

Allowing and letting be group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat.	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction? (use ABC, p9)	
Suggested Practice	Walking	15 mins
Inquiry	Inquire about today's practice; then include last week's practice too	10 mins
<i>Halfway point – gauge energy in room and move/ground as required</i>		
Exercise	<p>Vicious flower exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up “suffering” in circle in centre of board • Invite group to call to mind times when they have experienced pain – thoughts, emotions, body sensations, impulses & put in the middle. • Elicit things people do to deal with suffering and write them round edge of circle. • Ask, <i>why do we do these?</i> Elicit that it is understandable, trying to protect ourselves. Now, <i>how well do they work?</i> • Go round each – if it helps, line goes from circle outwards – if not, line goes round each response and back to circle. • Focus on when <u>not</u> helpful – what are consequences of these things? (short and long-term) – what when they don't work? - what do they do to the painful experience itself? • Point out that petals group into themes of avoidance (drugs/distraction) and entanglement (ruminating/wallowing); discuss continuum of avoidance ← → entanglement and how the breathing space gives us an exit from where we can decide how to act. • Link to the ABC – by mindfully Being with this discomfort by doing the breathing space, sensing the breath and exploring the body, we have the opportunity to make wiser Choices. • Breathing space and handout. 	20 mins
Closing	Set intention for practice over coming days/week – inc home practice	10 mins
	Go round and say one thing learned/struggled with today	
	Breathing space and thank you	

Allowing and Letting Be handout

What do you do when you experience unpleasant thoughts, feelings and sensations?

The petals on the vicious flower (right) may seem like a good idea at the time, and some may even work for a little while, but in the long term they all lead back to the suffering in the centre, and some make it worse.



Avoidance

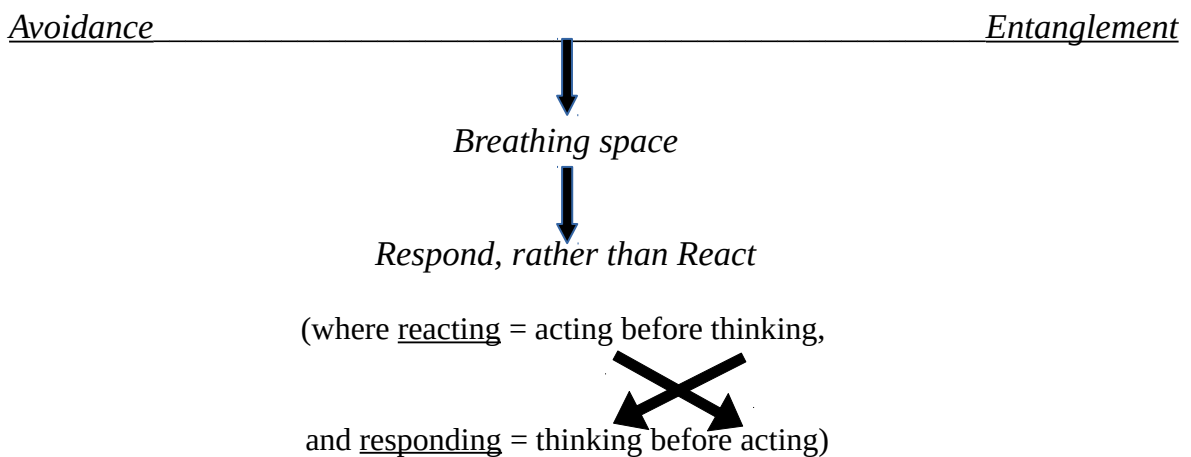
Distraction can be a helpful choice, if it is done consciously to get through a particularly hard time, but if you continually avoid your experience, pushing it away, it can start to influence you without you realising, which can lead back to active addiction.

Entanglement

The opposite of avoidance is getting caught up in it, or wallowing. We can plan, learn from mistakes, and think our way through some problems, but some are not solvable by thinking. You can end up getting more caught up in them and going round in circles, getting more anxious and depressed – and back to addiction.

There is another way!

First, let go of trying to make things different, and take a SOBER breathing space. It doesn't mean giving up - but by allowing whatever is happening now, you can start from where you are instead of pretending things are different. And at least if you truly know what's happening for you now, you can make better decisions about what to do next, and not just react in a knee-jerk way.



**“The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am,
then I can change”**

Carl Rogers

Thanks to Oxford Mindfulness Centre.