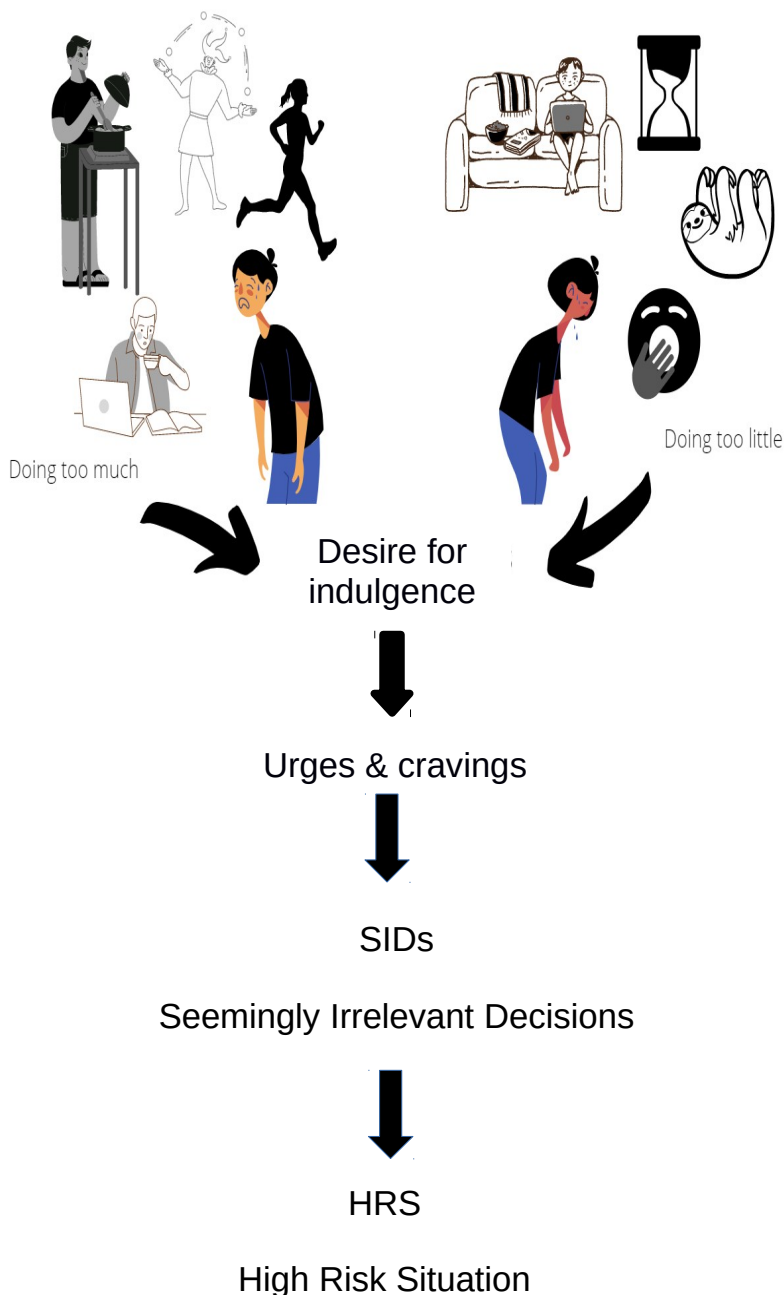


Balance and meaning group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat.	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction?	
Suggested Practice	The raisin	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>Introduce relapse process on the flipchart: Lifestyle imbalance → desire for indulgence → urges/cravings → and so on.. elicit from the group as you go through it.</p> <p>Say we spend a lot of time in treatment working on the later parts of the process, but if you can get the balance right at the start, you can reduce that second step of desire for indulgence – and thus the amount and severity of cravings and relapses.</p> <p>Early recovery is also a great time for re-evaluating who you are and deciding who you want to become.</p> <p>Show them worksheet 1 and invite them to choose five values that feel important to them (give them a few minutes on their own); feed back and discuss.</p> <p>Then invite them to work out ways they would like to spend their time using worksheet 2. They can have as many or as few ideas as come up – this is more about thinking about the future they would like than striving for ideas if they're not there yet. Feed back to the group.</p> <p>Then narrowing down and choosing one small thing they will do differently in the next week to start on their path. Help them make it SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bounded).</p>	20 mins
Closing	Affirm 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	

Balance and Meaning handout

Lifestyle imbalance is the first step in the **relapse process**:



Doing too much

It's tempting in early recovery to throw yourself into work and try to always keep yourself busy. It can feel like a healthy recovery from addiction, but not balancing this with downtime leads to a desire for indulgence in the form of relaxation, time alone and release.

Doing too little

A lack of meaning in life with few day-to-day activities or contacts with others can lead to feelings of emptiness, and a desire for indulgence in the form of excitement, contact and release.

This leads to urges and cravings to drink or use, which you might try to push away..

So you think, "I'll just nip to the cashpoint to get some money for a takeaway" or "I'll just go and see [someone you used to use/drink with] to see how they are". Something seemingly innocent, but that sets you up for what comes next...

And WHAM! - you're being offered drugs or drink before you know it. You can either turn it down and escape the process – or relapse.

It's important to learn skills to deal with the later stages in the process, but you can reduce the risk of even getting there by thinking about the life you want now, and planning a meaningful life with a balance of work, rest and play.

**“Create a life you don't need a break from ...
do the planning now, so you don't need to escape later.”**

Balance and Meaning worksheet 1

Drinking/using takes up a LOT of time and energy, and leaves behind a huge gap.

It also gets in the way of working out who you are and what makes you happy, so it can be difficult to start to work all this out in early recovery. Working out what makes you tick will be an important part of recovery, but there's no need to rush it at this stage! Just starting to get an idea of what is important to you at the moment might help show the way towards a happier life, but don't expect it to stay the same in months/years to come – enjoy exploring ideas and stay open-minded to change.

What is important to you?

From this list: 1: add any important values not on the list

2: then circle the five most important to you at the moment.

(Don't overthink it – just go with what feels right now and go with your gut).

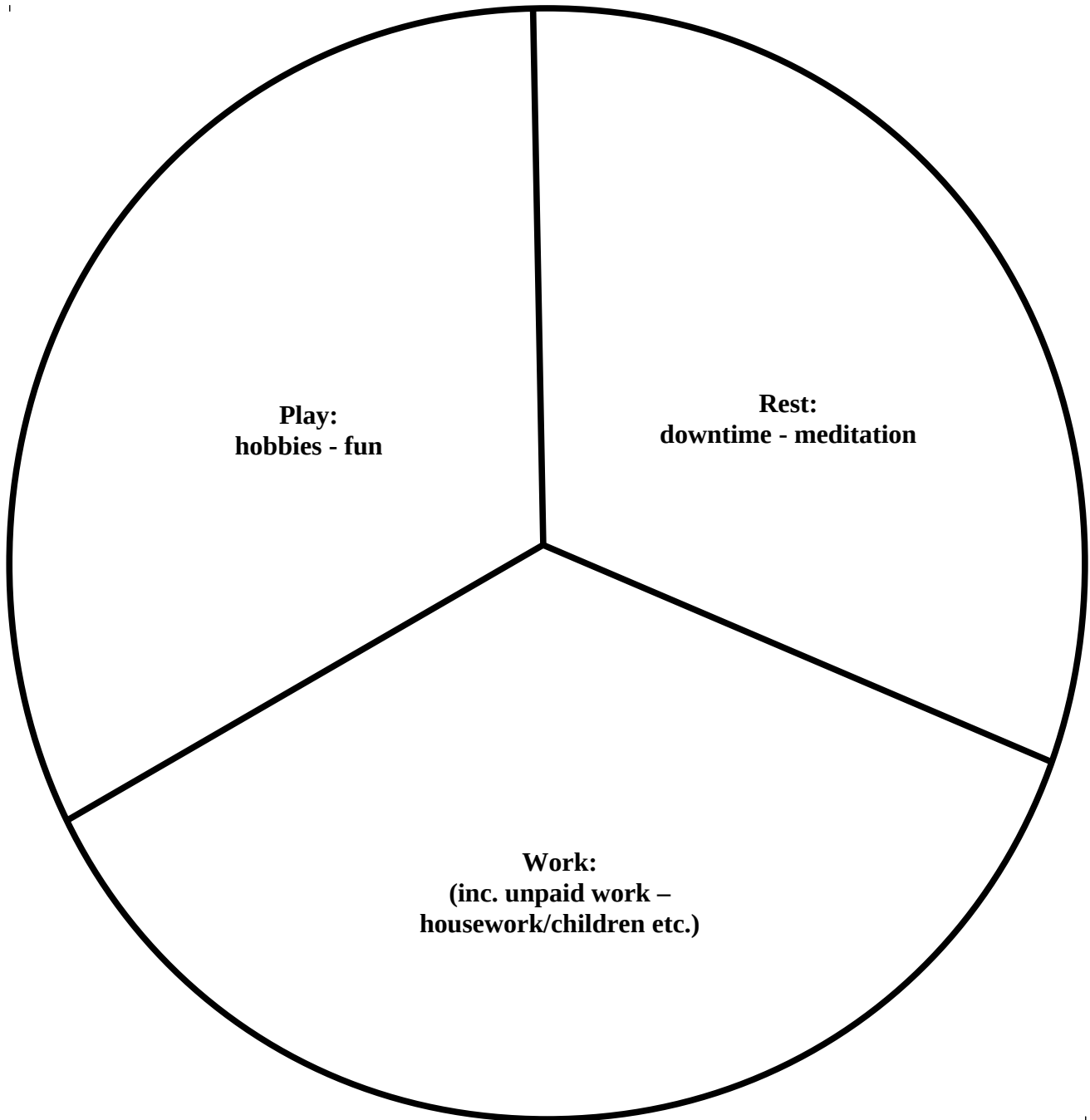
Achievement	Adventure	Authenticity	Balance
Challenge	Commitment	Compassion	Concern for others
Courage	Creativity	Curiosity	Empathy
Excellence	Fairness	Faith	Family
Financial stability	Freedom	Friendship	Fun
Generosity	Growth	Happiness	Harmony
Health	Honesty	Humour	Integrity
Kindness	Knowledge	Learning	Loyalty
Openness	Perseverance	Power & authority	Recognition
Religion	Respect for others	Responsibility	Security
Self-care	Self-respect	Serenity	Service to others
Others:	_____	_____	_____

Based on the Deepest Values Checklist in The Power of Full Engagement by Loehr & Schwartz

Balance and Meaning worksheet 2

Bearing in mind the five values you've identified, spend some time filling in the circle below with activities that fit into the three areas of work, rest and play. Start with things you already do and need to do – then let your mind play with things you'd like to do.

Think about who it's good for you to be around and who you may need to avoid, aiming for a balance between time with others and time alone.



Intention for the next week: