in, Mindfulness of Emotions and Guest House Poem, SOBER Space, Exploring Your Needs Meditation, Urge Surfing, and Kindness Meditation. These practices are discussed in more detail in Part 3 and 4.

Engaging in life

Engaging in life is all about living in the moment and being present in our daily lives. After all, we can only truly engage in life in the present moment. The past is in the past and the future is in the future. When we are too caught up in the past or future, we can miss out on important, pleasurable, and interesting experiences right in front of us in the present moment. Mindfulness is a skill for continually re-connecting with the present moment right in front of us and taking in what life has to offer.

Engaging in life is also about mindfully participating in life as it happens in a personally valued or meaningful way. This includes making mindful choices and following our values and goals, as best as we can, even when distress and discomfort come up.

The mindfulness practices or activities in MBRP that particularly relate to the ‘Engaging in life’ theme of mindfulness include Mindful Eating, other Mindful Daily Activities, the Values Meditation, and the SOBER Space. These practices are discussed in more detail in Part 3 and 4.

Accepting our momentary experience

Accepting our momentary experience is about adopting a stance of openness, nonjudgment, and acceptance towards our subjective momentary experience, including challenging or difficult momentary experiences (e.g., fear, sadness, anger, shame, physical pain and discomfort, repetitive or intrusive thoughts). It is about fully acknowledging and being willing to have these experiences in the moment, rather than getting caught up in judging, fighting, denying, avoiding, or controlling these experiences.

The mindfulness practices or activities in MBRP that particularly relate to the ‘Accepting our momentary experience’ aspect of mindfulness include Mindfulness of Emotions and the Guest House Poem, Urge Surfing, and the Mindful Check-In. These practices are discussed in more detail in Part 3 and 4.

Responding with awareness

Responding with awareness is about acting in a conscious and deliberate manner, rather than reacting impulsively or automatically (especially when we are triggered). As human beings, we all have the tendency to get caught up in automatic behavior patterns, which often do not serve us. Mindfulness helps create a “pause” or “space” in between a trigger and a response. Beyond moments when we are triggered, mindfulness helps us “pause” in daily life and make mindful choices in any kind of situation.

The mindfulness practices or activities in MBRP that particularly relate to the ‘Responding with Awareness’ theme include the SOBER Space, SOBER Space in Challenging Situation, and Urge Surfing. These practices are discussed in more detail in Part 3 and 4.

Thoughts as Thoughts

Thoughts as thoughts is all about seeing thoughts as just thoughts - words or images that pop up and then pass through our minds, rather than facts, truths, commands that we have to believe in or act upon. Being mindful of our thoughts can involve “stepping back” and simply observing our thoughts as they come and go, rather than getting swept away by our thoughts or lost in the stories our thoughts are telling us.

The mindfulness practices or activities in MBRP that particularly relate to the ‘Thoughts as Thoughts’ theme include the Walking Down the Street Exercise and the Mindful Check-In. These practices are discussed in more detail in Part 3 and 4.

Part 3

Conducting MBRP-Rolling Admission

(MBRP-RA)

OVERVIEW OF MBRP-RA

Here is a brief “bird’s eye” overview of MBRP-RA, including the components covered in every session and the components for specific sessions.

Components Covered Every MBRP-RA Session

- Orienting newcomers to the basics of the group.
- Mindful Check-In as the first guided practice for each session.
- Experiential Discussion after the Mindful Check-In.
- Conceptual Discussion related to the Mindful Check-In.
- Nudging participants toward regular practice (Educate, Motivate, Facilitate).

Snapshot of Individual Sessions

Name of Session	Mindfulness Practices	Learning Goals
1. Mindfulness vs. Automatic pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindful Eating • SOBER Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate mindfulness from automatic pilot. • Describe the role of automatic pilot in substance use. • Practice intentionally stepping out of automatic pilot mode into a mindful mode. • Define the steps of the SOBER Space.
2. Emotions as Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness of Emotions and Reading of Guest House Poem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the role of challenging emotions in substance use. • Practice mindfully accepting and “sitting with” emotional discomfort. • Identify ways in which challenging emotions are like “visitors.”
3. Self-Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindness Meditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the role of self-judgment in substance use. • Practice bringing kindness and compassion towards oneself. • Identify ways in which self-compassion facilitates recovery.
4. Responding (not reacting) to triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOBER Space • SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a trigger and describe the role of triggers in substance use. • Practice responding with awareness to an imagined trigger. • Define the steps of the SOBER Space. • Discuss ways to use the SOBER Space in triggering situations.

5. Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking Down the Street Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiate thoughts from body sensations and emotions. Describe the role of thoughts in the relapse cycle. Practice mindfully noticing thoughts as just thoughts arising in the mind, not truths or commands.
6. Surfing the Urge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urge Surfing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the similarity of urges/cravings with ocean waves. Practice noticing the experience of an urge/craving with curiosity and acceptance. Practice exploring wholesome needs “beneath” an urge/craving to use
7. Following Your Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values Meditation SOBER Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define ‘values’ and describe their role in the recovery process. Identify ways mindfulness facilitates valued living. Practice mindfully reflecting on personal values. Define the steps of the SOBER Space.
8. Exploring Your Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring Your Meditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify wholesome human needs that underlie urges to use substances. Practice mindfully exploring human needs underlying urges to use substances. Describe how and why it is understandable that people turn to substances

ORIENTING TASKS IN MBRP-RA

ORIENTING NEWCOMERS TO THE GROUP

A critical task in MBRP-RA is orienting newcomers to the group the beginning of a session. Here we describe these procedures.

Determine whether there are newcomers in the group. Sometimes it is easy to tell if there are newcomers to the group. Other times it is not so easy, especially if the group is relatively large. One way to determine if there are newcomers is to start the group by explicitly noting that some people may be new to the group and asking, “Is this anyone’s first time in this mindfulness group? Let’s see by a show of hands.” If there are one or more newcomers, then you can proceed to lead the orientation discussion about the group. If there are no newcomers to the group, then you can skip some or all of the orientation discussion about the basics of the group.

Orient newcomers to the basics of the group at very beginning of session. It is critical to orient newcomers by providing a brief orientation at the beginning of the session. We recommend making this orientation relatively brief (no more than 5 minutes), interactive, and somewhat varied from session to session. You want to avoid providing the same exact lecture about the group at every session because sometimes prior attendees may get bored of hearing the same lecture. The key pieces of info you want to cover in the orientation include:

1. The name of the group
2. What the group is about and what it involves
3. What mindfulness means
4. The role of mindfulness in recovery

The name of the group can be “Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention” and you might write this on the whiteboard at the beginning of every group. It is also completely fine to have the name of the group just be “Mindfulness” or “the Mindfulness Group.” Sometimes participants find it easier to simply refer to it as “the Mindfulness group.” Of note, if newcomers have never met you before, it is of course important to introduce yourself as well!

Typically, you as the clinician will directly provide the information for pieces 1 (the name of the group), and 2 (what the group is about and what it involves). For piece 2, you do not need to go into detail. Keep it short and simple. Give participants some sense of what the group involves (i.e., guided mindfulness practices and discussion). For example, to cover pieces 1 and 2, you might say:

“Hi Everyone. Welcome to this mindfulness group. For those of you who are new, this group is all about learning and practicing the skill of mindfulness. The way this group works is that I will lead the group through some guided mindfulness practices, and then afterwards we will have an open discussion.”

For pieces 3 (what mindfulness means) and 4 (the role of mindfulness in recovery), we recommend eliciting the information from prior attendees, rather than providing the information yourself. This serves the purpose of keeping prior attendees engaged and interested (rather than listening to the same lecture at the beginning of every session). Additionally, eliciting discussion is generally preferred over lecturing in MBRP. You do not need to go in detail for pieces 3 and 4. Again, keep it short and simple. The idea is to just give newcomers a broad sense about what the group is about and to pique their curiosity and interest in learning mindfulness. Here are some examples of key *orienting questions* you can ask to elicit information on pieces 3 and 4. Try to mix it up from session to session and ask different questions or ask the same questions in slightly different ways.

“Let’s review what mindfulness is. Would anyone who has already been to this class like to share what their understanding of mindfulness is?”

“What is the mindfulness thing all about?”

“What would you say is another word for mindfulness?”

“How is mindfulness related to recovery?”

“I was wondering if someone who has been to this group before would be willing to share a few quick comments about what this group is about overall. This would be helpful for some of the newcomers to get an idea about what this group is about. Any takers?”

“For those of you who have been to this group before, what would you say this group is all about? How would you describe the group to someone who is new to it?”

“For those of you who have been to this group before, would you be willing to share a short bit about how mindfulness has been helpful to you in your recovery so far?”

OTHER ORIENTING TASKS IN MBRP-RA

Tell newcomers that you will provide them a “Startup” packet of core handouts at the end of the session. Whenever newcomers are present at a session, you will need to provide them with the “Startup” packet of core handouts. This packet includes several handouts with introductory information. You can mention that these handouts are kind of like a “startup” packet or “starter kit” that will help new participants “get up to speed” or “get in the swing of things.” We recommend distributing this packet at the end of a session. Sometimes distributing handouts at the beginning or during sessions can be distracting (e.g., participants may be looking through the handouts during a practice or group discussion).

Write the name of the session on the whiteboard. We recommend writing the name of the session on the whiteboard, as well as briefly directing the group’s attention to what the unique topic of the session will be at the beginning of each session. This is important because it immediately informs participants who have attended prior MBRP-RA groups that new material will be covered in the current session. Otherwise, prior attendees may not be sure if new material will be covered and may get irritated, especially when the group starts out with the Mindful Check-In each time. Thus, writing the name of the session on the whiteboard is a way to “entice” prior attendees about forthcoming new material.

“The name of today’s session is called Mindfulness and Emotions. So, the topic for today will be on emotions and what it means to be mindful of our emotions. We will be talking more about this topic in a short bit. For now, we will start out the group like we usually do with the mindful check practice.”

Orient all participants to each new activity throughout a session. In addition to orienting participants at the beginning of a session, it is also important briefly orient participants to new activities during a session (e.g., “next we will be doing...”). The various practices or activities

may require more or less orientation depending on what they involve. For several of the practices that require a more thorough orientation, we provide examples of how to orient the group to the practice when we delve into the details of particular mindfulness practices in MBRP-RA.

THE MINDFUL CHECK-IN

The Mindful Check-In is the core mindfulness practice in MBRP-RA that is practiced at the beginning of every MBRP-RA session. As the name implies, the Mindful Check-In is all about “checking-in” with one’s inner experience in the moment (body sensations, emotions, and thoughts). Bringing awareness to sensations, emotions, and thoughts is an important mindfulness skill that is involved in many of mindfulness practices in MBRP. The phrase “checking-in” can quickly orient newcomers to the spirit of mindfulness, potentially because the phrase “checking-in” naturally seems to have connotations with a sense of curiosity and compassion. For example, one can check-in with one’s experience with a sense of curiosity or interest (e.g., Hmm, what I am actually feeling right now in this moment? What can I notice about my experience right now if I pause and really check-in?). Additionally, one can check-in with oneself with a sense of compassion, in the same way a parent may check-in with child who is upset (e.g., “Are you okay? Tell me what you are feeling.”), or in the same way a person may check-in with a person may check-in with a friend who appears stressed (e.g., “I just wanted to check-in. How are you?”).

The Mindful Check-In concludes with a period of focused attention on sensations of the breath. Focusing attention on the breath is also an important mindfulness skill that is involved in many other mindfulness practices in MBRP. Hence, altogether the Mindful Check-In is a foundational practice that involves two important mindfulness skills: (1) bringing a curious and compassionate awareness to one’s inner experience, and (2) focusing one’s attention on the breath.

MBRP-RA can feel somewhat chaotic and scattered at times –for both clinicians and participants – because of the rolling admission format. Having the same practice at the beginning of every MBRP-RA session provides a sense of structure and certainty amidst this chaos. Participants quickly learn what to expect when attending an MBRP-RA session, instead of just jumping in and having no idea what will come up from one session to the next. Having one core practice that all participants focus on can also create a sense of cohesion within the group. Participants quickly become very familiar with the Mindful Check-In and can discuss this practice as a group from session to session.

Key Steps of the Mindful Check-In

1. Check in with the body.
2. Check in with emotions.
3. Check in with the mind (i.e., thoughts in the mind).
4. Anchor attention on the breath.

A good way to remember the “checking-in” steps is to keep in mind the phrase “BODY, HEART, MIND.” When we check in with ourselves, we are curious about sensations in our *body*, emotions in our *heart*, and thoughts in our *mind*.

Sample Instruction

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction “.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipsis “.....”

As many of you already know, we are going to start out with the core practice in this group called the Mindful Check-In. This practice involves checking in with yourself and being curious about how you are feeling in the moment. Let’s get started now. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed.

We can start out here by checking in with how our bodies feel. When you are ready, bring your awareness to your whole body in this moment and just notice any sensations that come up in your awareness.....You might notice your body touching the chair or surface you are sitting on.....maybe noticing that sensation of pressure or the weight of your body on the chair..... You might start at the top of your head and slowly scan down your body, and just noticing any sensations that stand out to you.....seeing if you can become curious about what sensations are present.....perhaps you notice sensations of tightness, warmth, coolness, tingling?...or something else.....and just noticing these sensations as they are without judgment.....all we are doing is taking some time to check-in and be aware of what we are feeling, in an open and accepting way

Now, take a moment to acknowledge what’s going on with you emotionally.....Are you aware of any emotions that are present with you right now?
.....Maybe you feel content
....calm....or maybe restless..... anxious.... frustrated or sad.....or maybe you are sort of emotionally neutral right now.....see what it is like to just allow yourself to feel whatever you are feeling right now....taking this time to check-in with yourself in a gentle way and just feel your feelings as they are.....

Now, take a moment to acknowledge what’s going on in your mind.....Maybe noticing the overall quality of your mind overall right now...Is your mind jumbled with lots of thoughts?is your mind is somewhat quiet with some thoughts popping up here and there... Just noticing.....See what it’s like to step back and just observe thoughts in your mind from a distance.....not getting too caught up in thoughts or following them....just noticing them and letting them pop up and then pass by.....

Now, when you are ready, gather your attention and bring your focus to your breathing in this moment.....Notice the sensations of the breath in your body as the breath flows in and as it flows out.....Using your breath as an anchor for your attention. If you notice your attention wander off away from the breath, do your best to come back to your anchor, the breath, and continue to just follow the breath with your

awareness.....
.....

And when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.

Concepts Related to the Mindful Check-In

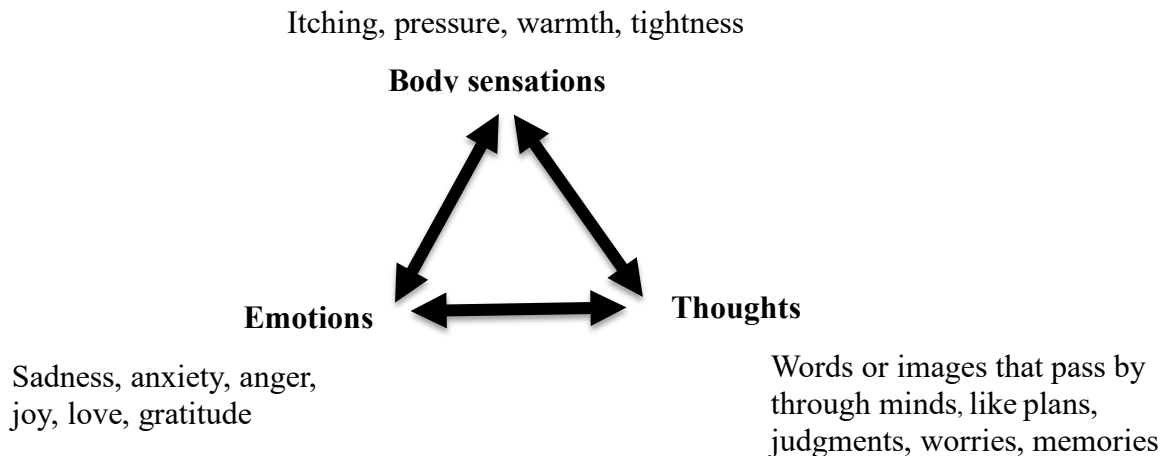
The way we check-in

- Mindfully checking in with ourselves in a *particular way*.
- Noticing how we feel in a *gentle* and *nonjudgmental* way. Not judging ourselves for the way we feel. Just acknowledging it, in the same way we might acknowledge the way a close friend is feeling when they are upset.
- Bringing an attitude of *openness* and *acceptance* towards unpleasant feelings. Allowing ourselves to feel unpleasant feelings, instead of pushing them away or fighting them.
- Being *curious* and *interested* in our inner experience. Hmm, what am I actually experiencing right now? Curiosity towards how we feel can help us be open to what is actually present.

The Triangle of Awareness

- Three key aspects of our inner experiences are body sensations, emotions, and thoughts
- This can be referred to as “The Triangle of Awareness.”
- When we check-in, we can be aware of each of these aspects of our experience in the moment (this is exactly what participants do in the Mindful Check-In Practice).
- Each of these aspects of our experience are different yet interrelated.
- The arrows in the triangle show that these aspects of our experience can influence one another (e.g., thoughts about a situation influencing how we feel emotionally).

Note: The Mindful Check-In Practice nicely sets up discussion of the triangle of awareness. We recommend drawing out the triangle of awareness on the whiteboard as you engage participants in an interactive discussion. You do not need to cover the triangle of awareness at every single session following the Mindful Check-In. Discussing the triangle awareness at every session may become repetitive and boring for regular attendees. Instead, mix things up and discuss the triangle of awareness for some sessions and not others. Again, in the rolling admission format, it is important to mix things up and not provide the same exact content over and over. At the same time, the Triangle of Awareness can be very helpful to discuss for both newcomers, and as a review for prior attendees. Thus, try to fairly regularly include the Triangle of Awareness into discussion following the Mindful Check-In.



Noticing new aspects of our inner experience

- Noticing little details about our inner experience we might not normally notice (tingling, sensations in feet, tightness in jaw).
- Being more aware of one’s body; often we may not be aware of our bodies.
- Expanding our awareness to other parts of our inner experience (sadness, shame) beyond the parts of our experience we might be fixated or stuck on (anger).

Slowing down and taking time for self-care

- Often, we don’t take time to slow down, to check-in, and to take care of ourselves.
- The importance of pressing the pause button, slowing down, stepping out of automatic pilot mode.
- Taking time for self-care is not selfish. We all need to take time to check in with ourselves and care for ourselves.

Noticing emotions and cravings earlier before things “snowball”

- Not waiting till emotions or cravings are extremely intense to notice and deal with them.
- Checking in with ourselves on a regular basis can help us notice and respond to emotions or cravings earlier in the process, when they might be less intense, before they have “snowballed” and become very intense and overwhelming.

Differentiating and labeling our experience to see things clearly as they actually are

- The Mindful Check-In is about checking in with body (sensations), heart, (emotions), and mind (thoughts). Hence, the Mindful Check-In helps us *differentiate* and *label* different parts of our inner experience.
- Sometimes our experience (when stressed, upset, or having a craving) can feel like one “big overwhelming blob” that we just cannot handle. Mindfully checking in helps us

“break our experience down in to parts” and see it for what it actually is, which can make our experience seem less mysterious and overwhelming.

- For example, when having a strong craving to use, an individual may pause and check-in closely with their actual experience (“Oh ok, wait a minute, let me check-in with what I am actually experiencing here...I notice a tightness in my chest, I feel somewhat sad right now, and I am having thoughts about going to the store to buy alcohol. These are just thoughts and feelings that will pass. Can I be okay with these experiences and let them come and go?”).
- In other words, differentiating and labeling our experience (seeing it clearly) can often facilitate mindfulness acceptance of whatever is present. Rather than being left in the dark or uncertain about what we are feeling, we can try to see our experience clearly and this can reduce the urge to avoid our experience and facilitate the ability to be with challenging experiences.
- We can “mentally label” our experience in different ways. For example, we can think to ourselves in our mind or make little “I notice” mental notes: “I notice I feel sad” “I notice thoughts coming up” “I notice a tingling sensation.”

Inner experiences as clues for self-care

- Checking in with ourselves throughout the day can help us uncover clues about what we need or how to take care of ourselves (sad/lonely → maybe reach out to friends; hungry and tired → maybe take break and have a snack; stressed/tense → go for a walk).
- If we feel an urge or craving to use, we can pause to check-in to see if there are other “inner clues” about what we might need. (“Hold on, are drugs the thing I really need right now? Let me take a moment to check-in. I notice I feel really lonely right now. Maybe what I need is to reach out to some supportive people in my life.”)

The breath as an anchor

- Sometimes we can get “swept away” or overwhelmed by difficult thoughts, feelings, or craving when we check in.
- The breath can serve an anchor that keeps us anchored or grounded as we check in with how we feel in any moment.
- The breath is always there, and we can always turn our attention to the breath as a way to ground ourselves when we are in the process of checking in
- The breath can assist us in being aware of difficult thoughts and feelings in such a way where we do not become completely swept away or caught up in these thoughts and feelings.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts for the Mindful Check-In

- So, for those of you who are new to the group, after doing the mindful check-in practice just now, what would you say this mindfulness thing is all about? Based on your experience with the practice, what would you say it means to be mindful?

(This can be a good question to ask newcomers. Even if you have briefly reviewed mindfulness at the beginning of the session, it is still useful to inquire newcomers about their own understanding of mindfulness after engaging in the Mindful Check-In).

- What does it mean to you to “mindfully check in” with yourself?
- Why is checking in with ourselves important in daily life?
- In what ways do you think taking the time to mindfully check in with ourselves can be important in the process of recovery?
- When we check in with ourselves, what are some different aspects of our experience that we can notice? *(This can lead to a discussion of the triangle of awareness).*
- What are different types of emotions? What are different types of body sensations? What are thoughts? What are types of thoughts?
- Why do all the arrows mean in this diagram? *(Referring to the triangle of awareness).*
- Why might it be helpful to mindfully check-in with ourselves when we have an urge or craving to use?
- The Mindful Check-In ends with focusing on the breath. In ways do you think focusing on the breath could be helpful during the process of checking in with ourselves when we are stressed or upset?

Other Notes About the Mindful Check-in

Although the Mindful Check-In has a certain format, this format can be flexible, and you can lead the practice in somewhat different ways depending on your clinical judgment about what you think will be helpful and appropriate for a group on a given session. For example, you can vary the amount of time you have participant’s check-in with different aspects of their experience. For some sessions you might zero in on the body or perhaps the breath by providing participants more time to check-in with these aspects of their experience. Another option for mixing it up is to do the checking in with the body step as more of a traditional body scan in which you guide participants in mindfully scanning different parts of their body (e.g., notice feet, then legs, then torso, etc.)

Be attentive to how much time you have newcomers notice thoughts and emotions during the check-in. For newcomers, noticing thoughts and emotions for several minutes at a time may be difficult. So, as a general guideline, you might spend a little more time on the body and the breath, as compared to thoughts and emotions, during the mindful check-in when you have newcomers.

EXPERIENTIAL DISCUSSION IN MBRP-RA

In Part 2 of this guide, we already delved into the ins and outs of experiential discussion in MBRP. Here, we would like to note that Experiential Discussion in MBRP-RA, with 60- or 90-minute sessions, can be somewhat different than Experiential Discussion in standard closed-group MBRP with 2-hour sessions. There is simply not as much time to delve into Experiential Discussion in MBRP-RA as there is in standard MBRP. Additionally, in MBRP-RA participants have varying levels of exposure to MBRP sessions and practices, and this too can have an impact on the Experiential Discussion that emerges from the group. Hence, it is completely okay and normal if some Experiential Discussions are fairly brief and if you are not able to explore the experiences of participants in a deep and detailed way. It is also completely okay and normal if you as the clinician experience challenges during Experiential Discussion, such as having difficulty eliciting discussion among participants. Just do the best you can.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION IN MBRP-RA

For the same reasons noted above (shorter sessions and participants with varying exposure to MBRP sessions and practice), Conceptual Discussion in MBRP-RA may be briefer and more challenging to facilitate, than Conceptual Discussion in standard closed-group MBRP. Again, just do the best you can.

As we noted in the section on Conceptual Discussion in Part 2 of this guide, don't worry about trying to facilitate the "perfect" discussion. There is no such thing as a "perfect" discussion. The most important thing is to provide participants a safe, open, nonjudgmental space to reflect on the material and how it relates to their own lives. In this guide we provide a list of potential concepts to discuss, as well as questions to elicit discussion about these concepts, for each of the mindfulness practices in MBRP-RA. These list of concepts for each practice are just *potential* concepts that might come up during conceptual discussion following a practice. You do not need to go out of your way to force these concepts into the discussion, and you certainly do not need to cover all of the concepts in one session. Rather, it is best to let the discussion unfold organically and to focus on certain concepts depending on where the discussion naturally flows and what participants bring up during a given session. Having said this, at times you might intentionally ask open-ended questions (such as the example questions we provide, or question you come up with) to gently steer the discussion in a certain direction that you think may be useful for the group.

Even though open, collaborative discussion is the primary means for facilitating understanding of concepts, it is also perfectly okay and sometimes very useful to provide didactic instruction, especially instruction that ties into or can be "weaved" into the collaborative discussion. Providing didactic instruction during Conceptual Discussion can be especially useful in MBRP-RA given the shorter length of the sessions. Sometimes, given time constraints, you may decide it

is appropriate and useful to briefly “teach” a concept, rather than elicit a discussion. Yet, even when you teach a concept in a more didactic way in which you are doing most of the talking, we encourage you to do this with a spirit of gentleness and curiosity, rather than being stern or trying to forcibly persuade participants.

THE SOBER SPACE

In addition to the Mindful Check-In, the SOBER Space is the other core practice of MBRP-RA. The SOBER Space is the “on-the-go” version of the Mindful Check-In. The steps of the SOBER are:

- Stop.** When you are in a particular situation, or even just random times throughout the day, remember to stop or “pause” to do this exercise. This is the first step in stepping out of automatic pilot.
- Observe.** Observe what is going on in the moment, both around you and inside of you. Observe the situation. Observe body sensations, emotions, and thoughts that may be coming up for you. Try to observe your experience in the moment with a sense of curiosity and nonjudgment.
- Breathe.** Focus your attention on your breathing. Notice the sensations of the breath in your body as you take a few slow breaths in and out.
- Expand.** Expand your awareness beyond just the breath and again observe your experience in the moment, including body sensations, emotions, thoughts, and the situation as a whole. Try to see the whole situation you are in with a sense of full awareness.
- Respond.** Respond to the situation with awareness of what you are doing, rather than just reacting automatically. Recognize that you have choices for how to respond. Think about what you need and how you can take care of yourself.

The parts of the SOBER Space that parallel the Mindful Check-In are the SOB steps. For example, the Mindful Check-In involves (1) Stopping to do the check-in, (2) Observing body sensations, emotions, and thoughts, and (3) Breathing (i.e., focusing attention on the breath). When teaching the SOBER Space, it is helpful to explicitly draw parallels between the Mindful Check-In and the SOBER Space. In particular, when covering the Observe step of the SOBER

Space, it is helpful to note how this step is similar to the Mindful Check-In and involve observing and checking-in with body sensations, emotions, and thoughts. Additionally, when covering the Breathe step, it is helpful to note how this step is similar to the end of the Mindful Check-In where we practice anchoring our attention on the breath.

Because the SOBER Space is a core practice in MBRP-RA, it is covered in three out of the eight sessions, including Session 1 “Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot”, Session 4 “Responding to triggers (not reacting),” and Session 7 “Following Your Values.” Sessions 1 and 7 include just the standard version of the SOBER Space, whereas Session 4 includes both the standard version and the “SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation Exercise” which involves first imagining a challenging situation before going through the steps of the SOBER Space.

Next, we review the key steps for teaching the SOBER Space and for then guiding participants through a brief SOBER Space Practice.

Key Steps for Teaching and Practicing the SOBER Space

1. Orient participants to what the SOBER Space is
2. Write the steps on the whiteboard and review each step
3. Guide participants through a brief guided SOBER Space.

Sample Instruction for *Teaching* the Steps of the SOBER Space

Note: When teaching the SOBER Space, elicit information about each step from prior attendees with questions as much as possible, instead of just lecturing about each step. After participants provide their comments, you can then “paraphrase” what they said, highlight certain points, and/or add your own follow-up comments as needed to adequately teach each step. In the Sample Instruction below the ellipses (...) indicate where participants would provide their comments.

Next, I am going to talk to you about the SOBER space. For those of you who are new, this is one of the core practices of this program. The SOBER space is a brief, on-the-go practice that you can do anytime, anywhere. For example, you can use the SOBER space when you are in a stressful situation or when having an urge to use. The SOBER space is all about learning how to pause and respond to situations with awareness, instead of just automatically reacting. For example, you might get cut off by someone in traffic and react by honking and yelling. Or someone might insult you and you immediately insult them back. Or you might be feeling angry and immediately start thinking about getting high. The SOBER space is a practice we can use to cope with these types of situations. The word SOBER helps you remember the steps of the practice. Let’s review the steps of the practice now. [Write “SOBER” vertically on left side of whiteboard].

Ok, let’s start with S. For those of you who have already practiced the SOBER space, can you tell me what the S stands for...That’s right, “Stop” [Record “Stop” next to S]. And what does this step involve? For those of you who have already practiced the SOBER space, can you tell me what this step involves in your own words...Great! As you mentioned, the S is all about

pausing and slowing down. You can almost think about it like pressing the pause button on a movie that is playing. The Stop step is about taking a moment to mentally pause so you can be more aware of what is going on. The Stop step is really important because it prevents us from getting stuck in automatic pilot mode and just reacting automatically.

Ok, let's turn to the O step. What does the O stand for?...That's right, The next step is to OBSERVE [Record "Observe" next to O]. And what does the O step involve? Would someone like to share?...Exactly! The O step is about observing what is happening in the moment, both around us and inside of us. We can observe the situation or environment we are in. We can also observe our own experience in the moment, including body sensations, emotions, and thoughts that are coming up. This step is similar to the Mindful Check-In Practice we just did. After Stopping, we then take a moment to check-in with ourselves and notice how we feel.

Ok, how about the B step. What does the B stand for?...Right. Breathe. [Record "Breathe" next to B]. The Breathe step is all about taking a moment to ground ourselves. Focusing on the breath can be a helpful way to ground ourselves and slow down even more, especially during moments when we might be upset or triggered in some way. This step can be as simple as just taking one or two slow, deep breaths and noticing the sensations of the breath in your body as you breathe in and out [physically demonstrate a slowed and deeper inhalation-exhalation]. This step of the SOBER is similar to the end of the Mindful Check-In where we practice focusing on the breath.

Ok, how about the E step. What does E stand for?...Nice! Yes, E stands for Expand [Record "Expand" next to E]. This step is all about expanding our awareness beyond just the breath and again observing what is happening in the moment. The idea is that after grounding ourselves with the B step, we want to expand back to the situation and again be fully aware of what is happening, both around us and inside of us. We use the word expand here because we are trying to expand our awareness and be aware of the whole situation, not just parts of it. Sometimes we can have tunnel vision and only be aware of certain things. The idea here to mindfully expand our awareness to the whole situation we are in.

Alright, and the final step R. What does R stand for?...Yes, The final step of the SOBER space is RESPOND [Record "Respond" next to R]. And what does this step involve?...Great! As you mentioned, the Respond step is all about responding to the situation with awareness, instead of automatically reacting or doing something we might regret. The respond step is about recognizing that in any situation, even really challenging situation, we always have choices for how we can respond. For example, we may choose to respond by walking away from a situation. Or we may respond by doing something to take care of ourselves or cope with a situation in a healthy way.

Stop, Observe, Breathe, Expand, Respond. These are the steps of the SOBER space. You can use the SOBER space in lots of different ways. In some situations, you may do a super quick 5 or 10 second SOBER. Or in other situations you might be able take a whole minute or two to go through the steps of the SOBER. I encourage you to try using the SOBER in lots of different ways and to "sprinkle" it throughout your day. Try doing quick little 5 or 10 second SOBERs here and there throughout your day. When you can, try taking a whole minute or two to go through the steps of the SOBER. Does anyone have any questions?"

Sample Instruction for *Leading the SOBER Space Practice*

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction “.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipsis “.....”

The best way to learn the SOBER space is to actually practice it yourself. So let’s practice the SOBER space together now – I will guide you in practicing the steps of the SOBER Space. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer.

The first step of the SOBER space is S for STOP. Take a moment right here to just pause and slow down for moment.....and the next step is O for OBSERVE. Observe what your experience is right now in the momentWhat is going on in your body?.....What kinds of thoughts and emotions are present for you now?.....Just observing with a sense of curiosity and without judging yourself in any way..... And the next step is B for BREATHE. Take a few slow mindful breaths right now anchor your attention on the breath as it flows in and out. As best as you can, connect with the direct sensations of the moving breath in the body..... and the next step is E for EXPAND. Expand your awareness back out to your experience in the moment right now. Again, just noticing any thoughts and feelings that are present with a sense of openness and nonjudgment..... You might expanding your awareness even more by opening your eyes if they were closed and just taking in the situation you are in....where you are and what you can see and hear the final step is R for RESPOND. For now, you might just simply notice that you have choices for responding or acting right now. For example, you might choose to just sit here and rest. Or, if you really wanted to you could choose to stand up and walk out of the room. The idea is to just be aware that you have the opportunity to consciously respond to this situation right here, right now. In any situation, even really challenging situations, we have choices for how we can respond. Mindfulness helps create a space or pause between a trigger and how we respond to a trigger.....

Concepts Related to the SOBER Space

A space between trigger and response

- Mindfulness can create a space or a pause between a trigger and our response.
- The STOP step of the SOBER is in a way the most important step because it creates a space and helps you step out of automatic pilot mode. The stop step gives us the opportunity to respond differently.
- Instead of reacting automatically (having a “knee-jerk” reaction), we can pause and respond to a situation with awareness.
- Mindfulness helps us pause and recognize the choices that are in front of us or the different ways of responding in any moment.

The Breath as an anchor

- Sometimes we can get “swept away” or overwhelmed by difficult thoughts and feelings when we check in.
- The breath is part of the SOBER space because the breath is like an anchor that keeps us anchored or grounded observe our experience.
- The breath can assist us in being aware of difficult thoughts and feelings in such a way where we do not become completely swept away or caught up in these thoughts and feelings.

Observing our experience in a certain way

- Similar to the mindful check-in, the Observe step of the SOBER is all about observing or checking in with our experience *in a certain way* (in a gentle, nonjudgmental, open, accepting, curious, way).
- Mindfulness is all about combining awareness with a mindful attitude towards what we are aware of.

Similarities between Mindful Check-In and SOBER

- The Mindful Check-in and the SOBER are very similar. They are the two core techniques in this program.
- The SOBER can be thought of as the “on-the-go” version of the mindful check-in
- The SOBER helps us remember the steps of checking in with ourselves when we are in the middle of a challenging situation.
- It can be helpful to remember that the mindful check in practice involves the first 3 steps SOB. (1) Stop, (2) Observe body sensations, emotions, thoughts, (3) Breathe.

Expanding to see the big picture

- The Expand step is all about expanding our awareness to “see the situation clearly” or “see the big picture.”
- Expanding awareness can be contrasted with having “tunnel vision” in a situation and fixating on one thing or seeing only one way to respond (when really there are multiple ways to respond).
- “Seeing the big picture” can mean a lot of different things: being aware of the how one feels and surroundings in the situation, being aware of different choices or responses in the situation, being aware of one’s values or goals related to the situation (how can I respond here in a way that fits with my values and goals?).

Experiment with using the SOBER in different ways

- The SOBER space is a flexible technique that can be used in lots of different ways.
- You don’t have to rigidly follow the steps or do it for a certain amount of time.
- You can do a 10 sec, 30 second, or 1 minute SOBER Space if you want.

- You can just do parts of the SOBER. Maybe just the S. Take a moment to pause and stop. Or maybe the SOB, which might involve taking 10 seconds or so to just stop, observe your experience, and then breathe.
- It is also completely fine to change the order of the steps if you wish. Some people like to do a “B-SOBER”, which involves starting out with noticing the breath as the first step before going through all the steps of the SOBER.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to the SOBER Space

- What do you think it means when we say: “mindfulness creates a space between the trigger and the response”?
- What does the “STOP” step mean to you? What does it mean to mindfully “STOP”?
- What does the “Observe” step mean to you? What does it mean to observe your experience in the moment?
- Why do you think the Breathe step is part of the SOBER space? How can this step be helpful in a stressful situation?
- What does the “Expand” step mean to you? What does it mean to “Expand” your awareness to the full situation? How can “expanding our awareness” or “seeing the big picture” be helpful in a stressful situation?
- In your own words, what does the “Respond” step involve? What would you say is the difference between *responding* with awareness vs. *reacting* automatically?
- How is the SOBER space similar to the mindful check in?
- How can you see yourself using the SOBER space in your own life?
- In what ways could the SOBER space be helpful in situations when you have an urge or craving to use?

Other Notes on the SOBER Space

- Because the SOBER space is covered several times throughout the program, try to be flexible in the way it is covered. Avoid providing the same exact lecture on the SOBER space because regular attendees may get bored hearing the same exact information. As always, make the discussion of the SOBER Space interactive and engage prior attendees with questions. Involve prior attendees in the teaching process by asking them to provide descriptions of each step of the SOBER when covering the steps.
- One option for mixing things up is to occasionally have participants practice the SOBER space for 1-2 minutes without guidance (following the guided practice). Explain to

participants that it is also important for participants to learn to guide or “coach” themselves through the steps of the SOBER space. Explain that in real life participants will be doing just this, guiding themselves through the steps. Tell participants that after you say “start” you will let them know when 1 minute has passed and during that time they will practice going through the steps of the SOBER space. Tell participants to start at the beginning if they finish before you say time is up.

- Another way to mix things up and cover the SOBER Space in a slightly different way is to focus on asking prior attendees to share specific situations since the last group in which they practiced the SOBER Space. You can draw on the real-life example of a participant to teach the SOBER Space to newcomers.
- It can be helpful to remind participants that the SOBER Space is a core practice in the program and that it why is so important to review and practice the exercise more than once. Participants tend to understand this rationale.
- The SOBER Space may come up during discussion (e.g., participant talks about how they used the SOBER Space during discussion of mindfulness practice) at other sessions in which the SOBER Space is not formally covered. For these sessions, newcomers may be present and are therefore unfamiliar with what the SOBER Space is. In these cases, you can (1) briefly tell newcomers that the SOBER Space is a practice that will be fully covered in other sessions, and/or (2) if there is time, briefly (~1-2 minutes) review what the SOBER Space is and what the steps are.
- Finally, here are some final things to consider when teaching the SOBER Space:
 - The SOBER Space is often discussed in relation to challenging or triggering situations. However, the SOBER Space can be used at random times during the day as a way to check-in.
 - The SOBER Space does not only have to apply to situations in which the participant would like to be SOBER. The SOBER Space can be used anytime, anywhere. The word SOBER is just to remind us about what the steps are.
 - People often get confused with the “Expand” step so be sure to review this step thoroughly. For the Expand step you can emphasize that we are trying to expand our awareness to see the “big picture” rather than just parts of the situation. Often times participants resonate with the idea of expanding one’s perspective on a situation so they can see different interpretations and identify different options for responding.

NUDGING PARTICIPANTS TO PRACTICE

In Part 2, we already discussed the three “nudge” tasks in MBRP (Educate, Motivate, Facilitate). Remember, the idea is not to “push” participants through forceful, punitive, or overly direct and

persuasive means, but instead to more gently and gradually “nudge” participants towards developing intrinsic motivation and genuine personal commitment for practicing mindfulness. Here we provide some additional notes about nudging participants to practice in the context of MBRP-RA.

- Nudging participants to practice usually takes place toward the end of a MBRP-RA session when the group talks about mindfulness practice. However, nudging can be interspersed throughout a session as appropriate. For example, when covering the SOBER space, you might encourage regular attendees to share their experiences practicing the SOBER space in their daily life.
- The way you go about covering the nudge tasks for a given session may also depend on what participants are attending. For example, if there are several newcomers for a given group session, you may spend more time on nudge task 1 (Educate). If there are no newcomers, you might skip to nudge tasks 2 (Motivate) and 3 (Facilitate).
- It is completely okay if you do not have enough time to thoroughly cover each of the nudge tasks during every MBRP-RA session, especially for the 1-hour length MBRP-RA sessions. At the very least, try to cover nudge tasks 1 (Educate) and 2 (Motivate), and then for sessions in which you have time cover task 3 (Facilitate) as well.
- Because of the rolling admission nature of MBRP-RA, it is not advisable to go in-depth and lecture on and on about mindfulness practice in the same way every single session. Prior attendees may become irritated if they have to listen to the same long lecture over and over. Instead, it is recommended to engage participants in a relatively brief and interactive discussion on a given session. Additionally, you can mix it up and conduct this educational discussion slightly different each session. If there are no newcomers for a given session, you can skip this educational task, or just very briefly review key concepts.
- A helpful strategy for engaging prior attendees is to ask them to explain the difference between Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice. As prior attendees share their comments, you can draw upon these comments and write notes on the whiteboard that highlight the key differences between Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice.
- Because the Mindful Check-In is practiced every session and is a core practice in MBRP-RA, it is helpful to consistently remind participants that the Mindful Check-In audio-recording is on the PracticeMBRP.com website, and that listening to this recording is a great way to practice the Mindful Check-In.

PROVIDING THE STARTUP PACKET TO NEWCOMERS

Here we would like to reiterate that providing the startup packet to newcomers is essential in MBRP-RA. Make sure you have plenty of startup packets before a group session to provide to any newcomers (or prior attendees who lost their packet!). As we noted previously, we recommend distributing this packet at the end of a session. Distributing the startup packet in the middle of sessions can be distracting (e.g., participants may be looking through the handouts during a practice or group discussion). When you distribute the startup packet, you can tell newcomers that these handouts are kind of like a “startup” packet or “starter kit” for this mindfulness program that will help them “get up to speed” or “get in the swing of things.” If there is time, you might direct participants’ attention to specific contents of the startup packet. For example, following a discussion about mindfulness practice, you might then distribute the starter packet and direct newcomers attention to the contents of the packets about planning out a practice routine. Encourage participants to read through the packet.

CHALLENGES IN MBRP-RA

Time management can be a challenge in MBRP-RA, especially the 60-minute sessions. Just do the best you can and keep in mind that it is completely okay if you are not able to get to every component for a given session. Every session is different and sometimes certain activities take longer or shorter amounts of time depending on how many people are in the group, how much people are participating in discussion, and other factors (e.g., disruptions). Overall, try to be flexible and adjust the length of time you spend on certain activities throughout a session depending on how things are going and how much time is left. It is okay to spend more time on certain activities or discussions if they seem particularly engaging or beneficial for participants during a given session (and therefore okay to spend less/no time on other activities planned during the session). It is more important to offer “high-quality” experiences, instead rushing through all the content at the potential detriment of quality.

Another challenge in MBRP-RA (which is related to time management) is the occurrence of tangential, off-topic, or disruptive participant comments during discussion. As a general guideline for conducting MBRP-RA, it is completely okay and often necessary to interrupt participants and redirect discussion in order to keep the session focused and leave enough time for each activity. Try to do this in a kind, validating, yet still direct way. For example, when a participant might be talking a lot about something off-topic, you might interject with, “I really appreciate you sharing all this. And I really want to bring the conversation back to the practice we just did and make sure there is enough time for others to share what they noticed.” As another example you interject with “Thank you for sharing. I need to stop you right there because it is time to move on to the next activity of the session.” Sometimes during experiential discussion following a practice, a participant may share a story or a personal event. Because the focus of experiential discussion is on direct experiences and observations during the mindfulness practice, you might say, “Hmm, so did you notice a thought about this event pop up in your mind during the practice?” This can serve to redirect the discussion to the participant’s experience of the thought or memory during the practice, rather than the details of the event itself.

Part 4

MBRP-RA Session-by-Session Guide

Session 1

Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 1
 - Key Concepts and Recommend Practice Handout
 - SOBER Space Handout
 - Using the SOBER Space Handouts and Worksheets
 - Practice Log
- Raisins or other food
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Differentiate mindfulness from automatic pilot.
- Describe the role of automatic pilot in substance use.
- Practice intentionally stepping out of automatic pilot mode into a mindful mode.
- Define the steps of the SOBER Space.

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Mindful Eating
- SOBER Space

Session 1 Outline

Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5 min	7-8 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	15 min
4. Practice Mindful Eating with Raisin	7 min	7 min
5. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	15 min
6. Teach and Discuss SOBER Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone • Review Using the SOBER Space Handouts • Encourage participants to complete the Using SOBER Space Worksheets on their own following the session 	10 min	15 min
7. Practice SOBER Space	3 min	5 min
8. “Nudge” participants towards regular mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants 	10 min	15 min

MINDFUL EATING PRACTICE

Key Steps for the Mindful Eating Practice

Guide participants in mindfully...

1. Looking at the raisin
2. Touching the raisin
3. Smelling the raisin
4. Chewing, tasting, and swallowing raisin
5. Noticing thoughts, feelings, and urges arising throughout the practice
6. Eating raisins at their own pace for a period of time

Sample Instruction for the Mindful Eating Practice

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction “.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipses “.....”

For this practice I will first guide you in bringing an open and curious awareness to the experience of eating. To begin, take a moment to just observe one of the objects in your hand at this time..... and just notice what comes up for you as you look at this object.....Perhaps you notice physical aspects of the object, like its color, shape, or size.....

As you observe the object, you might also notice your own internal reactions.....you might notice your mouth watering a bit, or maybe you notice an urge to just eat the object already.....Just noticing what’s coming up for you with a sense of openness and curiosity.....

Next, go ahead and pick up the object in between your fingers if you haven’t already..... Is it heavy or light?.....Notice if the light in the room might be reflecting off the object in some way.....and if you like rolling the object around in your fingers.....notice what the texture is like.....what happens if you gently squeeze the object between two fingers?.....

Now, when you are ready, you might see if the object has a smell.....you can bring the object up to your nose and just notice if there is any smell.....and now, if you like, you can try bringing the object up near one of your ears. What happens if you place the object next to your ear and gently roll it around between fingers?.....

Now, when you are ready, you are invited to place the object on your bottom lip. Just placing it on your lip for now and not eating it yet. What does the object feel like on your lip?.....What thoughts or other reactions come up as you do this?.....Next, you are invited to place the object in your mouth. You might place the object in your mouth first and keep it there without biting yet. Notice what this is like.....is there an urge to bite?.....is your mouth starting to water more?....just noticing.....Now, when you are ready, you are invited to take just one bite to start with. Take this bite and notice what

comes up.....do you notice any tastes?.....and now, if you like, you can continue slowly chewing, noticing what it's like to chew.....notice if you are getting to a point when you might be ready to swallow, and see if you can swallow with full awareness, notice what this is like.....

Now, you are invited to continue eating mindfully at your own pace and in your own way. You can eat the items in any way you want to. Just practice noticing what you are doing and what comes up in your awareness as you eat.....
And now we can bring this practice to a close. Bringing you awareness back to your surroundings or the room that you are in.

Concepts Related to the Mindful Eating Practice

Eating as a daily activity we often do in automatic pilot

- Eating is something we often do in “automatic pilot”, in which we do not pay much attention to our food and the experience eating in the present moment.
- Other daily activities that we might do in automatic pilot include: showering, brushing teeth, doing the dishes, other chores, driving.
- Examples of automatic pilot mode include: (1) walking into a room and not remembering why we walked into that room or what we were going to do, (2) automatically turning left in our car (even though we need to go right) because that is the route we normally take, (3) automatically picking up and looking at our smartphone without remembering what we are trying to do, (3) automatically checking our email even though we just checked it a few seconds ago, (4) accidentally putting body wash in our hair because we thought it was shampoo, (5) automatically opening the fridge even if we are not hungry or not sure what we want.

Automatic pilot vs. mindfulness

- Mindfulness can be thought of as the opposite of automatic pilot or “autopilot.” When we are mindful, we are fully aware of what we are doing in the moment. When we are in automatic pilot, we are not really aware of what we are doing in the moment.
- The potential to “step out” of autopilot and be more aware during any daily activity.
- During any daily activity, not just eating, we can intentionally “step out” of automatic pilot and make an effort to be more aware of what we are doing in the present moment.

Automatic pilot is not “bad,” we can just get stuck in it sometimes.

- Automatic pilot is not a “bad” thing by any means. We do lots of things automatically, like tying our shoes, and this can save us time and make things easier during our day. The problem is that we sometimes get stuck in automatic pilot and are not able to switch it off and be more aware when we need to or want to.

Role of automatic pilot in substance use

- When we have urges or cravings to use alcohol or drugs, we can get caught in an automatic pilot mode where we just react without full awareness of what we are doing.
- Alcohol or drug use can often be an automatic reaction to something. We get triggered in some way and then we automatically react and turn to substances without full awareness.

Switching from automatic pilot to mindful mode when we get triggered

- Recognizing we are in automatic pilot mode and switching to a mindful mode can prevent automatic substance use.
- Mindfulness helps us pause and “step out” of automatic pilot mode.
- When we are in a mindful mode, we pause and respond to a situation with awareness, instead of automatically reacting.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to the Mindful Eating Practice

- Was the way we just went about eating familiar or different than how you typically eat?
- If it was different, what was different about it?
- Do you find in your own daily life that you often eat food in automatic pilot without being fully aware?
- What other daily behaviors besides eating do you feel that you go about doing in automatic pilot mode?
- What is the difference between automatic pilot and mindfulness?
- What does automatic pilot have to do with substance use?

SOBER SPACE

See information on teaching and leading the SOBER Space in Part 3 of this guide.

Session 2

Emotions as Visitors

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 2
 - Guest House Poem Handout
 - Types of Challenging Emotions Handout
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practice Handout
 - Practice Log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Describe the role of challenging emotions in substance use.
- Practice mindfully accepting and “being with” emotional discomfort.
- Identify ways in which challenging emotions are like “visitors.”

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Mindfulness of Emotions with Reading of Guest House Poem

Session 2 Outline

Emotions as Visitors

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5-7 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	15 min	20 min
4. Practice Mindfulness of Emotions (leading into Guest House Reading) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone • Pass out these handouts (which includes Guest House Poem) before the Mindfulness of Emotions Meditation so that when you read the Guest House Poem participants can read along from the handout as you read the poem. It is helpful to provide instruction to inform participants that they can open their eyes if they want to read along with the poem as you read it. 	7-8 min	10 min
5. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	15 min	20 min
6. “Nudge” participants towards regular mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants 	10 min	20 min

MINDFULNESS OF EMOTIONS + GUEST HOUSE

Key Steps Mindfulness of Emotions + Guest House

1. Guide participants in mindfully noticing any emotions in the moment, including pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral emotions.
2. Read the Guest House Poem.
3. Provide participants a brief period of silence following the reading to reflect.

Sample Instruction for Mindfulness of Emotions + Guest House

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

For this practice I will first guide you in checking in with emotions you might be feeling in the moment. Then I will read a poem called “The Guest House” and leave some time for you to reflect on the poem. Find a comfortable position that works for you. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer. First, take a moment to slow down and gather yourself. Take a few slow mindful breaths in and out.....

And now, when you are ready, take a moment to check-in and become curious about any emotions you might be feeling right now.....this can include emotions that may be pleasant in some way, unpleasant, or maybe neutral.....There are many possible emotions you could be feeling. Maybe you feel content or calm.....or it could be that you feel anxious or restless.....frustrated and angry....sad, depressed, or lonely.....

You might notice what any emotions feel like in your body in this moment.....maybe a warmth or tingling in your chest....or maybe tension in your shoulders, pressure in your forehead, or the sensation of your heart beating fast.....just notice what sensations might be coming up for you at this time.....

And as best you can, allowing yourself to just feel your feelings as they are in this moment.....seeing if you can make space for the emotions that might be visiting you right now.....letting them visit and gently acknowledging their presence with a sense of openness and acceptance.....

And now I will read a poem called “The Guest House” by Rumi. All you have to do is listen and just take in the words as best you can.....(Read the poem).....And now taking some time to reflect on this poem you just heard.....or you can simply just notice any thoughts or feelings that are coming up for you after hearing this poem.....

And now when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.

Role of Challenging Emotions in Substance Use

- Substance use may be a way to avoid or get rid of challenging emotions, such as anxiety, sadness, anger, and shame.
- Whenever we feel upset, we may turn to substances to try to feel better or get relief.
- Over time, challenging emotions can become triggers for using substances. We can get to a point where we might rely on substances as a way to cope with our emotions.

Acceptance of Emotions

- Allowing ourselves to just feel our emotions in the moment, instead trying to fix our emotions.
- “Making space or room” for emotional discomfort, instead of pushing it away or blocking it out.
- Letting challenging emotions flow through us, instead of getting caught up in them or overanalyzing them.
- Acknowledging challenging emotions are present, instead of denying they are there or ignoring them.
- Recognizing that difficult emotions are a part of life and are experiences we all have as human beings.
- Being kind and gentle with ourselves when we have challenging emotions.

Emotions as Visitors or Guests that Guide Us in Life

- Emotions “visit” us. They are like a visitor or guest at our “house.”
- First of all, when something visits us, it doesn’t stay forever. It is temporary. It visits then eventually leaves.
- Difficult emotions can feel like “intruders,” but they are more like “visitors.” Just like a visitor might come to our house to tell us something, emotions often visit us to tell us something or guide us in some way.
- “because each has been sent as a guide from beyond” (Guest House).
- Emotions like sadness, anger, and anxiety visit us in life for a purpose or reason. They visit us in order to guide us in life and do the things that are important to us.
- Anger can visit us to give us energy and motivation to protect something important to us
- Anxiety can visit us to warn us about potential danger or bring our attention to a future event that is important to us and we need to prepare for.
- Sadness can visit us to help us slow down and reflect on things that are important to us, maybe things that we have lost.

Difficult emotions can guide us towards positive, meaningful experiences

- Difficult emotions can “clear the way” for new positive experiences in the future.
- “They may be clearing you out for some new delight” (Guest House).

- Without going through and “processing” difficult emotions, we might not have gone in a certain direction in our life that later on brought us positive experience and meaning in life.

Mindfulness helps us *work with* difficult emotions, not *work against* them

- We are often taught by society that “negative” emotions are “bad” and need to be reduced and avoided.
- Having this mindset can get us stuck in a sort of “battle” in life where we are always *working against* challenging emotions.
- It is much easier and more effective to *work with* challenging emotions like anger, anxiety, and sadness.
- Working with challenging emotions can involve acknowledging them, listening to them and thinking about how they might be guiding us, accepting them when they might hang around.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to Mindfulness of Emotions + Guest House

- What are some examples of challenging emotions?
- What do challenging emotions have to do with substance use?
- What does the poem seem to be saying about emotions?
- In what ways are emotions like visitors?
- What does it mean to bring an attitude of acceptance towards difficult emotions?
- In what ways can difficult emotions be helpful to us?
- What do you think about the phrase in the poem: “He may be clearing you out for some new delight”? What do you think this means?
- What do you think about the phrase in the poem: “because each has been sent as a guide from beyond”? What do you think this means?
- How is the Serenity Prayer related to this poem and what we have been talking about today? (*Serenity Prayer: Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.*)
- How do acceptance and change go together? Can acceptance help us change or grow in life?

Session 3

Self-Compassion

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 3
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practice Handout
 - Practice Log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Describe the role of self-judgment in substance use.
- Practice bringing kindness and compassion towards oneself.
- Identify ways in which self-compassion facilitates recovery.

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Kindness Meditation

Session 3 Outline

Self-compassion

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful-Check-In	7-8 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	20 min
4. Practice Kindness Meditation	10 min	10 min
5. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	15 min	20 min
6. “Nudge” participants towards developing a personal mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone 	10 min	20 min

KINDNESS MEDITATION

Key Steps for the Kindness Meditation

1. Brief period of mindfully releasing tension in the body.
2. Picturing a person (or pet) that it is easy to feel kindness and caring towards. Imagining this person or pet sitting next to them in the room.
3. Offering words of kindness to this person.
4. Imagining this person offering the same words of kindness to them.
5. Offering words of kindness to themselves.
6. Throughout the practice, also instruct participants to *notice how they feel in their body* as they offer kindness.

Sample Instruction for the Kindness Meditation

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction “.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipsis “.....”

For this practice I will guide you in offering kindness or well-wishes to yourself and others, and noticing how you feel as you do this. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer. To begin, take a moment to invite any tension or tightness in your body to release.....Relaxing your jaw, and your neck and shouldersand softening your chest and belly.....

Now, when you are ready, I invite you to bring to mind a person in your life who you find it easy or natural to feel kindness and caring towards. Maybe a close friend or family member, perhaps a grandchild or grandparent. Or maybe a spiritual guide of some kind or perhaps a pet. Take a moment here to choose one person or pet to bring to mind.....And you might imagine that this someone is sitting next to you here in the room.....As you imagine the presence of this someone, take a moment to notice how you feel.....maybe noticing sensations in your body, perhaps areas like your chest or belly where you may feel a sense of warmth or tingling.....or maybe you notice other sensations or not much at all and that is completely okay.....

And now, if it feels comfortable to you, see what it is like to offer this person words of kindness or well-wishes. For example, you might silently repeat the following phrase in your mind and send it to this someone: “May you be happy, safe, and at peace”“May you be happy, safe, and at peace”... Or, if you like, choosing some other words that work for you.....Repeating the words of your choice quietly in your mind, and just noticing how you feel.....

Now, if it feels comfortable, imagining this someone offering the same words of kindness to you. “May you be happy, safe, and at peace”“May you be happy, safe, and at peace”.....opening yourself up as best you can to receiving these words of

kindness.....and being curious about how you feel in this moment.....again perhaps noticing any sensations in your body around your heart area.....

Now, when you are ready, I invite you to offer words of kindness to yourself in this moment. Gathering all the feelings of kindness and compassion that you have offered and that have been offered to you, and redirecting these feelings to yourself in this moment...“May I be happy, safe, and at peace”“May I be happy, safe, and at peace.” Again, opening yourself up as best you can to receiving your own offering of kindness.....And as you repeat the words of kindness, noticing how you feel in your body and in your heart.....And if you notice any difficulty offering kindness towards yourself, that is completely okay and normal...It can be challenging to be kind to ourselves....Just coming back to the words you are repeating...focusing closely on the words and just being open to whatever your experience may be in this moment.....

Now, bringing everything to a pause and just resting.....Take a final moment to just check-in and notice how you feel after doing this exercise.....allowing yourself to just feel the way you are feeling.....No need to change anything. Just noticing yourself and your feelings as they are.....

And now when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.

Concepts Related to the Kindness Meditation

Kindness and compassion helps us work through setbacks in the recovery process.

- During the process of recovery, challenges and setbacks are common and natural. Instead of judging ourselves, we can do our best to be kind to ourselves (in the same way we might comfort a loved one who is struggling).
- Bringing kindness to ourselves when we have setbacks is about being gentle, understanding, and compassionate towards ourselves. It is about offering kindness and well-wishes to ourselves when we are struggling and having a hard time.

Kindness and compassion facilitates openness and acceptance of our experience.

- Judging or criticizing ourselves when we are upset (“What wrong with me. I shouldn’t be feeling this way”) can make it difficult to be open and accepting towards our experience as it is.
- When we are kind towards ourselves during tough moments, it can be easier to be open and accepting towards our experience as it is (“It’s okay to feel upset”).

All human beings struggle.

- Experiencing hardship is a shared human experience.
- We all go through hard times and struggle throughout life. No one is perfect.

- Kindness can involve telling ourselves things like: “I’m not alone feeling this way. We all go through hard times.”

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to the Kindness Meditation

- From your perspective, what does it mean to be kind or compassionate toward another person? What does it mean to be kind and compassionate towards ourselves?
- How does self-compassion relate to the process of recovery? What role does it play in recovery?
- How does self-compassion relate to mindfulness? What are some connections you see between these two things?
- In general, why do you think we need kindness and compassion in this world? Why is it important for people to be kind to others and to themselves?

Session 4

Responding (not reacting) to triggers

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 4
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practice Handout
 - SOBER Space Handout
 - Using the SOBER Space for Triggers Handouts and Worksheets
 - Practice Log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Define a trigger and describe the role of triggers in substance use.
- Practice responding with awareness to an imagined trigger.
- Define the steps of the SOBER Space.
- Discuss ways to use the SOBER Space in triggering situations.

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation

Session 4 Outline

Responding (not reacting) to triggers

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation and Introduction	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	15 min
4. Teach and Discuss SOBER Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone • Review SOBER Space for Triggers Handouts • Encourage participants to complete the Using SOBER Space for Triggers Worksheets on their own following the session 	10 min	15 min
5. Practice SOBER Space	2 min	3 min
6. Practice SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation	7-8 min	10 min
7. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	15 min
8. “Nudge” participants towards developing a personal mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants 	10 min	10 min

SOBER SPACE

See information on teaching and leading the standard SOBER Space in Part 3 of this guide.

SOBER SPACE IN A CHALLENGING SITUATION

Key Steps for SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation

1. Make sure to orient participants to the exercise before jumping right into it

*“For this next guided exercise, I will be guiding you in imagining a challenging or stressful situation in your mind, maybe a situation in which you are tempted to use alcohol or drugs, or a situation that triggers other problematic reactions or behaviors. Then I will guide you in using the SOBER space and going through the steps. The idea here is to practice what it’s like applying the SOBER space to a challenging situation. That way, you will be more ready to use the SOBER space when a challenging situation comes up in your life. For this exercise, try to choose a challenging situation, but maybe not a situation that is completely overwhelming or extremely upsetting to you. So now, as best you can, take a moment to choose one challenging situation for this exercise
.....Does everyone have something in mind?.....Ok let’s start.”*

2. Brief period of mindful breathing starting the imaginal exposure
3. Imagining the challenging situation
4. Steps of the SOBER
5. Returning to mindful breathing as a way to ground oneself after the exercise

The imaginal challenging situation can be anything. It doesn’t really matter. The whole point is just to elicit some distress in the moment before participants then go ahead and practice the steps of the SOBER. It’s okay if participants have difficulty imagining a situation. The challenging situation can be a past situation or an imagined hypothetical scenario.

The SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation is very similar to Urge Surfing, but has a few differences. Compared to Urge Surfing, the SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation practice has more of a focus on *noticing choices for responding* or imagining oneself *responding* or *doing something* in the situation. Urge Surfing, on the other hand, has more of a focus on simply noticing and “surfing” one’s experience, including urges and cravings that may arise, with a sense of curiosity, openness, acceptance, and nonjudgment.

Sample Instruction

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

Ok, so again for this practice I will first guide you in imagining the challenging or stressful situation you just chose. And then I will guide you in practicing the steps of the SOBER space.

Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer.

First take a moment here to settle in. Bringing your awareness to your breathing, and just taking a few moment to follow the sensations of the breath with your awareness as the breathe flows in and out.....

Now, when you are ready, I invite you to imagine or picture the challenging or stressful situation you chose. Just do your best to really bring that situation to mind.....maybe starting out by picturing the environment around you in the situation.....You might notice what you can see in the situation.....are there other people around? Are there certain objects you can see?.....You might notice what can hear in this situation.....maybe noticing sounds too.....You might also notice any sensations of touch, or maybe even things you might smell or taste in the situation.....

And now you might imagine the scene or situation playing out in your mind, almost like you are watching a movie in slow motion.....you might play out the situation until the point in the situation where you feel triggered in some way.....and when you get to that point when you are triggered, see if you can “press the pause button” and stop for a moment. This is the moment where we can use the SOBER space. Let’s go through the steps of the SOBER right now in this moment. The first step is S for Stop. Take a moment here to just pause...slow down...and gather yourself in this moment.....and the next step is Observe. Observe what your experience is right now in the momentWhat is going on in your body? What kinds of thoughts and emotions are coming up for you?.....Just observing with a sense of curiosity and without judging yourself in any way.....,And the next step is B for Breathe. Take a few slow mindful breaths right nowanchor your attention on the breath as it flows in and out.....and the next step is E for Expand. Expand your awareness back out to your experience in the moment right now. Again, just noticing any thoughts and feelings that are present with a sense of openness and nonjudgment.....and you might expand your awareness back to the challenging situation you are imaginingexpanding your awareness in such a way that you can view the situation from a place of greater awareness.....aware of the big picture.....and the final step is R for Respond. If you like, you might just first notice that in this situation there are options or choices for how you can respond.....Just hanging out in this space for a few seconds.....noticing that there can be a space or a pause in between a trigger and a response.....and if you like you might imagine yourself responding to the situation with awareness, instead of reacting automatically....doing your best to imagine yourself responding to the situation in a wise and skillful way that is best for you and in line with your goals and values as a person.....and no big deal at all if it is difficult to imagine what kind of response or action you might take in the situation....again you can simply just notice what it is like to pause here and be aware of the possibility of making different choices or taking different actions in the situation.....

And now, as you are ready, completely letting go of the situation in your mind and bringing your attention to your breathing in this moment.....Maybe taking a few deep

breaths.....Feel the breath in your body as it goes in and out.....And when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.

Concepts Related to SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation

What is a trigger?

- A trigger is a situation that brings about an urge, craving, or impulse to do something, such as using substances.
- Triggers can be people, places, or events.

Triggers can “set off” of a chain of various sensations, thoughts, and emotions.

- Triggers “set off” a chain of different experiences in the moment (including sensations, thoughts, and emotions) that are part of the overall craving experience.
- For example, walking by a street where one used to buy drugs may trigger a warm sensation and pressure in one’s forehead, a memory about using drugs, and an emotion of excitement followed by a sense of guilt and anger.

Using the SOBER Space helps us be more aware of triggers and how they affect us.

- Using the SOBER Space can help us pause and be more fully aware of the trigger itself – the person, place, or event that brings about a craving.
- Using the SOBER Space can also help us be more fully aware of how a trigger affects our experience in the moment. When we use the SOBER Space, we practice mindfully observing the various sensations, thoughts, and emotions that may come up when we encounter any trigger.

Responding to triggers with awareness vs. reacting automatically

- Using the SOBER Space when we encounter a trigger also helps us respond to a trigger with awareness and make wise choices in the moment, instead of reacting automatically.
- Using the SOBER Space creates a space between the trigger and our response to the trigger.
- Automatic, “knee-jerk” reactions to triggers is often what eventually leads to using substances.
- Using the SOBER to consciously respond to a trigger makes it less likely we will end up using substances.

Automatic reactions to triggers can sometimes lead to more triggers.

- Sometimes it is not just one trigger but multiple triggers that lead to substance use.
- Reacting automatically to one trigger can lead to another trigger.

- For example, when we see an old friend who used to sell drugs to us, we may experience a craving and automatically walk across the street to see the friend. Then, the friend may eventually show us some drugs and the sight of drugs triggers us even more and we automatically get some drugs.
- Using the SOBER Space can change the way the situation goes and prevent us from encountering additional triggers. For example, when we first see the friend and get triggered, we can respond with awareness and walk in other direction, which prevents us from talking to the friend and seeing the drugs that the friend has.

The SOBER Space is flexible and can be used in many different ways.

- In some triggering situations, one may only have time to do just parts of the SOBER at first.
- For example, some triggering situation may require quick action (such as when a friend offers one drugs in person).
- In these cases, one may just practice the Stop and R step (e.g., Stop or “pause” before doing anything, and then Respond by saying “No” and walking away from the person). Then after walking away from the situation, one can practice the entire SOBER to further cope with the situation and any craving one may still be experiencing.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to SOBER in Challenging Situation

- What is a trigger? How would you define it in your own words?
- What are some examples of triggers?
- What would it be like to use the SOBER Space when a trigger comes up?
- For what types of situations or triggers could you imagine the SOBER Space being a helpful practice to do?
- For what types of situations or triggers might it be challenging to do the SOBER Space? And how do you think you can work around this and somehow use the SOBER Space or parts of it in the situation?
- At what point in a situation do you think one can use the SOBER Space? Right when you notice the trigger? A few minutes later after you leave a situation? Both?
- What would you say is the difference between *responding* to a trigger vs. *reacting* to a trigger?
- How do you think you can remember to practice the SOBER Space when a trigger comes up?

Session 5

Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 5
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practice Handout
 - The Role of Thoughts in the Relapse Cycle Handout
 - Practice Log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Differentiate thoughts from body sensations and emotions.
- Describe the role of thoughts in the relapse cycle.
- Practice mindfully noticing thoughts as just thoughts arising in the mind, not truths or commands.

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Walking Down the Street Exercise

Session 5 Outline

Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	10 min
4. Practice Walking Down the Street Exercise	5 min	5 min
5. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	15 min	20 min
6. Elicit Discussion about Role of Thoughts in the Relapse Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone • Use the Role of Thoughts in the Relapse Cycle Handout to facilitate discussion 	10 min	20 min
7. “Nudge” participants towards regular mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants 	10 min	15 min

WALKING DOWN THE STREET EXERCISE

Key Steps for Walking Down the Street Exercise

1. Imagining walking down the street in a familiar location. Notice sights and sounds.
2. Imagining seeing a person you know walking towards you
3. As person gets closer, noticing thoughts. Noticing sensations and emotions too.
4. As person gets really close, imagining smiling and waving. The person does not wave back and continues to walk by. Noticing thoughts. Noticing sensations and emotions too.
5. Letting go of situation and bringing attention back to room.

Sample Instruction for Walking Down the Street Exercise

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer. For this exercise I am going to ask you to imagine a scenario and just imagine thoughts, emotions, and sensations that come up during the scenario.

First take a moment here to settle in. Bringing your awareness to your breathing, and just taking a few moment to follow the sensations of the breath with your awareness as the breathe flows in and out.....

Now, when you are ready, picture a situation in your mind where you are walking down the street in a familiar location. Just imagine the situation as best you can. Noticing what you can see as your walking.....noticing what might be able to hear.....And now imagine that you see someone you know in the distance on the other side of the street walking in your direction. Imagine it is a person you are happy to see and want to say hello to. Picture that person in your mind now.....And you see this person walking closer and closer to you....Notice what thoughts are going through your mind in this moment.....You might also notice any sensations or emotions you are experiencing in this moment.....And as the person gets really close, imagine you smile and wave at this person. The person does not wave back and just continues to walk by.....Notice what thoughts are going through your mind right now?.....Just noticing any thoughts that might be coming up with a sense of curiosity.....And maybe also noticing any sensations and emotions coming up too.....or perhaps there is some urge to act or do something.....just noticing whatever coming up for you in this moment with a sense of curiosity and openness.....

And now, when you are ready, letting go of this situation and bringing your attention to the room you are in.

Concepts Related to the Walking Down the Street Exercise

What are thoughts?

- Thoughts are words or images that pass through our minds.
- Us talking to ourselves in our head.
- An “internal narrator.”

Thoughts pop up automatically.

- Thoughts often just pop up automatically, without us choosing to have the thought.
- Just like our lungs breathe and our heart beats, our mind thinks. That is just what it does.

Thoughts can influence how we feel and act in situations.

- The way we think about situation can influence how we feel emotionally and how we act in the situation.
- For example, if we have the thought “Wow, I can’t believe they didn’t wave back at me. What a jerk!” that may make us feel angry and may lead us ignore the person the next time we see them.

Thoughts are just thoughts, and they are not necessarily true.

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

Mindfulness helps us see our thoughts as just thoughts.

- Mindfulness helps us pause, observe our thoughts as they pop up, and see them as just thoughts, not truths or commands.
- Mindfulness helps us observe our thoughts without getting lost in them or automatically “buy into” the story they are telling us.

Leading Discussion Following the Walking Down the Street Exercise

First, start with a general question to elicit experiential discussion. Ask the group, “What came up for you during the practice? Allow participants some time to share any of their experiences during the practice. If it hasn’t already come up, ask a question to elicit discussion about what thoughts came up when participants saw the person approaching them in the scenario (e.g., I am curious to hear, what thoughts came up for you when first seeing the person approaching you?). Then, if it hasn’t already come up, also ask a question to elicit discussion about what thoughts came up when participants noticed that the person did not wave and continued walking (e.g., And how about that moment when the person did not wave and kept walking by. What thought came up for you in that moment?). During the experiential discussion, also ask questions to explore what body sensations, emotions, or urges to act that participants may have experienced.

Importantly, during the experiential discussion, avoid getting into details about who the person was walking by or where the participant was in the scenario. The focus of the experiential discussion is on thoughts, sensations, emotion, and urges that participants noticed during the exercise.

After allowing some time for experiential discussion, ask the group what they learned from the exercise (e.g., Alright, so what did you learn from doing this exercise just now?). Allow some time for participants to share any comments. If it hasn't already come up, ask a question to elicit discussion about the nature of thoughts (e.g., So, I have a question for you all. What are thoughts?). Highlight that thoughts just pop up automatically, and that thoughts are not necessarily true. Then, ask a question to elicit discussion about how thoughts can influence how we feel and act (e.g., Do you think our thoughts about a situation can influence how we feel or act in the situation?)

Leading Discussion About the Role of Thoughts in the Relapse Cycle Handout

After the Walking Down the Street Exercise and discussion, the next activity in the session is to discuss the role of thoughts in the relapse cycle. Use the handout "The Role of Thoughts in the Relapse Cycle" to facilitate this discussion. First, note that a trigger set off an initial thought. Then, walk participants through what can happen when one is in Automatic Pilot Mode and automatically believes and acts upon the initial thought. Walk participants through each part of the relapse cycle. Highlight how other thoughts come up later on and how we can also automatically believe in and act on these thoughts. Highlight how the process is a cycle that can happen again and again. Then, walk participants through what can happen when one is in a Mindful Mode and sees the initial thought as just a thought and does not immediately act on the thought. Walk participants through each part of this alternative path. Highlight how the mindful mode led to an effective way of coping with the situation. Also point out that participants can step out of automatic pilot mode and into mindful mode at any point, even after a slip. After walking participants through the entire handout, ask the group: What did you learn from going through this handout just now?

Session 6

Surfing the Urge

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 6
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practices
 - Urge Surfing Handout
 - Practice log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Describe the similarity of urges/cravings with ocean waves.
- Practice noticing the experience of an urge/craving with curiosity and acceptance.
- Practice exploring wholesome needs “beneath” an urge/craving to use

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Urge Surfing

Session 6 Outline

Surfing the Urge

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	15 min
4. Practice Urge Surfing	10 min	10 min
5. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	20 min	30 min
6. “Nudge” participants towards regular mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone 	10 min	15 min

URGE SURFING

Key Steps for Urge Surfing

1. Make sure to orient participants to the exercise before jumping right into it

“For this next guided exercise, I will ask you to imagine or picture yourself in a situation in which you might be triggered in some way, maybe a situation that triggers an urge or temptation to use alcohol or drugs or engage in some other behavior that is problematic for you. Then I will guide you in bringing mindful awareness to your experience in the moment. The idea here is to practice what it’s like applying mindfulness to a situation that may trigger urges, cravings, or temptations to engage in a certain behavior like alcohol or drug use. That way, you will be more ready and prepared to use your mindfulness skills when you are actually in a situation that triggers an urge or craving. For this exercise, try to choose a challenging situation, but maybe not a situation that is completely overwhelming or extremely upsetting to you. So now, as best you can, take a moment to choose one situation for this exerciseDoes everyone have something in mind?...Ok let’s start.”

2. Brief period of mindful breathing before starting the imaginal exposure
3. Imagining a situation that triggers an urge or craving to use alcohol or drugs or engage in other problematic behaviors
4. Noticing body sensations in the moment
5. Noticing emotions and thoughts
6. Mindfully accepting and “surfing” their overall experience in the moment
7. Mindfully exploring wholesome needs underlying the urge to use (“What do I really need right now?”)
8. Returning to mindful breathing as a way to ground oneself after the exercise

The imaginal situation that triggers an urge or craving can be anything. It doesn’t really matter. The whole point is just to elicit distress and urges/craving in the moment before participants then go ahead and practice mindfulness skills. It’s okay if participants have difficulty imagining a situation. The challenging situation can be a past situation or an imagined hypothetical scenario.

Urge Surfing is very similar to the SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation practice, but has a few differences. First and most obvious, Urge Surfing does not involve explicitly talking about the steps of the SOBER Space (although some of the instruction may be similar). Second, compared to the SOBER Space in a Challenging Situation practice, Urge Surfing has less of a focus on imagining oneself responding or doing something in a situation, and more of a focus on simply noticing and “surfing” one’s experience, including urges and cravings that may arise, with a sense of curiosity, openness, acceptance, and nonjudgment. Third, Urge Surfing has more of a focus on the experience of urges and cravings.

Sample Instruction for Urge Surfing

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

Ok, so again for this practice I will first guide you in imagining the situation you chose. And then I will guide you bringing mindful awareness to your experience in the moment. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer.

First take a moment here to settle in. Bringing your awareness to your breathing in this moment, and just following the sensations of the breath with your awareness as it flows in and out.....

Now, when you are ready, I invite you to imagine or picture the situation you chose. A situation that might bring about an urge or temptation to use alcohol or drugs or engage in some other behavior that is problematic for you. Just do your best to really bring that situation to mind.....maybe starting out by picturing the environment around you in the situation.....You might notice what you can see in the situation.....are there other people around? Are there certain objects you can see?.....You might notice what can hear in this situation?.....What sounds are coming up?.....You might also notice any sensations of touch, or maybe even things you might smell or taste in the situation.....

You might imagine the events in the situation that lead up to the point when you really get triggered....And now we are just going to pause here and take some time to explore our experience, including any urge or cravings you might be experiencing right now. So, you might begin by noticing what physical sensations you are experiencing in your body in this moment.....seeing if you can notice sensations in your body with a sense of curiosity.....asking yourself, “What does this urge or craving actually feel like in my body?, Maybe a fluttering in your stomach, tightness in the chest, clenching of jaw, dryness or wetness in mouth, or some other sensations in your body.....You might also notice any thoughts going through your mind or emotions that are coming up for you right now.....as best you can, gently acknowledging your experience as a whole right now with a sense of acceptance and nonjudgment.....asking yourself, “Can I stay with my experience right now?....Can I be okay with the feeling of this urge or craving?.....

You might imagine that the feeling of an urge or craving is like an ocean wave.....and imagine that you are gently riding out or surfing that wave as it come up and passes by.....not fighting the urge, not reacting to it, and also getting completely caught up or swept away by the urge.....just gently noticing the urge is there and surfing the wave as it passes.....or maybe using your breathing to breathe with the feeling of the urge. Using your breath to keep you steady and anchored as you practice mindfully accepting and acknowledging the experience of any urges or cravings in this moment.....

You might also ask yourself: what do I really need right now? Just being curious and seeing what comes up for you.....almost like you are looking “beneath” the urge or craving and exploring what it is you really need or want deep down.....maybe what you need deep down is some time to rest and take time for yourself...or maybe what you need deep down is some sense of peace, safety, or assuranceor maybe what you need deep down is some sense of connection with other people...or maybe you are not sure what you need in this moment and that is completely okay.....All we are doing is being curious about the experience of having an urge or cravingsometimes an urge or craving to use alcohol or drugs can be “covering up” or “masking” other healthy needs and desires we all have as human beings.....like the need for rest, relief, assurance, safety, or connection with other people.....

And now, as you are ready, completely letting go of the situation in your mind and bringing your attention to your breathing in this moment.....Maybe taking a few deep breaths.....Feel the breath in your body as it goes in and out.....And when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.

Concepts Related to Urge Surfing

Urges/cravings like ocean waves

- They rise, reach a peak, and then eventually fade away.
- They come up and then pass by.

Mindfulness helps us slow down and be curious about the experience of an urge/craving

- Mindfulness helps us slow things down and bring a sense of curiosity and interest to the experience of an urge in the moment.
- We can pause and ask ourselves “Hmm, what does this urge actually feel like right now?”
- We can notice sensations in our bodies, as well as thoughts and emotions that might be coming up in the moment.

Mindfulness helps us mindfully “surf” or “ride out” urges /cravings

- Mindfulness helps us bring a sense of openness and acceptance to an urge or craving.
- Rather than fighting or resisting the urge, we can mindfully “surf” or “ride out” an urge.
- Rather than reacting to an urge, we can “stay with” the urge and be okay with our experience as it is.

The Breath as an anchor

- Sometimes we can get “swept away” or overwhelmed by urge and cravings.

- The breath can serve as an anchor that keeps us anchored or grounded as we surf the urge.
- We can breathe *with* the feeling of the urge and ride it out, instead of fighting *against* the feeling of the urge.

What do I really need right now?

- ❖ When we have an urge or craving for substances, there is often some other deeper need we have in the moment that is “hiding beneath” the craving.
- ❖ The craving for substances “covers up” or “masks” what it is we truly need or want in the moment, such as the need for rest or some alone-time, the need for peace, safety, or assurance, or the need for some sense of connection with other people.
- ❖ When we have an urge or craving, we can pause and ask ourselves: what do I really need right now?
- ❖ Mindfulness helps us get in touch with our needs when we have an urge or craving to use.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to Urge Surfing

- How is an urge or craving similar to an ocean wave?
- From your perspective, what does it mean to mindfully “surf” or “ride out” an urge in the moment?
- Can you see yourself surfing urges in your own life? What kinds of situations could you see yourself using it in?
- How can the breath be helpful when surfing an urge?
- When we have an urge or craving, why is it important to pause and ask ourselves “What do I really need in this moment?”

Session 7

Following Your Values

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 7
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practice Handout
 - My Personal Values Worksheet
 - SOBER Space Handout (Values Version)
 - Using the SOBER Space to Follow Your Values Handouts
 - Practice Log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Define ‘personal values’ and describe their role in the recovery process.
- Identify ways mindfulness facilitates valued living.
- Practice mindfully reflecting on personal values.
- Define the steps of the SOBER Space.

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Values Meditation
- SOBER Space

Session 7 Outline

Following Your Values

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	10 min
4. Teach and Discuss SOBER Space	10 min	10 min
5. Practice SOBER Space	2 min	2 min
6. Practice Values Meditation	7-8 min	7-8 min
7. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone (do this after the Experiential Discussion) • Review SOBER Space to Follow Values Handouts • Encourage participants to complete the My Personal Values Worksheet on their own after session 	15 min	30 min
8. “Nudge” participants towards regular mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants 	5 min	10 min

VALUES MEDITATION

Key Steps for the Values Meditation

1. Brief period of mindful breathing
2. Reflecting on values in different areas of life, such as relationships, fun and leisure, and roles and responsibilities.
3. Reflecting on identity as a person and to grow
4. Noticing feelings in the moment

Sample Instruction for the Values Meditation

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction “.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

For this practice I will guide you in reflecting on your personal values, or the principles and beliefs we have about how we want to live our life and what kind of person we want to be. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer.

First, take a moment to slow down and gather yourself. Take a few slow mindful breaths in and out.....Feel the sensations of the breath in your body.....

For this practice, we will consider different areas of life and then reflect on what personal values we might have in these areas. Let’s begin with on key area in life: relationships. Take a moment to just bring to mind the relationships you have with other people. This can be your relationship with your significant other, family, relatives, friends, co-workers, or other people in your life. You might picture some of these people in your mindNow, asking yourself: What do I really care deep down about when it comes to the various relationships in my life? What kind of person do I want to be in these relationships?

..... Dropping these questions into your heart, like a pebble tossed into a still pond, and just listen for the ripples that may come back to you.

..... And if nothing arises that is okay. See if you can just continue listening and remain open and aware of whatever comes up.....

Now, let’s turn to another key area of life: fun and leisure. Take a moment to think about some of the activities you engage in that are fun, enjoyable, or meaningful in some way. This could be hobbies, personal projects, sports, exercise, social activities, or maybe certain activities that are part of your routine, like listening to music, watching TV, or reading Now, asking yourself: What do I really care deep down about when it comes to these different activities? In what ways are they important to me?.....

And now, let's turn to another key area in life: roles and responsibilities. Think about the various roles of responsibilities you may have in your life right now.....maybe as a parent or a caretaker. Maybe it is a job you are involved in. Or perhaps a project you are leading or taking part in. Now, asking yourself the question: What do I really care about deep down when it comes to the roles and responsibilities in my life? Why are these roles and responsibilities important to me? Just see what comes up for you.....

.....

Now, if you like, take some time here to reflect on yourself as person, your identity, and who you are deep down. Recognizing that only you are you. You have strengths, interests, and values that make you unique as a person. Asking yourself: Who am I deep down? And in what ways do I want to grow as a person? Dropping these question into your heart, like a pebble tossed into a still pond, and just listen for the ripples that may come back to you.....

.....

.....

And just taking a final moment here to check-in and notice how you feel inside right now. What sensations are coming up in your body? What emotions might be here for you?.....Just gently check-in and letting yourself feel your feeling. Letting these feelings flow through you in this moment.....

And now when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.

Concepts Related to the Values Meditation

What are personal values?

- ❖ 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.

Values can give us direction

- 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.

Mindfulness helps us be aware of our values and our choices

- When we are on automatic pilot, we might act or react in ways not in line with our values
- Mindfulness helps us pause and be aware of our values as we go about daily life
- Mindfulness helps us be aware of our actions each day and whether these are in line with our values.

Recovery is about following our values

- Recovery is more than just changing our substance use.
- Recovery is about following our values and finding a sense of meaning and purpose in our lives.

Our values can give us strength and courage

- 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.
- For example, we might get in touch our personal values as a way to work through the anxiety related to a job interview.
- Or we might think about our personal values as a way to build the strength and motivation to do the hard work of recovery each day.

Questions to Elicit Discussion about Concepts Related to the Values Meditation

- In your own words, what are personal values?
- If you are willing to share, what would you say are some of your own personal values in life?
- What would you say it means to “follow our values” or “live by our values”?
- What does mindfulness have to do with following our values in life?
- What do personal values have to do with the process of recovery?
- In what ways are personal values similar to a compass or map?
- Do you think that our values can give us strength or courage in life? If so, in what ways?

SOBER SPACE

See information on teaching and leading the SOBER Space in Part 3 of this guide.

Session 8

Exploring Your Needs

Materials Needed

- Startup packet of handouts for newcomers
- Handouts specific to session 8
 - Key Concepts and Recommended Practices Handout
 - Practice Log
- Whiteboard, Markers, Pens/Pencils

Learning Goals

- Identify wholesome needs that underlie urges to use substances.
- Practice mindfully exploring wholesome needs underlying urges to use substances.
- Describe how and why it is understandable that people turn to substances

Key Mindfulness Practices and Activities

- Mindful Check-In
- Exploring Your Needs Meditation

Session 8 Outline

Exploring Your Needs

Procedures	Approximate Time for 60-Minute Session	Approximate Time for 90-Minute Session
1. Orientation	5 min	10 min
2. Practice Mindful Check-In	5 min	7-10 min
3. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i>	10 min	10 min
4. Practice Exploring Your Needs Meditation	5 min	7-10 min
5. Elicit Discussion Following Practice <i>Experiential discussion & Conceptual discussion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw Chart on Whiteboard 	25 min	35 min
6. “Nudge” participants towards regular mindfulness practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the Startup Packet to new participants • Pass out the Session-Specific Handouts to everyone 	10 min	15 min

EXPLORING YOUR NEEDS MEDITATION

Key Steps for the Exploring Your Needs Meditation

1. Initially focusing on the breath
2. Recalling times in the past when one turned toward alcohol or drugs
3. Reflecting on key questions about what one was looking for:
 - *What was I looking for in those moments? What was it that I really needed or wanted deep down in those moments?*
4. Reflecting on the idea that needs underlying substance use - such as the need or desire for peace, relief, safety, connection - are wholesome needs we all have as human beings
5. Mindfully noticing thoughts, sensations, emotions arising
6. Reflecting on what one gets from substance use in the short term and long term
 - *What are those things that you do actually get when you engage in substance use? In the short term? In the long-term?*
7. Reflecting on the idea that the problem is that we sometimes turn to the wrong places to meet our needs. We might turn to substances to fulfill our needs, but in the end substance use does not deliver on its promise.
8. Reflecting on the idea that mindfulness can help us pause and be aware of what we really need deep down when we have a desire for substances
9. Returning attention to the breath

Sample Instruction for the Exploring Your Needs Meditation

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses “.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

For this practice, what I'd like to do is invite you to take a step back and reflect on your substance use. We will explore our substance use from a non-judgmental and curious perspective. Allowing ourselves to explore what happens for us in some of those moments when we turn to substances.....

To begin this practice, find a comfortable position that works for you, with either your eyes closed or eyes open while gently lowering your gaze downward....and taking a few deep breaths in and out.....noticing the physical sensations of the breath as it flows in and out.....

Next, what I invite you to do is to call to mind times you have engaged in substance use.....perhaps a particular situation.....or thinking more broadly about times in the past or recently when you turned to substances

And see what it's like to ask yourself a gentle question: What did I really need or want deep down in those moments when I turned toward substances?.....What was I really looking for deep down in those moments?.....Drop these questions into your awareness, and just listen to what might come up for you.....And just noticing any

thoughts, emotions or body sensations that are coming up for your right now.....

Maybe what you really wanted or needed in those moments were things like peace...relief... freedom...safety...escape....acceptance....or a sense of control....or maybe connection with others...nurturing and support...or perhaps there was a longing for a sense of feeling alive...feeling happy...feeling engaged in life or a part of something.....

And you might recognize in this list a theme.....maybe it's humanity.....maybe it's all of these things are wholesome needs every human has at some point.....maybe it's that nothing on that list is flawed or bad.....Maybe simply recognizing that there is a real need you are trying to meet by engaging in substance use

And now I invite you to ask yourself, What are those things that you do actually get when you engage in substance use?.....In the short term?.....In the long-term?.....Drop these questions into your awareness..... Maybe you got some of the things you wanted, at least in the short term. Or maybe the things you were searching for weren't what you actually got.....

And taking a step back now to see the whole picture, what do you notice?.....All those things we are really looking for when we engage in substance use.... That we think that substances can give us - things like happiness, peace, or connectionaren't these things that we all long for and seek out as human beings?...All of these longing are actually very human, noble, and wholesome.....The problem is that we sometimes turn to the wrong places to meet our needs. We might turn to substances thinking that this will fulfill our longings... but in the end, substance use does not deliver on its promise. It does not actually provide us what we are looking for.....

So, keeping in mind, when we feel that urge or desire for substances, we might pause and ask ourselves, "wait a minute, what am I really longing for deep down in this moment?".....

Now, letting everything go and bringing your attention back to your breathing.....follow the breath with your awareness as it flows all the way in and all the way out.....And when you are ready, if your eyes are closed, you can open them and bring your attention back to the room.

Concepts Related to the Exploring Your Needs Meditation

Wholesome, human needs underlying desire to use substances.

- ❖ We can turn toward substance use because we are just trying find a way to meet our *human needs* in the moment. These underlying needs are completely wholesome and healthy, and entirely understandable and normal for any human being to have.
- ❖ This may include a need to feel safe, to get some relief, to feel in control, to connect with other people, or to feel happy and alive.

- ❖ There is nothing wrong with having these needs and trying to fulfill these needs. Having these needs and trying to fulfill them is something we all share as human beings.

Substances use doesn't fulfill its promise.

- Substance use does not actually deliver on their promise.
- In the long-run, substance use does not fulfill our needs. In the end, substances are not reliable and do not give us what we are looking for or seeking out as human beings.

It's completely understandable that we turn towards substance use.

- ❖ As human beings, we just sometimes turn to the wrong things or the wrong places to meet our needs. And it is completely understandable that we might turn towards substances, because substances at first appear to be the solution. At first, it seems like substances will fulfill our needs. But in the long-run substances do not fulfill 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 get in touch with our deeper needs.

- ❖ Mindfulness helps us pause and be more aware of our deeper needs in any moment, including moments where we may have an urge or craving to use substances.
- ❖ 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 or craving, 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.

Leading the Discussion Following the Exploring Your Needs Meditation

First, start with a general question to elicit experiential discussion. Ask the group, "What came up for you during the practice? Allow participants some time to share any of their experiences during the practice. Then, if it hasn't already come up, ask a question to elicit discussion about what participants were looking for or seeking out during moments in the past when they turned towards substance use (e.g., "So, thinking back to times in the past when you turned to substance use, what were you really looking for in those moments? What was it that you really needed or

<p>What I was looking for/What I needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relief - Sense of control - Social life - Connection with others - Excitement - Safety 	<p>What I ended up getting in the long-run</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More stress - Shame - Regret - Loss of self-respect - Relationship problems
--	---

wanted deep down in those moments? Would anyone like to share?) As participants share, write down their responses on one side of the board under the heading “What I was looking for/What I needed” (see example below). After writing down several responses, ask the group: “What do you think as you look at this?” Allow participants some time to share any comments. If it hasn’t already come up, you can make a statement about how all the things written down are wholesome needs we all have as human beings (e.g., “What I am struck by is how all the things written down here are wholesome needs we all have as human beings. Of course we want these things. We are just trying to take care of ourselves, to be happy.”).

Then, ask a question to elicit discussion about what participants ended up getting in the long-run from substance use. (e.g., “Okay, so we have explored what we were looking for or what we needed. Now, let’s think more about what we ended up actually getting. What would you say you have ended up actually getting from your substance use in the long-run?”). As participants share, write down their responses on the other side of the board under the heading “What I ended up getting in the long-run” (see example). After writing down several responses, ask the group: “What do you think as you look at this?” Allow participants some time to share any comments. If it hasn’t already come up, ask a question similar to: So, in looking at this, do you think that substance use delivers on its promise?. During the discussion make some type of validating statement that conveys how it is completely understandable that one would turn to substance use (e.g., “As human beings, we can turn to the wrong things or the wrong places to meet our needs. And it is completely understandable that we might turn towards substances, because substances at first appear to be the solution. At first, it seems like substances will fulfill our needs. But in the long-run substances do not fulfill our needs”).

Finally, ask a question to elicit discussion about how mindfulness is related to the ideas discussed so far (e.g., How is mindfulness related to everything we have discussed so far. What are your thoughts?). Allow participants some time to share any comments. If it hasn’t come up already, bring up the idea that mindfulness can help us pause and be more *aware* of our needs in any moment, including moments where we may have an urge or craving to use substances. When we have an urge or craving, we can mindfully check-in with ourselves and ask: what do I really need in this moment?

It is very important to lead the Exploring Your Needs discussion in the *spirit of compassion*. One of the purposes of the Exploring Your Needs Meditation and discussion is to help participants bring a sense of compassion and understanding towards themselves as a human beings. For example, it can be powerful for participants to fully recognize that wholesome, human needs underlie their desire to use substances. It can also be powerful for participants to realize that it is completely understandable that any person would turn to substances because substances *at first* appear to be the solution. Additionally, as human beings, we all have times when we turn to the wrong things to try to fulfill our needs. No one is perfect. We are just doing the best we can to be happy.

Part 5

Clinician Cheat Sheets

PLAN OUT YOUR OWN PRACTICE ROUTINE

The single most effective way to get trained in teaching mindfulness to others is to regularly practice mindfulness in your own life.

My practice routine includes listening to a mindfulness exercise about _____ days per week.



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:

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

I will access the audio-guided exercises by _____

Your options include:

- (1) Go to PracticeMBRP.com on a smartphone, tablet, or computer
- (2) Get a subscription mindfulness app (Headspace, 10% Happier, Calm, MyLife)
- (3) Get a free mindfulness app (Mindfulness Coach, Insight timer)

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.

THE OPEN-HEARTED THERAPEUTIC STANCE

Relating to participants and their experiences with a sense of openness, curiosity, non-judgment, acceptance, and validation.

- **Nonverbal cues.** Eye-contact, nod, other nonverbal signs of acknowledgement and validation.
- **Ask curiosity questions.**

“I’m really curious to hear. What came up for you during that practice we just did?”

I’m curious to hear your personal thoughts on this. What does mindfulness mean to you?

- **Thank participants for sharing.**

“Thank you for sharing with the group.”

“I really appreciate you sharing and opening up about your experience.”

- **Genuine praise for effort.**

- *“Thank you all for participating in that practice.”*

- *“I really appreciate the hard work you are putting in here.”*

- **Explicit statements to create a non-judgmental/accepting atmosphere.**

“Just so everyone knows. There are no wrong or right answers here. The idea is to have an open discussion and learn from one another.”

“Just keep in mind, that during mindfulness practice, there is no wrong or right way to feel during the practice. Whatever we are feeling is just what we are feeling.”

- **Normalize and validate struggles.**

“Getting distracted by thoughts over and over is totally normal and okay. This happens to me all the time when I practice.”

- **Avoid confrontation, argumentation, and “selling.”** Think of yourself as more like a “guide” or “facilitator”, rather than an “expert,” “lecturer” or “salesperson”.

CLINICIAN CHEAT SHEET 3
THE “OPEN” PROCEDURES

<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">O</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">rient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether there are newcomers in the group. • Orient newcomers (can do #3 and 4 before or after Mindful Check-In): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The name of the group 2. What the group is about and what it involves 3. What mindfulness means 4. The role of mindfulness in recovery • Engage/elicit info from prior attendees, rather than just lecturing. • Tell newcomers you will provide “Startup” packet at end of the session. • Write name of session on whiteboard.
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">P</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">ractice</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If helpful, review steps/sample instructions of a practice <i>before</i> a session. Avoid reading from sample instructions while leading (can be inauthentic/mechanical). • When it comes time to lead a practice, just be yourself and be in the moment as best you can (no such thing as a “perfect” guided practice). • While leading a practice, do your best to follow your own instructions and engage in the practice, especially during moments of silence. Draw from your own experience to inform your guidance.
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">E</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">licit</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">discussion</p>	<p>Experiential Discussion (“inquiry):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask curiosity questions to elicit statements about experiences (body sensations, thoughts, emotions, sounds, sight, etc.) that participants noticed during a practice • What did you notice? What did that emotion feel like in your body? What was going on in your mind? What happened next after you noticed this? <p>Conceptual Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit thoughts and ideas about key concepts, use some didactic instruction, gently guide participants toward their own personal understandings. • Ask questions: What does this mean to you? How does this relate to recovery? <p>Start out with Experiential discussion following a practice. Conceptual discussion is either interweaved throughout experiential discussion or follows the Experiential discussion.</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">N</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">udge</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">participants towards regular practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently and gradually “nudge” participants towards developing intrinsic motivation and genuine personal commitment for practicing mindfulness • <u>Nudge Task 1. Educate</u> about Planned Practice and On-the-Go Practice • <u>Nudge Task 2. Motivate</u>. Elicit participant’s own motivations. Disclose your own motivations. Strengthening “mindfulness muscle.” Briefly mention research. Little bit goes a long way. Caring for our mind as much as our teeth. • <u>Nudge Task 3: Facilitate</u> ongoing practice over time. Inquire about ongoing practice efforts. Reinforce practice efforts. Explore specific moments of On-the-Go Practice (e.g., SOBER). Normalize practice challenges.

CLINICIAN CHEAT SHEET 4
THE HEART THEMES

The HEART acronym is for you as the clinician and is intended to remind you of the core, overarching themes in MBRP. You do not need to teach the HEART acronym to participants.

<p>Honoring our experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledging our experience as it is, recognizing our needs, and taking care of ourselves with kindness and compassion • Asking ourselves: “What do I really need right now?” when having urges to use • This theme particularly relates to the Mindful Check in, Mindfulness of Emotions and Guest House Poem, SOBER practice, Exploring Your Needs Exercise, Urge Surfing, and Kindness Meditation.
<p>Engaging in life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the moment and being present in our daily lives. Engaging fully in activities and being curious about what’s going on and how we feel. • Reflecting on personal values and making mindful choices in line with our values. • This theme particularly relates to Mindful Eating, other Mindful Daily Activities, the Values Meditation, and the SOBER Space.
<p>Accepting our momentary experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a stance of openness, nonjudgment, and acceptance towards our momentary experience, including challenging experiences (e.g., fear, sadness, anger, shame, pain, repetitive or intrusive thoughts, urges and craving). • “Making room for” or “sitting with” challenging thoughts and feelings in the moment, rather than getting caught up in judging, fighting, denying, avoiding, or controlling these thoughts and feelings • This theme particularly relates to Mindfulness of Emotions, the Guest House Poem, Urge Surfing, and the Mindful Check-In.
<p>Responding with awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting in a conscious and deliberate manner, rather than reacting impulsively or automatically (especially when we are triggered) • Pausing and responding with full awareness of what we are doing. Recognizing when we are in automatic pilot mode and switching to a mindful mode. • This theme particularly relates to the SOBER Space, SOBER Space in Challenging Situation, and Urge Surfing.
<p>Thoughts as thoughts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing thoughts as just thought - words or images that pop up and then pass through our minds, rather than facts, truths, commands that we have to listen to • “Stepping back” and observing our thoughts as they arise and pass. • This theme particularly relates to the Walking Down the Street Exercise and the Mindful Check-In.

Part 6
Handouts

Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention

**Startup Packet of Handouts for
New Participants**



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

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

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS-BASED RELAPSE PREVENTION?

- ❖ Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP) is a program designed to prevent relapse for those in recovery from substance use problems.
- ❖ MBRP involves learning and practicing the skill of mindfulness through various guided exercises.
- ❖ 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.

WHY MINDFULNESS?

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.

Here are the research studies:

1. Bowen, S., Witkiewitz, K., Clifasefi, S. L., Grow, J., Chawla, N., Hsu, S. H., ... & Larimer, M. E. (2014). Relative efficacy of mindfulness-based relapse prevention, standard relapse prevention, and treatment as usual for substance use disorders: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 71(5), 547-556
2. Li, W., Howard, M. O., Garland, E. L., McGovern, P., & Lazar, M. (2017). Mindfulness treatment for substance misuse: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 75, 62-96.

HOW CAN I BOOST MY MINDFULNESS ABILITY?

Plan out a practice 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.”

How to listen to audio-guided mindfulness exercise:

1. Go to **PracticeMBRP.com** and listen to audio-guided mindfulness exercises. The “RP” in the website name stands for “Relapse Prevention.”
2. Ask your clinician for help finding a device to play audio-guided mindfulness exercises, such as a MP3 Player or CD player.
3. Download the FREE smartphone app called “Mindfulness Coach.”

AUDIO-GUIDED EXERCISES ON *PracticeMBRP.com*

Name of Exercise	Description
Mindful Check-in	<p>Check-in with yourself. Notice what’s going on in your body and mind. Then, focus your attention on your breathing.</p> <p>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.</p>
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.

PLAN OUT YOUR PRACTICE ROUTINE

My practice routine includes listening to a mindfulness exercise about _____ days per week.



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:

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

I will access the audio-guided exercises by _____

Your options include:

- (1) Going to PracticeMBRP.com on a smartphone, tablet, or computer
- (2) Have your clinician help you find a device like a MP3 Player or CD player
- (3) Download the free mindfulness app called “Mindfulness Coach”

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.

HOW CAN I USE MINDFULNESS ON-THE-GO IN MY DAILY LIFE?

#1 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 feeling right now?)

#2 Mindful Coping



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

- Use mindfulness to cope
- Use the SOBER Space

#3 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)

THE 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.

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

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.

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

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

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.

COMMON CHALLENGES AND HOW TO WORK THROUGH THEM (PART 1)

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).

COMMON CHALLENGES AND HOW TO WORK THROUGH THEM (PART 2)

“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.

MY MOTIVATIONS FOR PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

What are your personal motivations for practicing mindfulness?

Circle 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

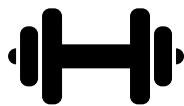
WHY STICK WITH IT?

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-Specific Handouts

Handouts for Session 1

Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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)

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

1. **Planned 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

2. **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.

SOBER SPACE HANDOUT

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

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 help you step out of “automatic pilot” and be more aware and mindful in your response.

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

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.

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

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

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.

USING THE SOBER SPACE (Handout Part 1)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Situation

Wake up in the morning with intense physical pain and feeling depressed

AUTOMATIC PILOT MODE

“Not this again.
I can’t handle this.”

Just lie in bed,
instead of getting up.

“This pain will
never go away”

“I need to get high.”
(Feel craving to use)

Text a friend to get drugs

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Pressure and aching in back
- Sadness
- Lots of negative thoughts popping up

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out.
Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to how you are feeling. Do your best to bring a sense of openness and acceptance to your experience.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Remind yourself “I can handle this. I have done it before.”
- Get out of bed and take a hot shower.

USING THE SOBER SPACE (Handout Part 2)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Situation

Feel bored and lonely on a Saturday night

AUTOMATIC PILOT

"My life is so boring"

"I could use some company right now"

Call a friend you previously used alcohol and drugs with

Feel craving to use

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Heaviness in chest area
- Bored, Lonely
- Thoughts about reaching out to others

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out.
Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to how you are feeling. Do your best to bring a sense of openness and acceptance to your experience.

RESPOND

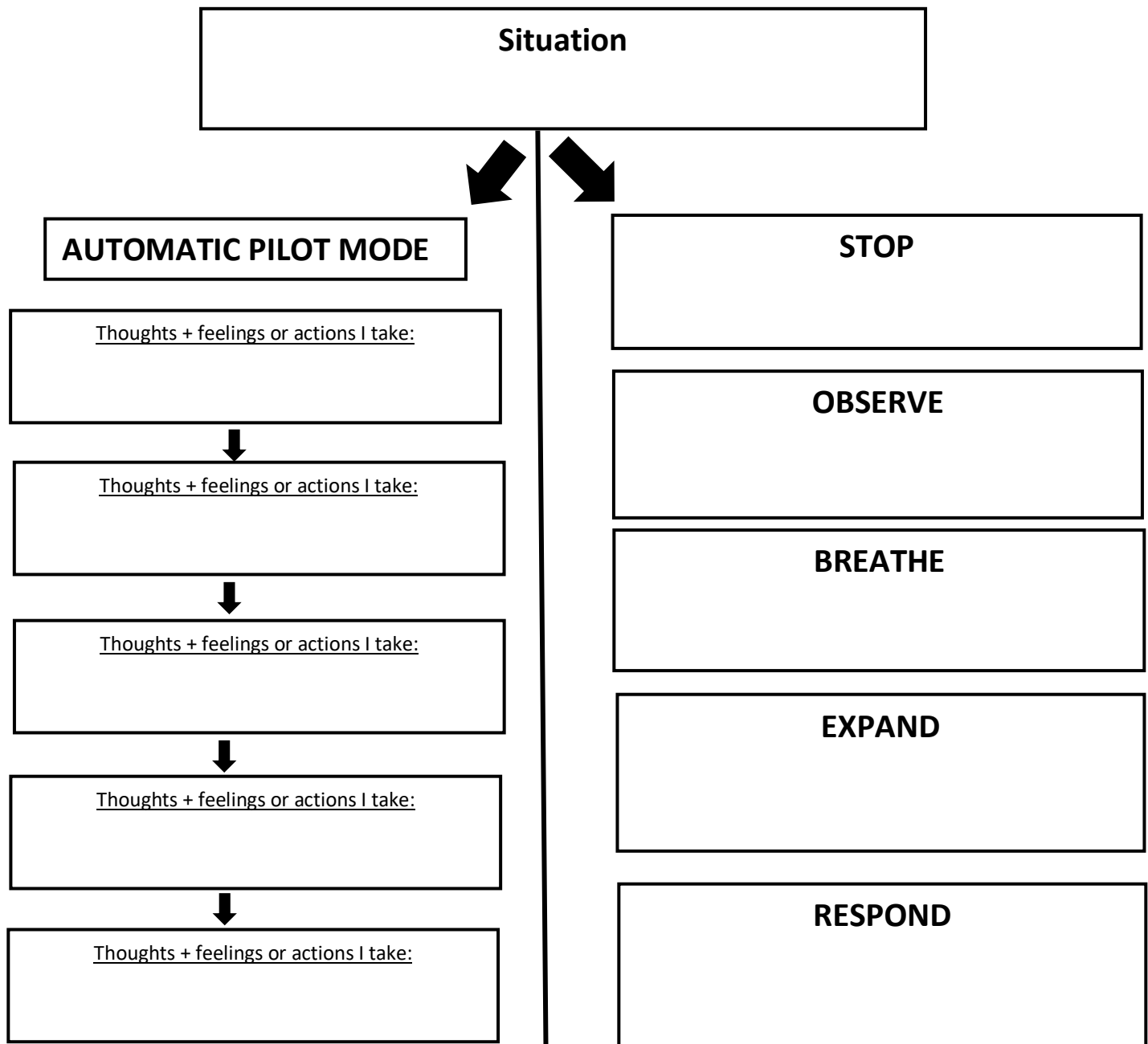
Respond with awareness.

- Call a sober-support friend and make plans to get dinner.

USING THE SOBER SPACE (Worksheet 1)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

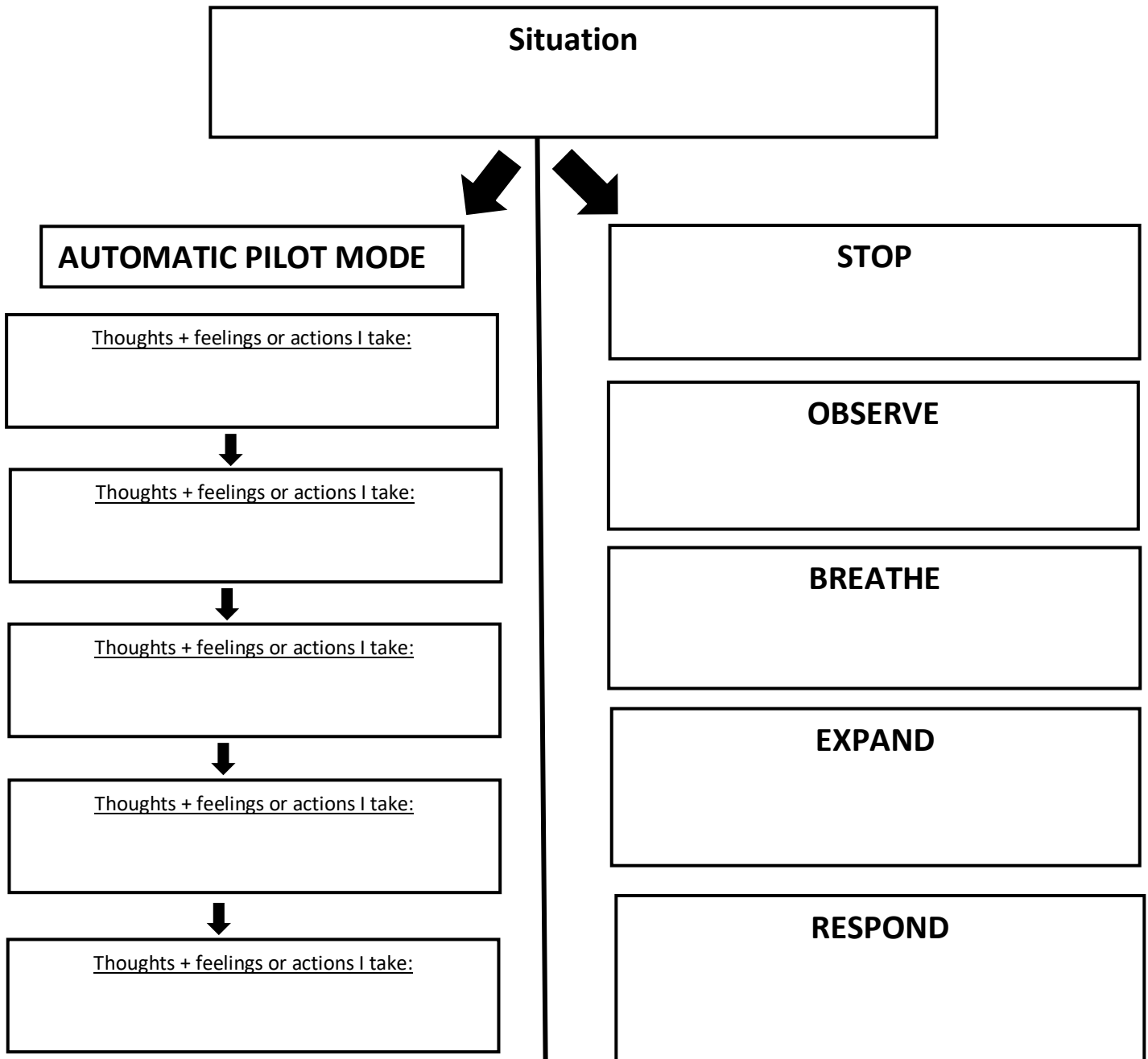
Write your own example. Think about a type of situation that brings about an automatic reaction. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space in the situation? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.



USING THE SOBER SPACE (Worksheet 2)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Write another example. Think about another situation that brings about an automatic reaction. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? 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.



Handouts for Session 2

Emotions as Visitors

THE GUEST HOUSE HANDOUT

Session 2: Emotions as Visitors

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

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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. He may be clearing you out for some new delight ...because each has been sent as a guide from beyond”* (the Guest House Poem).

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

1. **Planned 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)
2. **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 for Session 3

Self-Compassion

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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.”

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

- 1. Planned 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
- 2. 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 for Session 4

Responding (not reacting) to triggers

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

1. **Planned 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
2. **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.

SOBER SPACE HANDOUT

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers

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 to cope with situations that trigger an urge or craving to use substances or engage in some other problematic behavior.

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

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

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

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

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.

USING THE SOBER SPACE FOR TRIGGERS (Handout Part 1)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers



Primary Trigger:

Argument with significant other

REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Automatically walk in direction of nearby liquor store



Trigger:

See liquor store



REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Go in store, buy alcohol, and start drinking

STOP

Pause. Slow down before doing anything.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Tightness in chest
- Angry, Guilty
- Having thought "I need a drink"

BREATHE

Focus on your breathing. Notice the breath flowing in and out. Slow down even more.

EXPAND

Expand back to the full situation. Be aware of yourself and the environment.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Go to bedroom. Listen to music
- Talk over things with significant other later

USING THE SOBER SPACE FOR TRIGGERS (Handout Part 2)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers



Primary Trigger:

Across the street, you see an old friend who used to sell drugs to you

REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Automatically walk across street towards old friend



Trigger:

He tells you he has drugs in his car around the corner



REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Go with him to car around corner



Trigger:

He shows you the drugs



REACT AUTOMATICALLY

You buy the drugs and use them

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Warm feeling in belly. Mouth salivating.
- Desire or craving to feel high
- Having thought "I should go say hello"

BREATHE

Take a slow, mindful breath in and out.

EXPAND

Expand back to the full situation. Be aware of yourself and the environment.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Walk away in the other direction
- Take out smartphone and listen to guided SOBER space when you get to apartment

USING THE SOBER SPACE FOR TRIGGERS (Worksheet 1)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers

Write your own example. Think about a TRIGGER that brings about an urge or craving to use alcohol or other drugs. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.

Primary Trigger:

AUTOMATIC PILOT

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

STOP

OBSERVE

BREATHE

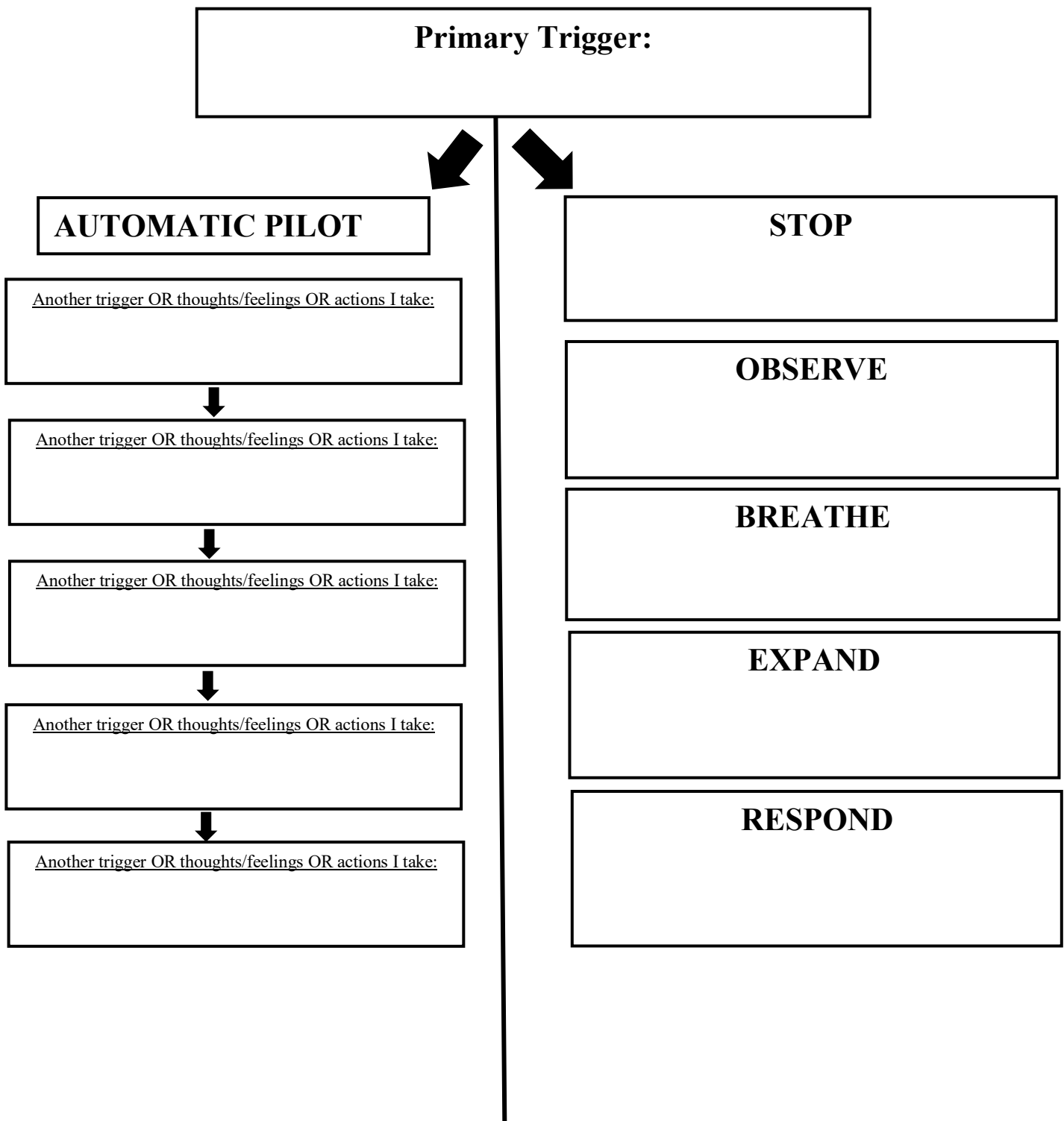
EXPAND

RESPOND

USING THE SOBER SPACE FOR TRIGGERS (Worksheet 2)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers

Write another example. Think about a TRIGGER that brings about an urge or craving to use alcohol or other drugs. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.



Handouts for Session 5

Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

3. Planned 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

4. 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.

THE ROLE OF THOUGHTS IN THE RELAPSE CYCLE

Session 5: Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts

Trigger:
Physical pain and stress
from a worsening health condition

Automatic Pilot
*Believe thoughts
Act on thoughts*

Mindful Mode
*See thoughts as thoughts
Don't need to act on thoughts*

Initial Thought:
"I can't deal with this. Getting high would make things a lot better."

Believe thoughts.
Feel upset and have urge to use.
Go get some alcohol or drugs.

Go back home and take one pill/drink/hit ("Just one")

The "Ah, Screw it" Thought
"I'm a failure. I might as well give up and have another."

Next day...
Another "Screw it!" Thought:
"I knew I would go back to using. There's no hope for me."

Take use/drink more and eventually fall asleep

Pause. Notice your thoughts as just passing thoughts, not truths or commands. ("This is just a thought. I don't need to believe it or act on it right now")

Focus on your breathing for a few moments to "ground" yourself.

Respond with awareness. Make some tea. Call a supportive friend.

The Relapse Cycle

Never too late to switch to mindful mode

Handouts for Session 6

Surfing the Urge

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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?

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

1. **Planned 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

2. **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 for Session 7

Following Your Values

KEY CONCEPTS RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

1. **Planned 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
2. **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).

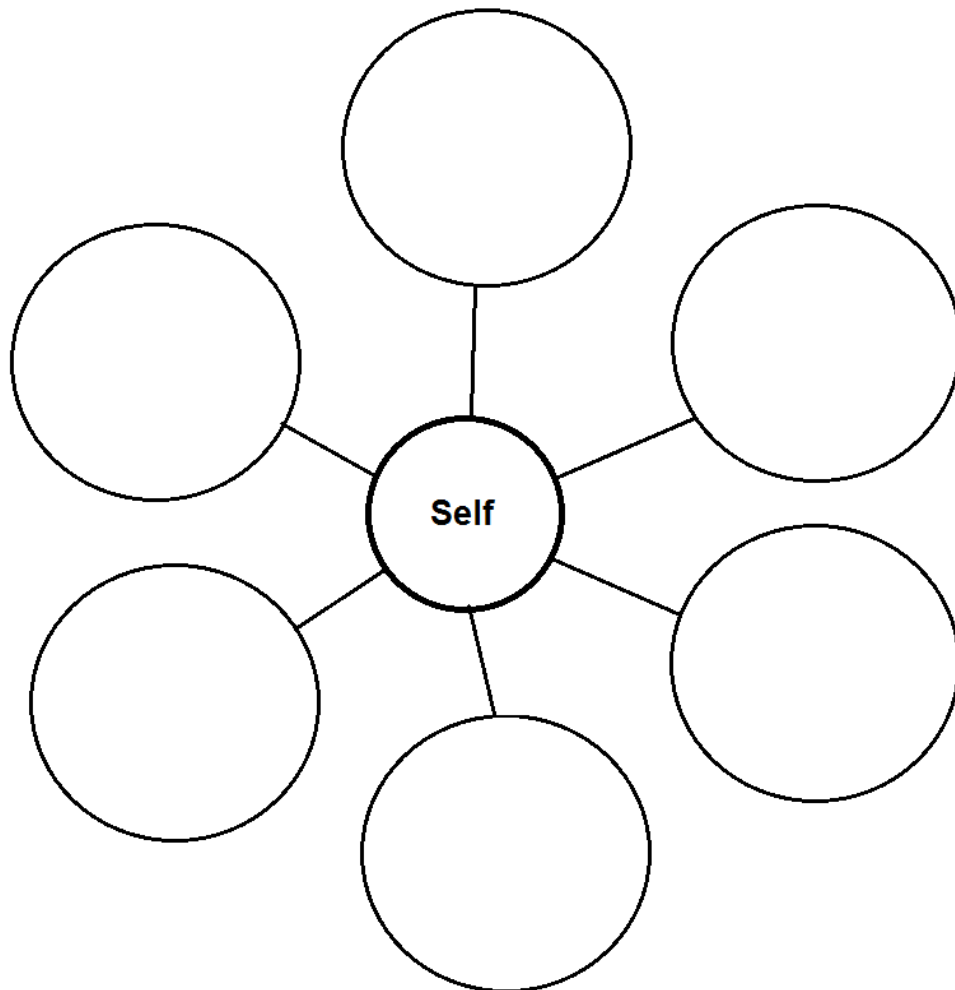
MY PERSONAL VALUES (Worksheet Part 1)

Session 7: Following Your 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.

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 on the next page.**



MY PERSONAL VALUES (Worksheet Part 2)

Session 7: Following Your Values

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?

SOBER SPACE HANDOUT

Session 7: Following Your 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.

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

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.

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

Expand. Expand your awareness to your body and the situation. **Expand your awareness even more to consider your values.**

Respond. Respond to the situation with awareness. **How can your values guide you in responding to the situation?**

USING THE SOBER SPACE TO FOLLOW YOUR VALUES (HANDOUT Part 1)

Session 7: Following Your Values

“Choice Point” Situation
Feel anxious before job interview.
Not sure whether to go.

AUTOMATIC PILOT

“I’m just going to mess up the interview.”

“What’s the point. I probably won’t even get the job.”

Feel more anxious and start to also feel sense of shame

Don’t go to job interview. Stay home and lie in bed.

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Heart beating fast
- Anxious
- Thoughts about avoiding interview

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out.
Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to yourself and the situation. Expand your awareness even more to consider your personal values.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Say to yourself: “Getting a job is important to me right now. I’ll just do the best I can.”
- Go to job interview.

USING THE SOBER SPACE TO FOLLOW YOUR VALUES (HANDOUT Part 2)

Session 7: Following Your Values

“Choice Point” Situation

Bored on a Sunday. Not sure what to do with yourself.

AUTOMATIC PILOT

“What should I do with myself? Maybe I’ll just chill.”

“I would feel more relaxed if I could get a little high.”

Feel craving to get high

Look around house for drugs or alcohol you might still have

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Tension in shoulders
- Agitated
- Thinking: “What should I do with myself?”

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out. Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to yourself and the situation. Expand your awareness even more to consider your personal values.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Say to yourself: “You know what, I care about my daughter and want to spend more quality time with her.”
- Call daughter and plan to meet for lunch.

Handouts for Session 2

Exploring Your Needs

KEY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE HANDOUT

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.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

1. **Planned 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
2. **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.

PRACTICE LOG FOLLOWING SESSION 8: Exploring Your Needs

Date/Day	Planned Practice	On-the-Go Practice	Notes/Observations
	Set aside time to listen to audio-guided exercise	<u>Mindful Moment</u> (took a random moment to pause/check-in) <u>Mindful Coping</u> (Used SOBER Space in challenging situation) <u>Mindful Activity</u> (eating, walking, chores, being outside)	
	Which practice? How long?	What did you do? How many times?	

Thank you for your interest in MBRP-RA! We welcome any feedback, comments, or questions
Please email Corey Roos at corey.roos@yale.edu.