

SOBER Breathing Space

This is an exercise that you can do almost anywhere, anytime because it is very brief and quite simple. It can be used in the midst of a high-risk or stressful situation, if you are upset about something, or when you are experiencing urges and cravings to use. It can help you step out of “automatic pilot”, becoming less reactive, and more aware and mindful in your response.

A way to help remember these steps is the acronym SOBER.

S – Stop. When you are in a stressful or risky situation, or even just random times throughout the day, remember to stop and do this exercise. This is the first step in stepping out of automatic pilot.

O – Observe. Observe the sensations that are happening in your body. Also observe any emotions, moods or thoughts you are having. Just notice as much as you can about your experience.

B – Breath. Allow your attention to settle on your breath.

E – Expand. Expand your awareness to include the rest of your body, to your experience, and to the situation, seeing if you can gently hold it all in awareness.

R – Respond. Respond (versus react) mindfully, with awareness of what is truly needed in the situation and how you can best take care of yourself.