

You can't stop the waves.. group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat. *Explain this group doesn't follow usual structure, having the exercise first and meditation afterwards*	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction?	
Exercise	<p>Ask “what happens when you crave?” - elicit thoughts, feelings, body sensations, to separate these elements out in people’s minds (maybe for the first time!). You could put these in columns on the board for clarity.</p> <p>Draw axes of urge surfing diagram on the board & elicit what happens when you use, drawing the line in and describing the process – trigger, craving, using, trigger, craving, using. Use their examples. (Can also ask what happens when they try to ‘white knuckle’ it – sometimes works short term, but does it work longer term?)</p> <p>Then in a different colour explain the process with mindful awareness and allowing it to pass and burn itself out - go through this process. It can be higher to start with, but when you allow them to burn out they lose their power over time.</p> <p>Introduce the urge surfing exercise: we are going to spend some time accessing something difficult – remember feelings won’t kill you!</p> <p>Invite participants to think of an urge to act in an unhelpful way – less than 5 on scale of 0-10 (remind of weightlifting analogy: don’t start with huge weights or you’ll break something). Doesn’t have to be primary substance – can be wanting a cigarette or a biscuit or an urge to shout at someone.</p> <p>Urge surfing exercise: breath → bring urge to mind → stay with the feeling in the body → ask yourself what is the real need → if increasing, surf feelings → mountain → body/breath (*see urge surfing appendix)</p>	20 mins
<i>Halfway point – gauge energy in room and move/ground as required</i>		
Suggested Practice	Mountain meditation – to help ground after the previous exercise.	15 mins
Inquiry	Inquire about today’s practice; then include home practice too	10 mins
Closing	Give out handouts and recap teaching points. 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	

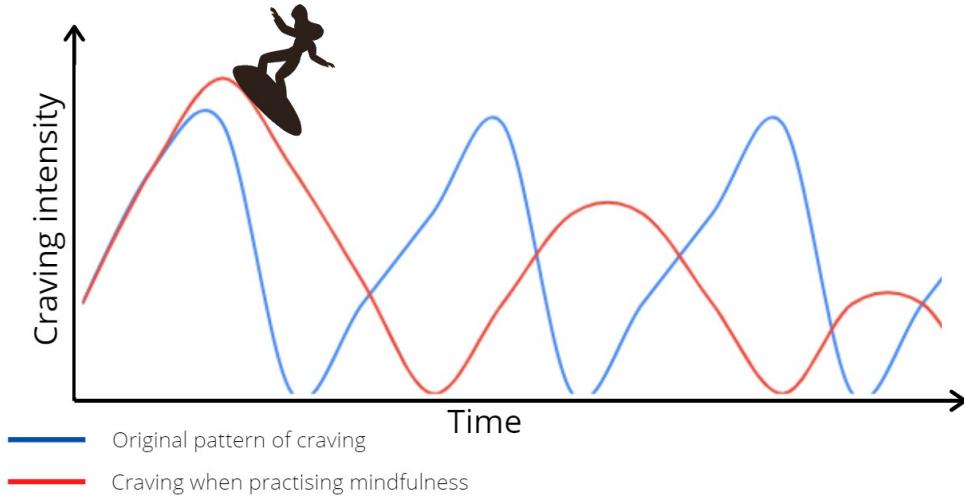
You can't stop the waves... but you can learn to surf

handout

When we're triggered this can often lead to cravings – which can feel overwhelming.

We tend to either give into cravings, and use or drink to make them go away - or fight hard to resist them, white-knuckling it. You'll likely find that "what you resist, persists" - the more you try to push away a craving, the stronger it seems to get, until the only option seems to be to use/drink to get rid of it. When you've been fighting cravings or giving into them for years, you end up believing that the only way to get rid of them is to use/drink.

In this session we started to learn another way to experience urges and cravings – allowing them and 'surfing' the feelings, knowing that they will pass.



When you practise urge surfing, you are learning a powerful way of stopping the fight/give-in cycle with cravings, instead learning that they won't hurt you, and that you can live through them without needing to act on them. By exploring the feelings of craving **in the body**, you can learn a new way of dealing with them.

The feelings may go a bit higher to start with, but as you allow them to burn out they will lose their power.

By grounding yourself first, and practising urge surfing regularly when you're in a safe place, you'll find it easier to sit with a craving in the real world, and you'll discover **it will pass**. And every time you do this, the craving has a bit of power taken out of it for next time, until you find they're further apart and easier to deal with when they do come.

When you give yourself the time to explore a craving, you take the power out of it, and you find yourself able to ask, "what do I really need here?". You might need comfort, or freedom, or release, or escape.

**Once you've worked out what you really need,
you can find a healthier way to meet that need.**

Based on Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (Bowen, Chawla & Marlatt)