

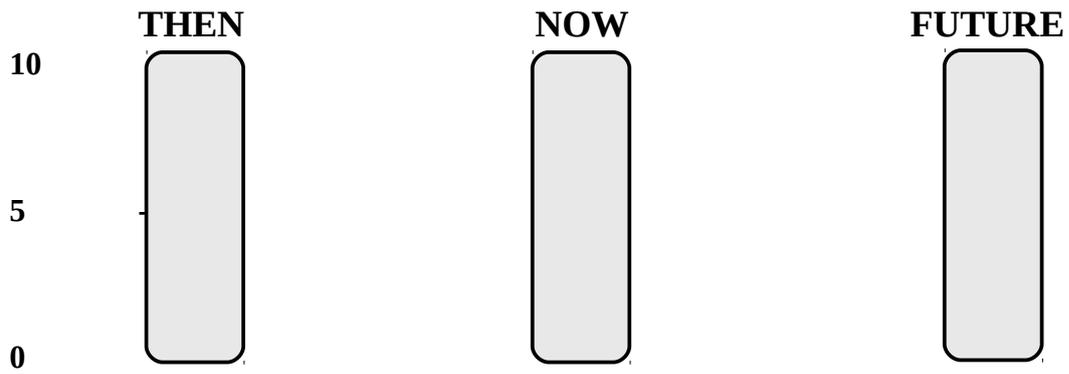
Thoughts are not facts group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat.	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction?	
Suggested Practice	breath → thoughts passing as clouds → thoughts as cinema → thoughts passing on stream → breath.	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>Ask for a volunteer to sit in the middle with head in hands</p> <p>Ask <i>what is happening here?</i> and feed back to board</p> <p>Ask what are facts on the board – and circle them.</p> <p>Discuss (Point out you asked precisely “what is happening?” - there will have been lots of judgements and maybe not one objective fact.)</p> <p>*Teaching point – we make ‘facts’ up all the time!</p> <p>Give out handouts with the blank statement side up. Tell them you're going to read out a few statements and you want them to notice which one feels the most familiar to them. Read the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life without drink/drugs would be boring and no fun. • Drink/drugs are the only way I can control my feelings. • I can't properly relax (or sleep) without drink/drugs. • Drinking/using is the only way to get rid of cravings. • I won't be able to stay off drink/drugs. <p>Ask them to write their statement on the handout.</p> <p>Ask them to mark down how much they believe their chosen thought from 1-10 on the middle NOW barometer.</p> <p>Now ask them to think back to when they were at their worst. How much did they believe that fact then, from 1-10? mark it down on the left hand THEN barometer.</p> <p>What do they notice? Might today's opinion change? Leave the last barometer blank: when they revisit this worksheet in future they can see what they notice then.</p> <p>*Teaching point – just because we have a thought and believe it doesn't make it true! They change with time/situation/mood.</p> <p>Now ask them to think of another statement about themselves or the world that they'd like to explore – it can be another of the statements you read out, or if this conversation has triggered another thought, they could use that– maybe “I'm no good” or “no-one likes me really”. Put that in ‘thought 2’ box and fill in the barometer to show how much they believe it today. Invite them to keep this sheet near them in the following days/weeks, and make a note of levels then.</p>	20 mins

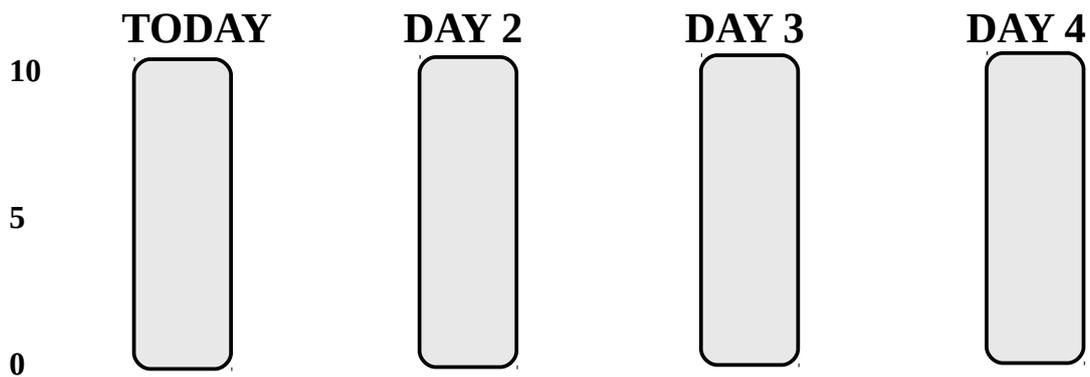
	*Teaching point – just noticing thoughts as thoughts is the most helpful first step – no need to get hung up arguing with them.	
Closing	Set intention for practice over coming days/week – inc home practice.	10 mins
	Go round and say one thing learned/struggled with today	
	Breathing space and thank you	

Thoughts Are Not Facts worksheet

Thought 1:



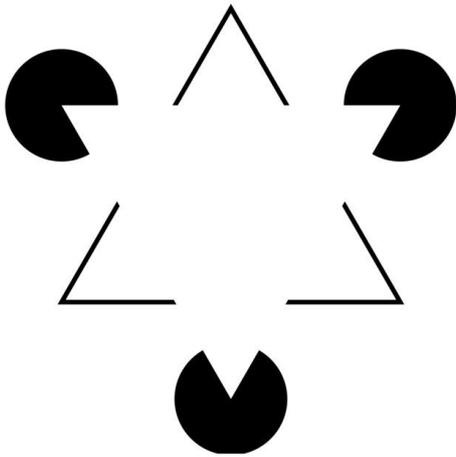
Thought 2:



Thoughts Are Not Facts handout (Even the ones that say they are..!)

We need to trust some thoughts to get us through life: without believing them we would get nothing done, as we wouldn't know what to do, where to go, who to see, how to find the keys, etc. But are our thoughts always telling us the truth?

How many triangles can you see in the diagram?



It might seem obvious at first – two triangles, one with a black outline and a white one on top, right?

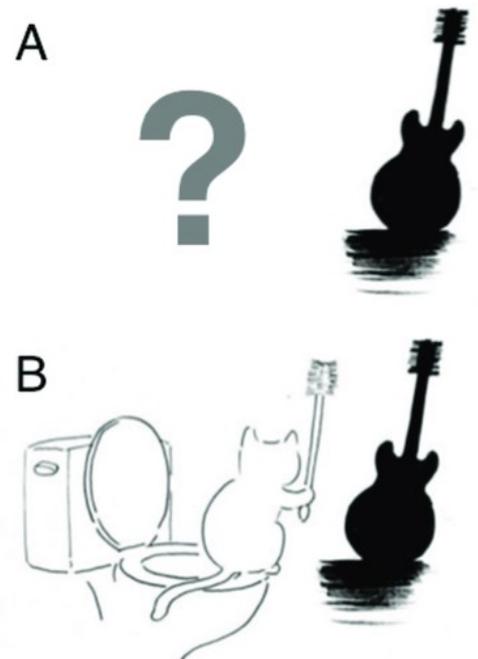
But look again – there are simply three pacman-shaped black shapes and three black Vs.

Our minds fill the gaps between things we know and experience, in order to make sense of the world.

This 'corner cutting' means that the things we tell ourselves are not always real facts – and this is true for many things, like what we are capable of, what we need, what other people are thinking, what the world is like – and so many more. Our thoughts are conditioned by our pasts, and the more we think them, the more they reinforce themselves and become truer and truer for us. We fall into habits of thinking, without questioning them.

Some thoughts might help us get through specific times, “No-one can help me now” or “this place is not safe” or “I need my substance to cope” - but what when these thoughts become habits and stop helping us?

When we practise mindfulness, we practise simply seeing thoughts as events caused by the mind – neurons (brain cells) firing - and bringing non-judgmental attention to them. They may or may not be true. And if you find yourself going round and round in thought, you can always take a breathing space and bring your attention back to body sensations. The thoughts will still be there later, don't worry about that – and choosing to place your attention in the body can buy you some space before you act.



“What we dwell upon becomes the shape of our mind.

The shape of our mind becomes the shape of our world” Christina Feldman