

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE (Handout Part 1)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Situation

Wake up in the morning with intense physical pain and feeling depressed

AUTOMATIC PILOT MODE

“Not this again.
I can’t handle this.”

Just lie in bed,
instead of getting up.

“This pain will
never go away”

“I need to get high.”
(Feel craving to use)

Text a friend to get drugs

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Pressure and aching in back
- Sadness
- Lots of negative thoughts popping up

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out.
Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to how you are feeling. Do your best to bring a sense of openness and acceptance to your experience.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Remind yourself “I can handle this. I have done it before.”
- Get out of bed and take a hot shower.

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE (Handout Part 2)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Situation

Feel bored and lonely on a Saturday night

AUTOMATIC PILOT

"My life is so boring"

"I could use some company right now"

Call a friend you previously used alcohol and drugs with

Feel craving to use

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Heaviness in chest area
- Bored, Lonely
- Thoughts about reaching out to others

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out.
Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to how you are feeling. Do your best to bring a sense of openness and acceptance to your experience.

RESPOND

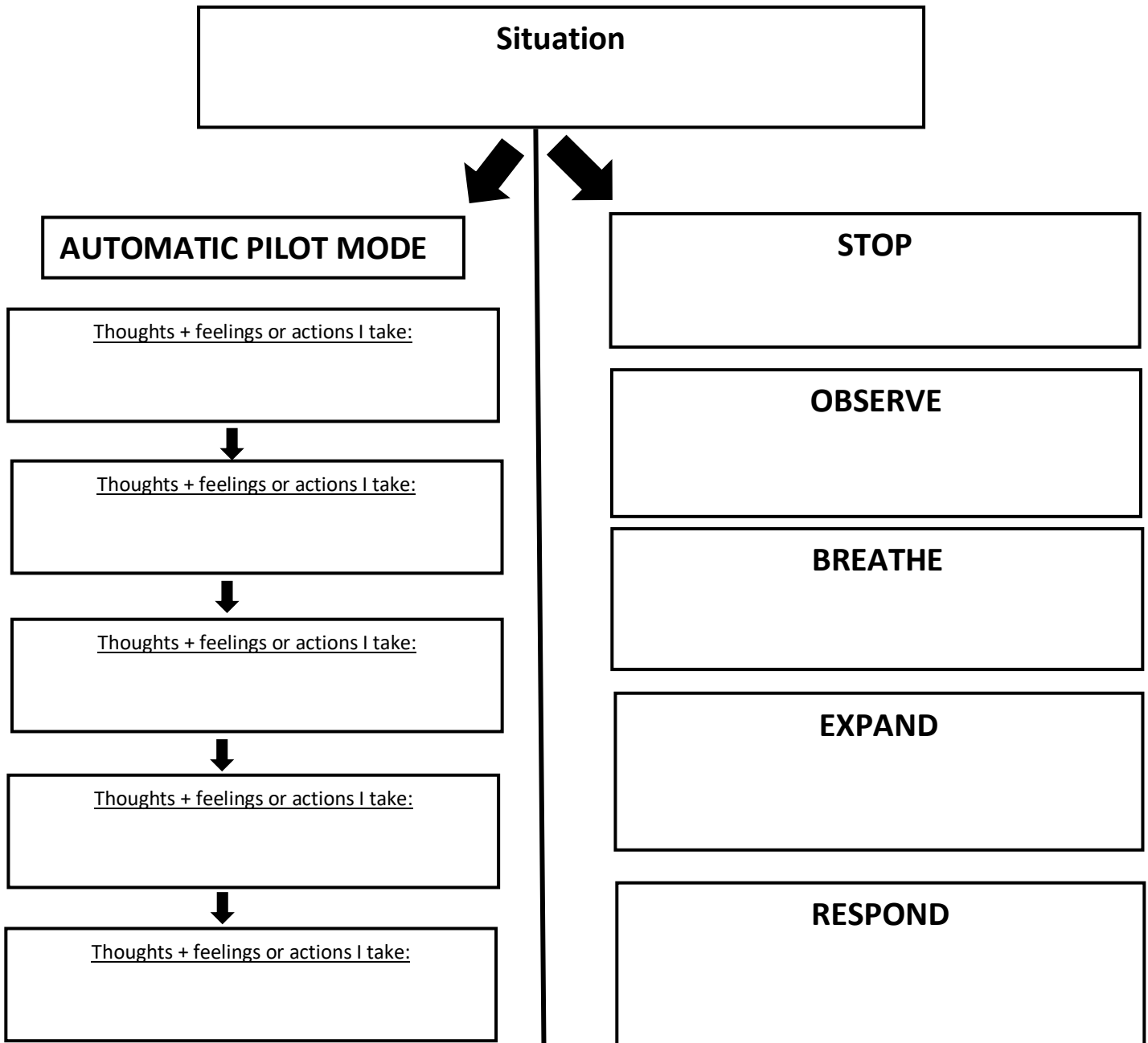
Respond with awareness.

- Call a sober-support friend and make plans to get dinner.

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE (Worksheet 1)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

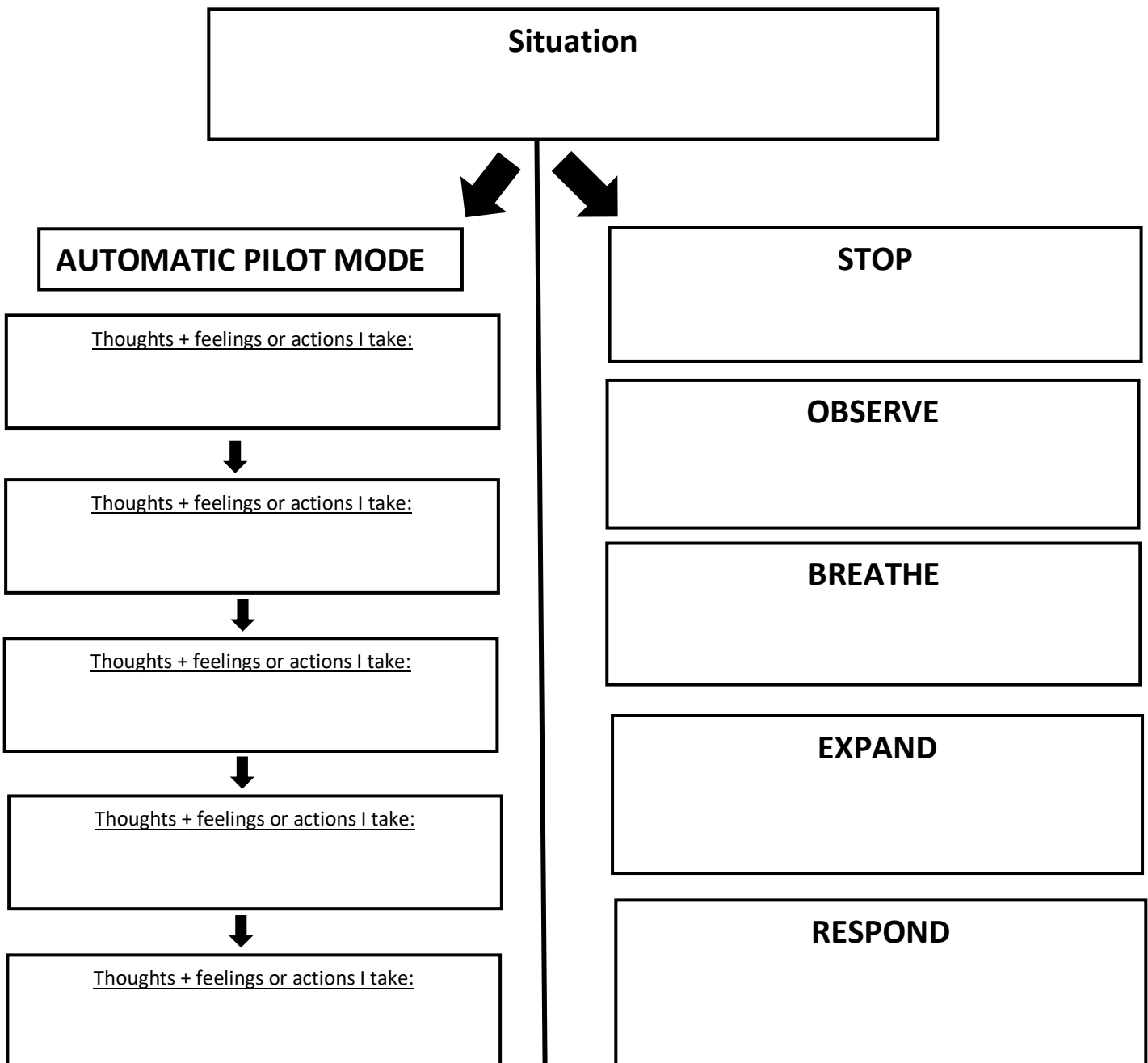
Write your own example. Think about a type of situation that brings about an automatic reaction. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space in the situation? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.



APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE (Worksheet 2)

Session 1: Mindfulness vs. Automatic Pilot

Write another example. Think about another situation that brings about an automatic reaction. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space in the situation? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.



APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE *FOR TRIGGERS* (Handout Part 1)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers



Primary Trigger:

Argument with significant other

REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Automatically walk in direction of nearby liquor store



Trigger:
See liquor store



REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Go in store, buy alcohol, and start drinking

STOP

Pause. Slow down before doing anything.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Tightness in chest
- Angry, Guilty
- Having thought "I need a drink"

BREATHE

Focus on your breathing. Notice the breath flowing in and out. Slow down even more.

EXPAND

Expand back to the full situation. Be aware of yourself and the environment.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Go to bedroom. Listen to music
- Talk over things with significant other later

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE *FOR TRIGGERS* (Handout Part 2)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers



Primary Trigger:

Across the street, you see an old friend who used to sell drugs to you

REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Automatically walk across street towards old friend



Trigger:

He tells you he has drugs in his car around the corner



REACT AUTOMATICALLY

Go with him to car around corner



Trigger:

He shows you the drugs



REACT AUTOMATICALLY

You buy the drugs and use them

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Warm feeling in belly. Mouth salivating.
- Desire or craving to feel high
- Having thought "I should go say hello"

BREATHE

Take a slow, mindful breath in and out.

EXPAND

Expand back to the full situation. Be aware of yourself and the environment.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Walk away in the other direction
- Take out smartphone and listen to guided SOBER space when you get to apartment

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE *FOR TRIGGERS* (Worksheet 1)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers

Write your own example. Think about a TRIGGER that brings about an urge or craving to use alcohol or other drugs. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.

Primary Trigger:

AUTOMATIC PILOT

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:



Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

STOP

OBSERVE

BREATHE

EXPAND

RESPOND

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE *FOR TRIGGERS* (Worksheet 2)

Session 4: Responding (not reacting) to triggers

Write another example. Think about a TRIGGER that brings about an urge or craving to use alcohol or other drugs. What happens in the situation when you are in automatic pilot? How can you use the SOBER space? For each step of the SOBER write out what you would do/what you would notice in your own words.

Primary Trigger:

AUTOMATIC PILOT

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

Another trigger OR thoughts/feelings OR actions I take:

STOP

OBSERVE

BREATHE

EXPAND

RESPOND

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE TO *FOLLOW YOUR VALUES* (HANDOUT Part 1)

Session 7: Following Your Values

“Choice Point” Situation
Feel anxious before job interview.
Not sure whether to go.

AUTOMATIC PILOT

“I’m just going to mess up the interview.”

“What’s the point. I probably won’t even get the job.”

Feel more anxious and start to also feel sense of shame

Don’t go to job interview. Stay home and lie in bed.

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Heart beating fast
- Anxious
- Thoughts about avoiding interview

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out.
Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to yourself and the situation. Expand your awareness even more to consider your personal values.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Say to yourself: “Getting a job is important to me right now. I’ll just do the best I can.”
- Go to job interview.

APPLYING THE SOBER SPACE TO *FOLLOW YOUR VALUES* (HANDOUT Part 2)

Session 7: Following Your Values

“Choice Point” Situation

Bored on a Sunday. Not sure what to do with yourself.

AUTOMATIC PILOT

“What should I do with myself? Maybe I’ll just chill.”

“I would feel more relaxed if I could get a little high.”

Feel craving to get high

Look around house for drugs or alcohol you might still have

STOP

Pause and step out of automatic pilot mode.

OBSERVE

Observe your experience without judgment:

- Tension in shoulders
- Agitated
- Thinking: “What should I do with myself?”

BREATHE

Take a few slow, mindful breaths in and out. Focus your attention on the breath.

EXPAND

Expand your awareness back to yourself and the situation. Expand your awareness even more to consider your personal values.

RESPOND

Respond with awareness.

- Say to yourself: “You know what, I care about my daughter and want to spend more quality time with her.”
- Call daughter and plan to meet for lunch.