

Mindful Communication group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat.	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction?	
Suggested Practice	Breath → sounds → open awareness.	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>Invite participants to get into pairs and decide on who is an apple and who is a banana (or longest hair or other way):</p> <p>Demonstrate chairs arranged in pairs like a kissing chair (facing in opposite directions next to each other, so they can speak quietly to the other person and be heard).</p> <p>Explain what is going to happen before you start it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples will speak for two minutes on a topic you will give them; bananas can <u>say nothing at all</u>, but must just listen. • Bananas will then summarise <u>what they heard</u> back to apples. • Swap round and repeat <p>Tell them that if they run out of things to say, not to worry – sitting in silence is fine: just focus on sensations in the body if so. Any questions about the setup?</p> <p>Reveal choices of topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something you've achieved recently that you're proud of; • Something you hope to achieve in the future. <p>Start the exercise from sitting in silence with an awareness of the body; invite them to see what it's like trying to keep some awareness of the body as they talk and listen. Return to the body between each part – signify by ringing a bell.</p> <p>At the end invite them to thank their partners; back to main group and ask – what's it like being really heard? What's it like listening without speaking?</p> <p>*Possible learning points – we often don't really listen when others are talking; it feels validating being really heard.</p> <p>Give out handouts and discuss teaching points.</p>	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	

Mindful Communication handout

We know that conflict with others is one of the most common triggers leading to substance use. When we fall into old familiar patterns of communication with others we are often triggered, and respond in old familiar ways.

Often, when we think we are listening, we're:

- Thinking of what we're going to say back to the person,
- Waiting to say it,
- Not paying any attention at all, nodding in the right places, while thinking of something else entirely.



Being aware of how we are communicating and listening fully to others can help us to respond in new ways, which can help us break out of our old habits and weaken addictions. In this session we experiment with fully listening, remaining aware of what is going on in our bodies while we listen, and giving the other person our full attention.

Some things to play with to help improve communication are -

- Asking yourself “who am I listening to right now?” (often you’ll find it’s yourself – let your inner voice just be, and refocus on the other person).
- Remaining 50% aware of your body sensations while you’re talking to someone, and 50% aware of what you’re doing/saying/hearing. When you spot you’re triggered in some way, use that as an opportunity to go slow and take care of yourself.
- Pausing before replying, taking a moment to check you’ve heard what they said.

How to **HEAR** the other person:

Halt whatever you are doing and offer your full attention.

Enjoy a breath as you choose to receive whatever is being communicated to you—wanted or unwanted.

Ask yourself if you really know what they mean and if you don’t, ask for clarification. Instead of making assumptions, bring openness and curiosity to the interaction. You might be surprised at what you discover.

Reflect back to them what you heard. This tells them that you were really listening.