

Copyright Roos, Stein et al.

Sample Instruction for Leading the SOBER Space Practice

Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses“.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

The best way to learn the SOBER space is to actually practice it yourself. Solet’s practice the SOBER space together now – I will guide you in practicing the steps of the SOBER Space. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer.

The first step of the SOBER space is S for STOP. Take a moment righ there to just pause and slow down for moment.....

And the next step is O for OBSERVE. Observe what your experience is right now in the momentWhat is going on in your body?.....What kinds of thoughts and emotions are present for you now?.....Just observing with a sense of curiosity and without judging yourself in any way.....

And the next step is B for BREATHE. Take a few slow mindful breaths right nowanchor your attention on the breath as it flows in and out. As best as you can, connect with the direct sensations of the moving breath in the body.....

And the next step is E for EXPAND. Expand your awareness back out to your experience in the moment right now. Again, just noticing any thoughts and feelings that are present with a sense of openness and nonjudgment.....You might expand your awareness even more by opening your eyes if they were closed and just taking in the situation you are in.....where you are and what you can see and hear.....

The final step is R for RESPOND. For now, you might just simply notice that you have choices for responding or acting right now. For example, you might choose to just sit here and rest. Or, if you really wanted to you could choose to stand up and walk out o fthe room. The idea is to just be aware that you have the opportunity to consciously respond to this situation right here, right now. In any situation, even really challenging situations, we have choices for how we can respond. Mindfulness helps create a space or pause between a trigger and how we respond to a trigger.

Sample Instruction for Urge Surfing

*Note: The ellipses in the instruction“.....” indicates a period of silence without instruction. Longer ellipses“.....” indicates a relatively longer period of silence compared to shorter ellipse “.....”

Ok, so again for this practice I will first guide you in imagining the situation you chose. And then I will guide you bringing mindful awareness to your experience in the moment. Find a comfortable position that works for you, maybe sitting up straight in your chair, with your hands in your lap or at your side. Your eyes can be open or closed, whatever you prefer .First take a moment here to settle in. Bringing your awareness to your breathing in this moment, and just following the sensations of the breath with your awareness as it flows in andout.....Now, when you are ready, I invite you to imagine or picture the situation you chose. A situation that might bring about an urge or temptation to use alcohol or drugs or engage in some other behavior that is problematic for you. Just do your best to really bring that situation to mind.....maybe starting out by

picturing the environment around you in the situation..... You might notice what you can see in the situation.....are there other people around? Are there certain objects you can see?.....You might notice what you can hear in this situation?.....What sounds are coming up?.....You might also notice any sensations of touch, or maybe even things you might smell or taste in the situation.....You might imagine the events in the situation that lead up to the point when you really get triggered....And now we are just going to pause here and take some time to explore our experience, including any urge or cravings you might be experiencing right now. So, you might begin by noticing what physical sensations you are experiencing in your body in this moment.....seeing if you can notice sensations in your body with a sense of curiosity.....asking yourself, "What does this urge or craving actually feel like in my body?.....Maybe a fluttering in your stomach, tightness in the chest, clenching of jaw, dryness or wetness in mouth, or some other sensations in your body.....You might also notice any thoughts going through your mind or emotions that are coming up for you right now.....as best you can gently acknowledging your experience as a whole right now with a sense of acceptance and nonjudgment.....asking yourself, "Can I stay with my experience right now?....Can I be okay with the feeling of this urge or craving?.....You might imagine that the feeling of an urge or craving is like an ocean wave.....and imagine that you are gently riding out or surfing that wave as it come up and passes by.....not fighting the urge, not reacting to it, and also getting completely caught up or swept away by the urge.....just gently noticing the urge is there and surfing the wave as it passes.....or maybe using your breathing to breathe with the feeling of the urge .Using your breath to keep you steady and anchored as you practice mindfully accepting and acknowledging the experience of any urges or cravings in this moment.....

You might also ask yourself: what do I really need right now? Just being curious and seeing what comes up for you.....almost like you are looking "beneath" the urge or craving and exploring what it is you really need or want deep down.....maybe what you need deep down is some time to rest and take time for yourself...or maybe what you need deep down is some sense of peace, safety, or assurance.....or maybe what you need deep down is some sense of connection with other people.....or maybe you are not sure what you need in this moment and that is completely okay....All we are doing is being curious about the experience of having an urge or cravingsometimes an urge or craving to use alcohol or drugs can be "covering up" or "masking" other healthy needs and desires we all have as human beings.....like the need for rest, relief, assurance, safety, or connection with other people.....And now, as you are ready, completely letting go of the situation in your mind and bringing your attention to your breathing in this moment.....Maybe taking a few deep breaths..... Feel the breath in your body as it goes in and out.....And when you are ready you can open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to the room as we bring this practice to a close.