

You are not your thoughts (or feelings) group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat.	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction? Inc. <i>creating new neural pathways to replace autopilot – not stuck as you are.</i>	
Suggested Practice	Lengthened SOBER breathing space with elongated O. Can also give other anchors as well as breath in B.	15 mins
Inquiry	Inquire about today's practice; then include home practice too	10 mins
<i>Halfway point – gauge energy in room and move/ground as required</i>		
Exercise	Dining room exercise: two scenarios; give out paper and pens.	20 mins
	<p>Scenario 1: “You wake up late, with your alarm going off and your keyworker banging at the door, telling you off. You drag yourself out of bed, tripping over something on the floor as you race to get some breakfast. As you go into the dining room, a peer leaves the room saying they can't stop. What do you think? How do you feel? What do you notice in your body?” Write down on paper.</p> <p>Scenario 2: “You wake up just before your alarm, feeling refreshed and well-slept. You have a leisurely shower and feel good. As you head towards the dining room your keyworker compliments you on something you did well the day before. As you go into the dining room, a peer leaves the room saying they can't stop. What do you think? How do you feel? What do you notice in your body?” Write down on paper.</p> <p>Using columns flipchart, feed back various answers from both scenarios into columns thoughts, feeling, body.</p> <p>Discuss differences/similarities and ask what they notice. Elicit: person, mood, context etc. affect thoughts.</p> <p>Ask what consequence in final column each row might lead to.</p> <p>*Teaching point – when we believe thoughts and act on feelings, repeating consequences regularly, we create neural pathways - habits. These can be changed by noticing thoughts and changing consequences, but first task is to notice them. <u>New neural pathways (and therefore habits) can be created by doing them regularly: “neuroplasticity” (brain – changing). We are not stuck as we are.</u></p> <p>Give out handouts and discuss teaching points.</p>	
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	

You Are Not Your Thoughts (or Feelings!) handout

One aim when practising mindfulness is to be more aware, more often. This way we learn to spot our automatic reactions to events, and see how we are led down old familiar pathways when in autopilot. When we see how this works, we can start to make different choices.

We all react to situations differently, and depending on how we feel or what is going on for us at the time. We explored this example today:

Situation	Thought	Feeling	Body	Consequence
Peer leaves the room when you go in.	“They didn’t even look at me”	Upset	Tightness in stomach, knot in throat	Cry
	“What have I done? I must have done something wrong”	Worried	Butterflies in stomach, shaky	Talk to someone
	“Nobody likes me”	Miserable	Numbness, heaviness	Isolate
	“They always were ignorant”	Angry	Tense in arms, full of energy	Follow them and hit them
	“I hope they’re ok”	Concerned	A bit tense.	Maybe catch them later

These images all have more than one way of seeing them. Similarly, situations are not as clear as they seem at first.

There is no “right” and “wrong” answer to how we SHOULD feel, think or act, but we can see that the same situation can end up with really different outcomes, depending on how we perceive it. Often a thought will come up, and we end up in a maelstrom of thoughts, feelings and urges, which can lead to using/drinking, without us really knowing how we ended up there.



Spotting these processes early is difficult to start with, because they can occur quite automatically and overtake us, without us even knowing quite what has happened. This is why it’s important to take time to practise spotting your inner monologue and how your body, thoughts, feelings and urges all relate to each other when things are ok, so you’re more practised when things are difficult.

The good news is that we can rewire our brains and learn healthier habits, if we take time to pay attention and become aware of our inner processes. By exploring your experience and changing what you do in response you are practising new ways of being.



From thoughts come actions. From actions come all sorts of consequences. Which thoughts will we invest in?