

## **Handout: Overview of Sessions**

### **SESSION 1: AUTOMATIC PILOT AND RELAPSE**

In this first session, we discuss “automatic pilot,” or the tendency to behave mechanically without being fully aware of what we’re doing. We discuss this in relation to smoking and alcohol use (acting on cravings and urges “automatically”). In order to bring attention to the body, we practice the exercise known as a body scan.

### **SESSION 2: AWARENESS OF TRIGGERS AND CRAVING**



This session focuses on learning to experience triggers, cravings, and thoughts of using without automatically reacting. We focus on recognizing triggers and what the reaction feels like in the body, such as our thoughts and emotions that go with cravings. We use mindfulness to bring awareness to this automatic process, learning to experience craving and urges in a way that helps us take control of the wheel and decide how we respond.

### **SESSION 3: MINDFULNESS IN DAILY LIFE**

“SOBER space” is learned to expand the quality of mindfulness from formal sitting or lying down practice to the daily situations we encounter. This helps us “be with” the different physical sensations and emotions that may come with cravings and urges. In this session we also begin to practice formal sitting meditation.



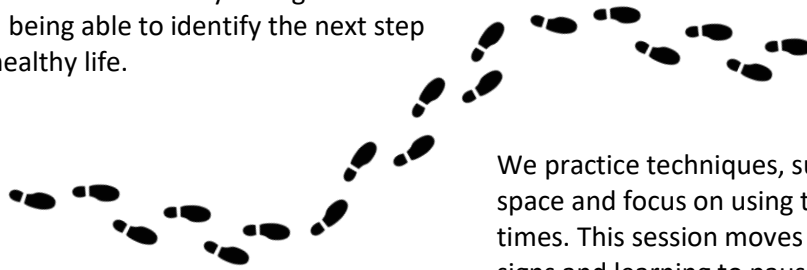
### **SESSION 4: MINDFULNESS IN HIGH-RISK SITUATION**



We focus on being present in situations or with people that have previously been associated with substance use, using mindfulness to learn to experience pressures or urges in order to avoid automatically reaching for a substance. We identify individual relapse risks and explore ways to cope with the intense feelings that come up in high-risk situations.

## SESSION 5: ACCEPTANCE AND SKILLFUL ACTION

Acceptance of present experience is an important foundation for truly taking care of oneself and being able to identify the next step towards a healthy life.



We practice techniques, such as the breathing space and focus on using these in challenging times. This session moves from noticing warning signs and learning to pause, to taking action in both high-risk situations and in daily life.

## SESSION 6: SEEING THOUGHTS AS THOUGHTS

With focus on experiencing thoughts as just thoughts we may then continue the exploration of awareness and its connection to thinking. We look at the role thoughts play in the relapse cycle, specifically thoughts that are problematic, and ways to work with them.



## SESSION 7: SELF-CARE AND LIFESTYLE BALANCE

This session focuses on how to react and respond to personal warning signs for relapse. This includes discussion of broader lifestyle choices, balance, self-compassion, and the importance of including nourishing activities as part of a full, healthy life style.



## SESSION 8: SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CONTINUING PRACTICE

In this final session, we review skills and practices learned in this group and discuss the importance of building a support system. We reflect on what we learned and share our individual plans for incorporating mindfulness practice into daily life.