

Handouts and Appendix Materials for
Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention for Addictive Behaviors:
A Clinician's Guide, Second Edition
 by Sarah Bowen, Neha Chawla, Joel Grow, and G. Alan Marlatt
 Guilford Publications, Inc.

HANDOUT 1.1 Overview of Sessions	1
HANDOUT 1.2 Session 1 Theme and Daily Practice: Automatic Pilot and Mindful Awareness	2
HANDOUT 1.3 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	3
HANDOUT 2.1 Common Challenges in Meditation Practice (and in Daily Life)	4
HANDOUT 2.2 Noticing Triggers Worksheet	5
HANDOUT 2.3 Session 2 Theme and Daily Practice: A New Relationship with Discomfort	6
HANDOUT 2.4 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	7
HANDOUT 3.1 SOBER Space	8
HANDOUT 3.2 Session 3 Theme and Daily Practice: From Reacting to Responding	9
HANDOUT 3.3 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	10
HANDOUT 4.1 Session 4 Theme and Daily Practice: Mindfulness in Challenging Situations	11
HANDOUT 4.2 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	12
HANDOUT 5.1 Using the SOBER Space in Challenging Situations Worksheet	13
HANDOUT 5.2 Session 5 Theme and Daily Practice: Acceptance and Skillful Action	14
HANDOUT 5.3 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	15
HANDOUT 6.1 Relapse Cycle Worksheet	16
HANDOUT 6.2 Session 6 Theme and Daily Practice: Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts	17
HANDOUT 6.3 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	18
HANDOUT 7.1 Daily Activities Worksheet	19
HANDOUT 7.2 Reminder Card	20
HANDOUT 7.3 Session 7 Theme and Daily Practice: Supporting and Sustaining Well-Being	21
HANDOUT 7.4 Daily Practice Tracking Sheet	22
HANDOUT 8.1 Resource List	23
HANDOUT 8.2 Reflections on the Course Worksheet	24
HANDOUT 8.3 Session 8 Theme: Social Support and Continuing Practice	25
APPENDIX Intentions of MBRP Exercises and Practices	26
Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention—Fidelity Scale	34

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Overview of Sessions

HANDOUT 1.1

SESSION 1: AUTOMATIC PILOT AND MINDFUL AWARENESS

In this first session, we discuss “automatic pilot,” or the tendency to behave unconsciously or out of habit without full awareness of what we’re doing. We discuss this specifically in relation to addictive behaviors (acting upon cravings and urges “automatically” without awareness). We introduce an exercise called the body scan to practice intentionally bringing attention to the body.

SESSION 2: A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH DISCOMFORT

In this session, we learn ways to experience triggers and cravings without automatically reacting. We focus on recognizing triggers and what the reactions to those feel like, specifically the sensations, thoughts, and emotions that often accompany craving or reactivity. We use mindfulness to bring greater awareness to this often automatic process, learning to experience craving and urges in a way that increases our ability to make choices in how we respond.

SESSION 3: FROM REACTING TO RESPONDING

We learn the “SOBER space” as a way to expand our mindfulness skills from formal mindfulness practice to the daily situations we encounter. This may help us “be with” challenging physical sensations and emotions that arise, including those associated with cravings and urges, without reacting in harmful ways. We explore what might be driving these desires to use or react. In this session, we also learn formal sitting meditation.

SESSION 4: MINDFULNESS IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

We focus on being present in situations or with people previously associated with substance use or other reactive behaviors, using mindfulness to increase our ability to experience pressures or urges to use without automatically picking up a substance or reacting in other harmful ways. We identify our individual relapse risks and explore ways to cope with the intensity of feelings that come up in these high-risk situations.

SESSION 5: ACCEPTANCE AND SKILLFUL ACTION

It can often feel paradoxical to accept unwanted thoughts, feelings, and sensations as a way of moving through or past them. However, this may indeed be the first step in moving toward change. Acceptance of present experience is an important foundation for truly taking care of ourselves and seeing more clearly the best action to take. We continue to practice techniques such as the SOBER space and focus on using these in challenging situations. This session moves from noticing warning signs and learning to pause to taking skillful action in both high-risk situations and in normal daily life.

SESSION 6: SEEING THOUGHTS AS THOUGHTS

We further explore awareness of and relationship to thinking, with a focus on recognizing thoughts for what they are, versus assuming they are accurate reflections of the truth. We look at the role thoughts play in relapse cycles, specific thoughts that seem especially problematic, and ways to work more skillfully with our minds.

SESSION 7: SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING WELL-BEING

This session focuses on personal warning signs for relapse and how to best respond when these warning signs arise. This includes discussion of broader lifestyle choices, balance, kindness toward ourselves and others, and the importance of including nourishing activities as part of a full, healthy life.

SESSION 8: SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CONTINUING PRACTICE

In this final session, we review skills and practices learned in this course and discuss the importance of building a support system. We reflect on what we learned from the course and share our individual plans for incorporating mindfulness practice into daily life.

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Session 1 Theme and Daily Practice

Automatic Pilot and Mindful Awareness

HANDOUT 1.2

THEME

“Automatic pilot” describes our tendency to react without awareness. When we experience cravings and urges to use substances, or engage in other reactive behaviors, we often go on automatic pilot; that is, we act upon urges without full awareness of what is happening and what the consequences might be. Practicing mindfulness can help us step out of this automatic pilot mode, raise our awareness, and make more conscious choices about how we respond rather than reacting in habitual and often self-defeating ways.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. *Body Scan*

Do your best to practice the body scan daily between now and when we meet again. There’s no “right” way to do this nor is there anything in particular that you “should” experience. Just notice whatever is arising in the present moment, including mind wandering, boredom, restlessness, sleepiness, and so forth.

2. *Mindfulness of a Daily Activity*

Choose an activity that you engage in each day (e.g., washing dishes, drinking coffee or tea) and, as best you can, bring your full attention to the experience in the same way we did with the raisin. You may notice qualities of the object or activity as well as sensations, thoughts, or feelings that arise.

3. *Complete Daily Practice Tracking Sheet*

Fill this out daily, recording your mindfulness practice (both the body scan and mindfulness of a daily activity) and what you noticed or what got in the way. Please be honest. You will not be judged in any way about how much or how little you have integrated practices each week, or about your experiences.

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 1.3

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

Day/ date	Formal practice with audio recording: How long?	Mindfulness of daily activities	Observations/comments
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	

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Common Challenges in Meditation Practice (and in Daily Life)

HANDOUT 2.1

There are some challenges that arise so commonly in the course of meditation practice that this list has remained steady over thousands of years. These experiences are not bad or wrong; they are simply part of meditation practice, and they do not mean that your meditation is “not working” or that you are doing the practice incorrectly. These challenges can feel distracting, and people often feel defeated or discouraged by them. Learning to recognize these experiences as they arise and knowing they are simply part of the experience of meditation can be helpful. It’s not just you!

These challenges will most certainly arise for anyone practicing meditation, including you. When we recognize them, they become less of a barrier or “problem.” We can learn to observe them with curiosity and nonjudgment.

1. AVERSION

This is the experience of “not wanting” or “not liking.” Any time we experience something and have the reaction of dislike, or the desire to make that experience go away, it could be described as aversion. This might include feelings of fear, anger, irritation, disgust, or resentment.

2. CRAVING OR WANTING

This can be as subtle as wanting to feel a little more relaxed and peaceful, or as strong as an intense urge or craving.

3. RESTLESSNESS OR AGITATION

This can be experienced physically, as in an itchy discomfort or strong desire to move during meditation, or can be experienced as the mind feeling restless or uncomfortable.

4. DROWSINESS OR SLEEPINESS

This could be physical sleepiness or just mental sluggishness. It might be in the mind, the body, or both.

5. DOUBT

Doubt might be experienced as a sense of doubt about yourself (“I can’t do this practice”), or doubt about the practice and its utility (“This is ridiculous. Why would people just sit there and watch their breath?”). Doubt can especially be tricky because it is often very convincing.

It may help to remember that the type of meditation we are practicing has been around for thousands of years and has helped millions of people transform their lives. There is no one who cannot participate in meditation; it is accessible to anyone who wishes to practice. It can also be a challenging practice. The important part is to stay with it, and when these challenges arise (which they will) to bring them, too, into your awareness.

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Noticing Triggers Worksheet

HANDOUT 2.2

Pay attention this week to what triggers you or to times when you feel reactive. Use the following questions to bring awareness to the details of the experience as it is happening.

Day/ date	Situation/trigger	What sensations did you experience?	What moods, feelings, or emotions?	What were your thoughts?	What did you do?
<i>Example:</i> Friday 3/26	<i>An argument with a friend.</i>	<i>Tightness in chest, cold, clammy palms, heart beating fast.</i>	<i>Anxiety, craving.</i>	<i>I really need something to get me through this.</i>	<i>Took a walk, later talked with friend about what upset me.</i>

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Session 2 Theme and Daily Practice

A New Relationship with Discomfort

HANDOUT 2.3

THEME

Most of us tend to either give in to craving or fight hard to resist it. This session focuses on learning to experience triggers and cravings differently. We begin by learning to identify what triggers us, then observing how these triggers lead to all the sensations, thoughts, and emotions that are often part of craving. We practice observing the experience without “automatically” reacting. Mindfulness can help bring this process into our awareness, allowing us to disrupt the “automatic” chain of reactions that often follows a trigger and giving us greater freedom to make choices that in the long run make us happier.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. As best you can, practice the body scan daily this week and note your experiences on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.
2. Fill out the Noticing Triggers Worksheet each day, noting the thoughts, urges or cravings, emotions (e.g., angry, sad, anxious, happy), and body sensations (e.g., tight in the chest, jittery) you experience. If no triggers or thoughts of using come up on a particular day, you can simply make a note of that. You could also note other types of triggers, for example, things that bring up anger, shame, or any behaviors you would like to change.
3. Continue with the mindfulness of a daily activity practice. You can use the same activity or choose a different one. Bring your full attention to that activity, noticing the sensations, sights, sounds, thoughts, and even emotions that arise.

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 2.4

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

Day/date	Formal practice with audio recording: How long?	Mindfulness of daily activities	Observations, comments, or challenges (aversion, craving, sleepiness, restlessness, doubt)
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	
	___ minutes	What activities?	

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SOBER Space

HANDOUT 3.1

This is an exercise that you can do almost anywhere, anytime, because it is brief and quite simple. It can be used in the midst of a high-risk or stressful situation, if you are upset about something, or when you are experiencing urges and cravings to use. It can help you step out of automatic pilot, becoming less reactive and more aware and mindful in your response.

A way to help remember these steps is the acronym SOBER.

S—Stop (or Shift). When you are in a stressful or risky situation, or even just at random times throughout the day, remember to stop or slow down and shift your attention from the situation to what is happening in your experience. This is the first step in stepping out of automatic pilot.

O—Observe. Observe the sensations that are happening in your body. Also observe any emotions, moods, or thoughts you are having. Just notice as much as you can about your experience.

B—Breath. Gather your attention and bring it to the sensations of your breath.

E—Expand. Expand your awareness to again include the rest of your body, your mind, and your emotions, seeing if you can gently hold it all in awareness.

R—Respond. Respond mindfully (vs. react), with awareness of what is truly needed in the situation and how you can best take care of yourself. Whatever is happening in your mind and body, you still have a choice in how you respond.

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Session 3 Theme and Daily Practice

From Reacting to Responding

HANDOUT 3.2

THEME

Mindfulness practices can help us increase awareness and subsequently make more skillful choices in our everyday lives. Because breathing is always a present-moment experience, pausing and paying attention to sensations of the breath can be a way to return to the present moment and come back into the body. When we are more present, we are often more aware and less reactive and can make decisions from a stronger, clearer place. The SOBER space is a practice that can extend this quality of mindfulness from formal sitting or lying-down practice into the daily situations and challenges we encounter.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. Practice with the sitting meditation audio recordings this week and note your experiences on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.
2. Begin integrating the SOBER space into your daily life. It is best to practice this in both day-to-day situations as well as in challenging situations. Make a note of your practice on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 3.3

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

Day/ date	Formal practice with audio files: How long?	SOBER space	Notes/comments
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	

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Session 4 Theme and Daily Practice

Mindfulness in Challenging Situations

HANDOUT 4.1

THEME

Mindfulness practice can help foster a sense of spaciousness and perspective in challenging situations. In this session, we focus on staying present in situations that have previously triggered substance use or other reactive behaviors. We learn how we might relate differently to pressures or urges to react or use, and practice responding with awareness rather than reacting “automatically” or out of habit.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. Practice sitting meditation or body scan each day, as best you can.
2. Practice the SOBER space regularly and whenever you notice challenging emotions, sensations, and urges, or anytime you notice yourself becoming reactive. Note your practice on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.
3. Practice the walking meditation at least once this week. The purpose of the walking practice is to connect with awareness of the body while in motion and in day-to-day life. You can practice this formally in a private space, walking back and forth along a short path. You might also practice this informally in your daily routine, for example, when walking to the bus stop or walking your dog. If practicing in daily life, you may experiment with moving your attention between sensations of walking, the experience of seeing, the experience of hearing, and observation of the breath, resting your awareness on each for a few moments and continuing to move between them.

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 4.2

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

Day/ date	Formal practice: How long? Which practices?	SOBER space	Walking	Notes/comments
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	How many times?	

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Using the SOBER Space in Challenging Situations Worksheet

HANDOUT 5.1

Instructions: In the left column, list people, locations, relationships, emotions, or events that happen this week that feel challenging, triggering, or like high-risk situations for you. In the next columns, write what you notice about your reactions, specifically sensations, thoughts, or emotions that might be cues for you in the future to take a SOBER space. In the third column, note whether you were able to take a SOBER space, and in the final column, note how you responded in this situation.

High-risk situations or triggers (people, locations, emotions, events)	Reactions (sensations, thoughts, feelings that might be cues to take a SOBER space)	SOBER space? (yes/no)	How did you respond?
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

The reactions listed in the second column may be cues to stop and take a SOBER space. You may use these reactions as a reminder to step out of an automatic, reactive mode and observe your experience.

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Session 5 Theme and Daily Practice

Acceptance and Skillful Action

HANDOUT 5.2

THEME

It can sometimes be challenging to accept what is arising in a particular situation. However, this is often the first step toward taking healthy or positive action in our lives. For example, we might not have control over things that happen to us, emotions that arise, our current job or family situation, or people's behaviors and reactions around us. When we fight against these things, however, we tend to feel frustrated, angry, or defeated, which can be triggers for substance use or other reactive behaviors. When we accept the present as it is, we are *not being passive*; we are allowing what already is without struggle or resistance. This is often a necessary and active first step toward change. The same is true of self-acceptance; it often requires a complete acceptance of ourselves as we are before real change can occur.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. Practice sitting meditation, body scan, or mindful movement. Note your practice on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet (Handout 5.3).
2. Practice the SOBER space regularly and whenever you notice challenging emotions, sensations, or urges or anytime you notice yourself becoming reactive. Note your practice on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.
3. Complete the Using the SOBER Space in Challenging Situations Worksheet (Handout 5.1).

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 5.3

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

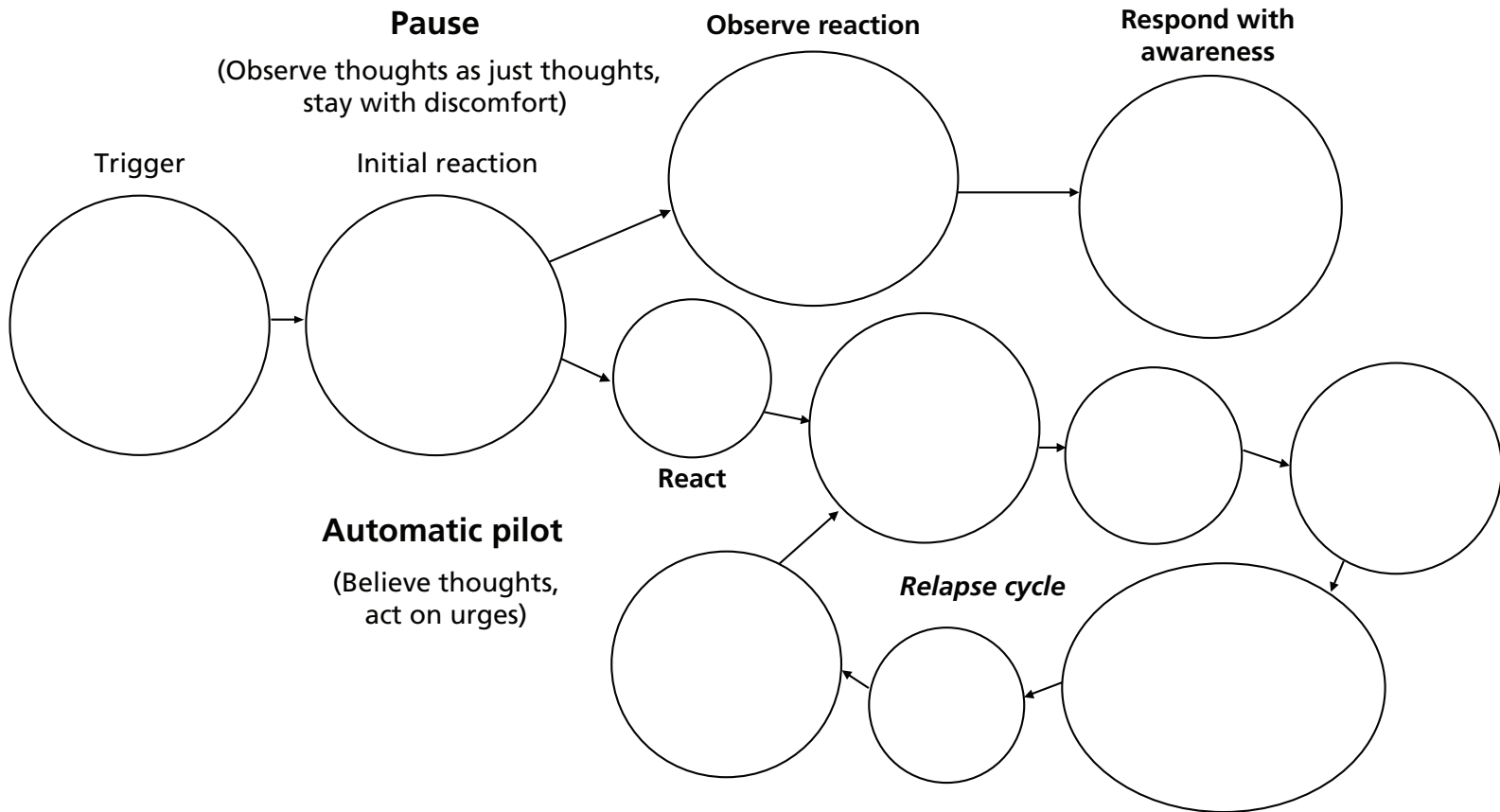
Day/ date	Formal practice: How long?	SOBER space	Notes/comments
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	

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Relapse Cycle Worksheet

HANDOUT 6.1

Think of a situation that has led to a reactive behavior in the past, or a situation you imagine might be risky for you in the future. Write the trigger, the initial reaction that followed, and the events along each possible path in the circles below. How *might your responses differ if you are on autopilot versus if you are more aware?*



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Session 6 Theme and Daily Practice

Seeing Thoughts as Thoughts

HANDOUT 6.2

THEME

We have had a lot of practice noticing our minds wandering. We have practiced gently returning the focus of attention to the breath or body sensations. Now we want to intentionally turn our focus to thoughts and practice relating to them as just words or images in the mind that we may or may not choose to believe. In this session, we discuss the role of thoughts in the relapse process and, more specifically, what tends to happen when we believe these thoughts.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. Choose your own practice from the set of practices we've learned thus far. Note your practice on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.
2. Practice the SOBER space regularly and whenever you notice challenging emotions, sensations, and urges or anytime you notice yourself becoming reactive. Note your practice on the Daily Practice Tracking Sheet.
3. Complete the Relapse Cycle Worksheet.

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 6.3

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

Day/ date	Formal practice with audio recording: How long?	SOBER space	Notes/comments
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	

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Daily Activities Worksheet

HANDOUT 7.1

A. List activities, people, and situations that you associate with **distress, challenging emotions, or self-doubt**, and describe how you tend to feel when you engage in these activities.

Activity, person, place, or situation	How do you tend to feel?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. List activities, people, and situations (that don't involve substance use) that you associate with **pleasure or joy** or that increase your **confidence**. Note how you tend to feel when engaged in these activities.

Activity, person, place, or situation	How do you tend to feel?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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Reminder Card

HANDOUT 7.2

Side One

REASONS TO STAY ON TRACK

-
-
-
-
-

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES/PLANS

-
-
-
-
-

Side Two

SOBER SPACE

- Stop: pause wherever you are
- Observe: notice what's going on right now
- Breath: direct focus to your breathing
- Expand your awareness
- Respond with awareness

RESOURCES

-
-
-
-
-

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Session 7 Theme and Daily Practice

Supporting and Sustaining Well-Being

HANDOUT 7.3

THEME

We have spent several weeks bringing awareness to the specific situations, thoughts, and emotions that put us at risk for relapse. Taking care of ourselves and engaging in nourishing activities are also crucial parts of sustaining recovery. In this session, we take a look at the broader picture of our lives and identify aspects that support a healthier, more vital life as well as those that put us at risk. Lifestyle balance and compassion for oneself are essential elements of a healthy and fulfilling life.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE INTO YOUR WEEK

1. Among all the different forms of practice we have learned over the past several weeks, choose a pattern you are interested in using on a regular basis (e.g., sitting three times per week and body scan three times per week, or simply sitting six times per week). Engage in your chosen program this week.
2. Practice the SOBER space daily (regular times and whenever you notice challenging thoughts, feelings, or cravings).
3. Engage in at least three nourishing activities that you have marked on your Daily Activities Worksheet.
4. Finish filling out the reminder card, if you haven't already done so.

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Daily Practice Tracking Sheet

HANDOUT 7.4

Instructions: Each day, record your mindfulness practice, also noting any barriers, observations, or comments.

Day/ date	Formal practice with audio recording: How long?	SOBER space	Notes/comments
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	
	___ minutes	How often? In what situations?	

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Resource List

HANDOUT 8.1

WEBSITES

- Downloadable meditation teachings and instruction from Dharma Seed: www.dharmaseed.org
- Resources, meetings, podcasts, meditations: www.refugerecovery.org
- Local meetings and resources relevant to meditation and recovery: www.buddhistrecovery.org
- Guided practices, resources, clinician lists: www.mindfulrp.com
- Guided practices and talks: www.tarabrach.com

BOOKS

- *Eight Step Recovery: Using The Buddha's Teachings to Overcome Addiction*, by Valerie Mason-John. Cambridge, England: Windhorse Publications, 2018.
- *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*, by Joseph Goldstein. Boston: Shambhala, 1993.
- *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions*, by Christopher K. Germer. New York: Guilford Press, 2009.
- *The Mindful Way through Anxiety: Break Free from Chronic Worry and Reclaim Your Life*, by Susan M. Orsillo and Lizabeth Roemer. New York: Guilford Press, 2011.
- *The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness*, by J. Mark G. Williams, John D. Teasdale, Zindel V. Segal, and Jon Kabat-Zinn. New York: Guilford Press, 2007.
- *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation*, by Thich Nhat Hanh. Boston: Beacon Press, 1987.
- *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps*, by Kevin Griffin. Emmaus, PA: Rodale, 2004.
- *A Path with Heart: A Guide through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life*, by Jack Kornfield. New York: Bantam, 1993.
- *The Power of Meditation: A 28-Day Program*, by Sharon Salzberg. New York: Workman Publishing, 2010.
- *Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha*, by Tara Brach. New York: Bantam, 2003.
- *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation*, by Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield. Boston: Shambhala, 1987.
- *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living*, by Pema Chödrön. Boston: Shambhala, 1994.
- *10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works*, by Dan Harris. New York: Dey Street, 2014.
- *True Refuge: Finding Peace and Freedom in Your Own Awakened Heart*, by Tara Brach. New York: Bantam, 2013.
- *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*, by Pema Chödrön. Boston: Shambhala, 1997.
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn. New York: Hyperion, 1994.

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Reflections on the Course Worksheet

HANDOUT 8.2

Please take a moment to reflect upon the following questions and write down your responses:

1. What did you find most valuable about this course? What, if anything, did you learn?
2. What, if anything, has changed for you during the course as a result of your participation?
3. Was there anything that got in the way of your learning or growth or that might have improved the course for you?
4. Other comments?
5. On a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very*), how important has this program been to you? Please explain why you have given it this rating.
6. On a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very*), how likely are you to continue engaging in **formal** mindfulness practice (e.g., body scan, sitting meditation, mindful stretching/movement) after this course?
7. On a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very*), how likely are you to continue engaging in **informal** mindfulness practice (e.g., SOBER space, mindful eating, walking, daily activities) after this course?

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Session 8 Theme

Social Support and Continuing Practice

HANDOUT 8.3

Using the mindfulness skills we've learned in this course can help us face our experiences differently; we can accept the experience instead of fighting it, and from there make choices from a wiser, more spacious place. This moment-by-moment journey of recovery and mindfulness practice can feel, at times, like swimming upstream. It is not an easy voyage. But we are fully capable of it.

Thus far, we have learned about the factors that put us at risk, some skills to help navigate through high-risk situations, and the importance of maintaining overall well-being. Participating in this group has also hopefully offered a sense of support and community. Having a support network is crucial to continuing along the path of practice and recovery. It can help us recognize signs of relapse and provide encouragement when we feel we are at risk. Having support around our meditation practice can help us maintain our practice and choose to show up for our lives.

There are many things we do not have control over and many things that may not go "our way." We do have a choice, however, in how we respond and how we experience our lives. Practicing mindfulness on a regular basis helps us be less reactive and more aware in our choices, ultimately giving us greater freedom. Taking care of ourselves and engaging in activities that nourish us is part of maintaining balance in our lives and helping protect against relapse. Maintaining a practice is not easy. Difficulties and barriers will arise. Be gentle with yourself. Remember that any practice is good practice; you can always begin again from right where you are.

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Intentions of MBRP Exercises and Practices

Note: Primary intentions are set in **bold** text.

SESSION 1: AUTOMATIC PILOT AND MINDFUL AWARENESS

Raisin Exercise

- **Experientially discern between “automatic pilot” and mindful awareness**
- Explore relationship between automatic/reactive behavior and substance use/relapse
- Introduce mindfulness by bringing all senses to an external, tangible object

What Is Mindfulness?

- **Allow participants to describe/define mindfulness based on direct experience with raisin exercise**
- Highlight nonjudgment as an aspect of mindful awareness

Body Scan

- **Awareness of body sensations as a way to directly connect with present-moment experience**
- Openness and curiosity toward all experiences, versus expectations about what “should” or “shouldn’t” be happening
- Exploring relevance of paying attention to physical experience and reactivity, cravings, and urges
- Shifting focus of attentional training from the outside object (raisin) to an interoceptive awareness of the body, and intentionally moving awareness from one area of focus to the next

(continued)

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SESSION 2: A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH DISCOMFORT

Common Challenges

These challenges often arise and are commonly viewed as “problems,” though they are universal.

- **Shifting one’s relationship to these challenges, recognizing them as common experiences to acknowledge and possibly even befriend (“inviting in” the visitors, as in the Rumi poem)**

Walking Down the Street Exercise

- **Observing the tendency for proliferation of thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, and urges to react in response to the *interpretation of an ambiguous event***
- Noticing and recognizing them as such, rather than as the “truth”
- Beginning to differentiate thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, and urges and noticing how they affect (or “feed”) one another
- Noticing if reactions are familiar, and thus beginning to recognize cognitive or behavioral patterns in response to triggers

Urge Surfing

- **Exposure/response prevention: Staying present with and observe the experience of craving/urges with kindness and curiosity, without engaging in reactive or resistant behavior**
- Exploring the experience of craving, including physical sensations, thoughts, and urges, therefore dismantling an experience that often feels overwhelming and typically elicits reactivity
- Looking “beneath” the craving for underlying, often wholesome, needs (e.g., relief from difficult emotions, a desire for peace or freedom)

Mountain Meditation

- **Embodying the stabilizing, grounded, rooted, and still qualities of a mountain, even in the face of inner and outer “weather” (e.g., changing circumstances, challenging situations or emotions)**
- Knowing that we have these inner resources available to us at any time

(continued)

SESSION 3: FROM REACTING TO RESPONDING

Awareness of Hearing

- **Bringing awareness to sensory experience versus content**
- Noticing the mind’s tendency to immediately jump in to assess, label, categorize, and judge, and how this can obstruct our true vision or raw experience
- Offering a practice that can help us “get out of our heads”

Breath Meditation

- **Practicing repeatedly returning focus to a present-centered experience (breath)**
- Noticing the tendency of the mind to wander and get caught in thoughts and stories, and practicing nonjudgmental awareness
- Disabusing ourselves of ideas about meditation being a “trancelike” state, or a relaxation exercise

False Refuge

- Recognizing needs that often underlie craving
- Exploring whether addictive behavior truly fulfills these underlying needs
- Recognizing addictive behavior as a misguided way of getting our needs met

SOBER Space

- **Integrating mindfulness into daily life by practicing the shift out of “autopilot” and into awareness, especially in situations in which we tend to be reactive**
- Establishing a clear, focused, and portable practice for higher-stress situations
- Observing whatever is arising—not necessarily changing our experience or “feeling better”—which may allow for choice in the face of challenging situations

(continued)

SESSION 4: MINDFULNESS IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Awareness of Seeing

- Observing present experience through a different “sense door”
- **Noticing deeply habitual ways in which the mind works (i.e., “automatically” labeling and categorizing), and how this can obstruct our true vision or raw experience**

Sitting Meditation (Sound, Breath, Sensation, Thought)

- Expanding the field of awareness to include other sense experiences
- **Becoming aware that all sense experiences are in the same class. Rather than thoughts or emotions being more important or true, all these experiences arise and pass in our field of awareness, moment to moment**
- Practicing observation of physical and emotional discomfort, and meeting it with patience, curiosity, and kindness, rather than with resistance
- Further noticing the mind’s tendency to automatically label, categorize, and judge

Individual and Common Relapse Risks

- **Awareness of individual risks and relapse patterns, and of the commonality of these factors and challenges**
- Specific focus on how mindfulness practices might be useful in high-risk situations

Sober in a Challenging Situation

- **Pausing at the brink of where we typically become reactive, and practicing presence and awareness versus reacting on autopilot**
- Learning that it is possible to “stay,” even when it feels intolerable
- Exploring our experience with curiosity and kindness
- Experiencing how greater awareness of experience just as it is can allow the space necessary to make a more mindful, intentional choice

Walking Meditation

- **Bringing attention to the body in motion, grounding oneself in physical sensations**
- Increasing awareness of another often “automatic” daily activity
- Noticing the experience of just walking versus trying to get somewhere (i.e., being vs. doing)

(continued)

SESSION 5: ACCEPTANCE AND SKILLFUL ACTION

Sitting Meditation (Sound, Breath, Sensation, Thought, Emotion)

- Experiencing emotion as another arising (and passing) event—with sensory and cognitive elements
- **Noticing raw elements of emotion versus stories about it or reactivity to it**

Sober Space in Pairs

- **Generalizing SOBER practice to everyday challenges by inducing a slightly more agitated, distracted, or “automatic” mode**
- Practicing mindful pausing in the context of an interpersonal exchange

Discussion of Acceptance and Skillful Action

- **Accepting what already *is* versus wishing things were different (fighting against reality)**
- Accepting things as they are—providing a stable, clear vision from which to make change in the future

Mindful Movement

- **Another modality of mindfulness practice: repeatedly returning attention to sensations in the body while in motion and engaging in different postures, distinguished from trying to “achieve” something**
- Noticing emotional responses in relation to the body (e.g., urges to escape discomfort, self-judgment, and evaluation)
- Befriending the body by making space for emotional and physical discomfort, as well as pleasant sensations and a sense of well-being (listening to the body, respecting what it says)

(continued)

SESSION 6: SEEING THOUGHTS AS THOUGHTS

Sitting Meditation: Thoughts

- **Observing thoughts similarly to how we have been observing sounds and sensation— arising and passing objects of attention**
- Creating distance and perspective by observing thoughts as objects, while stepping back from their content, using metaphors to observe the arising and passing of thoughts in the mind
- Thoughts as simply words or images arising in the mind, rather than reliable reflections of “truth”
- Recognizing judgment as yet another thought

Relapse Cycle

- **Disaggregating the seemingly automatic process of relapse**
- **Realizing that slowing down and observing thoughts, emotions, and sensations can allow us to step out of the “automatic” cycle and choose a more skillful response**
- Decentering from thoughts that may lead to relapse through recognition and familiarity
- Distinguishing a lapse from the full-blown cycle of relapse and illustrating the many points of choice following a lapse
- Discussing the abstinence violation effect, and exploring individual “relapse signatures” as a way to prepare and minimize damage

(continued)

SESSION 7: SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING WELL-BEING

Kindness Meditation

- **Practicing kindness toward self and others**
- **Observing whatever arises** in the practice (including resistance and aversion) with openness and curiosity, rather than expecting a particular feeling or sentiment

Daily Activities Worksheet

- Bringing awareness to ordinary daily activities and how they tend to affect overall mood, life balance, and health
- Recognizing not just the categories of things that tend to be nourishing or depleting, but also the qualities (e.g., “I feel depleted when I’m pressured and I feel nourished when I have a sense of freedom,” compared with “I feel depleted at work”)
- Noticing balance between depleting versus nourishing activities, and the importance of including nourishing activities
- **How we relate to “depleting” activities can make them more or less depleting**
- **Not missing the pleasurable experiences in our lives—being present for the nourishing activities**
- Recognizing how ways we relate to daily activities, and the imbalance between nourishment/depletion, can put us at higher risk for relapse

(continued)

SESSION 8: SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CONTINUING PRACTICE

Importance of Support

- Recognizing the importance of a support network, for maintaining both mindfulness practice and recovery
- **Identifying excuses/barriers to seeking support and discussing possible actions to overcome these**

Reflections on the Course

- **Recognizing which aspects/practices have been beneficial and ways this practice has supported recovery and greater life goals/values**
- Opportunity to share experience and provide feedback

Intentions for the Future

- **Articulating plans for integrating practice into daily life (e.g., types of practices, time of day)**

Closing Circle/Concluding Meditation

- Recognizing that we, and others around us, are shaped by our past experiences and are a perfect part of nature just as we are
- Practicing kindness toward self and others

Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention—Fidelity Scale

A. INQUIRY				
	Absent	Minimal	Adequate	Superior
Facilitating inquiry and responding to questions or comments				
1. Awareness of Current Experience: What did you notice? Encourages awareness of present moment experience. Elicits/highlights experiences. <i>("What did you notice?" "Did you notice anything in your body?" "So you noticed the thought that . . ." "Anyone notice the mind wandering?")</i>	0	1	2	3
2. Curiosity: Exploring the experience Encourages further exploration, curiosity, and nonjudgment toward what is noticed. <i>("What is the experience of anger like for you? Where do you feel it?" "What does an itch really feel like? Is it burning, hot, pulsing, throbbing?")</i>	0	1	2	3
3. Acceptance: How are you relating to the experience? What was it like to be with that? Highlights or inquires about the difference between relating to experiences with acceptance versus aversion or grasping. <i>(Allowing and being with difficult emotional and physical states versus trying to get rid of them or manipulate one's experience in some way)</i>	0	1	2	3
4. Familiar or Different Inquires about whether an experience is familiar (i.e., habitual/autopilot) or different (i.e., raw experience, mindful awareness).	0	1	2	3
5. Relevance/Relation Explores how practices or in-session experiences relate to behavior, daily life, or addiction.	0	1	2	3

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B. GUIDING PRACTICE							
		Unsatisfactory		Satisfactory		Excellent	
<i>Adapting to present context</i>		0	1	2	3	4	
Pacing, inclusion/adaptation of instructions as needed (Ambient noise, participant experiences, challenges with practice, etc.)							

C. GENERAL SKILLS							
		Unsatisfactory		Satisfactory		Excellent	
Attitude	Ability to model and embody mindful awareness (Respond to participants in a curious, present-focused way, nonjudgmental/accepting of whatever arises)	0	1	2	3	4	
Theme	Integrates/refers to session theme throughout	0	1	2	3	4	
Redirects/ Stays on topic	Redirects from content or "storytelling" to direct experience, keeps session on topic	0	1	2	3	4	
Elicits	Elicits versus teaches themes	0	1	2	3	4	
Clarifies intentions, disabuses expectations	Understands and clarifies intentions and addresses misconceptions about mindfulness or practice (Addresses "I'm not doing it right" "It didn't work" "I'm in a totally different zone when I practice" "I'm trying but I can't seem to relax")	0	1	2	3	4	

D. GLOBAL RATING				
<i>Overall quality of the therapy in this session</i>				
Unsatisfactory	Mediocre	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
0	1	2	3	4