

SOBER Breathing Technique



SOBER breathing is an intervention where its components can be found in mindfulness based practices. The technique is used to help manage panic attacks, reduce anxiety and stress, and helps to prevent or to disengage from high risk situations that can prevent harm to self and others. It is also used in the help of breaking addictive processes and behaviours, as well as managing pain.

When practiced it helps to gain clarity of your situation by calming the body and mind which in turn provides an opportunity for more rational choices to be made. The mechanics allow effective breathing to take place whereby your blood that carries oxygen can be helped to reach all extremities of the body.

When experiencing panic attacks, stress and anxiety breathing becomes restrictive therefore so does the oxygen in your body. When this happens it affects your mind, body, thoughts, feelings and emotions that often distort your cognitive process. The body becomes tense as its not getting a sufficient blood and oxygen flow which impacts the mind further. So breathing correctly helps brings balance to your oxygen and blood flow, therefore reducing stress on the body and helps the mind rectify itself.

S – Stop...

...whatever you are doing immediately, even if you are shopping, out socialising, in doors etc.

O – Observe...

...your surroundings objectively. Imagine you are standing back from the situation like sitting on a wall observing whatever the events are unfolding in front of you but you are not a part of that scene.

B – Breathe...

...gently in through your nose and hold for 3-5 seconds and gently release your breath through your mouth, hold 3-5 seconds before you breath back in through your nose again. Repeat this action 5-10 times.

E – Evaluate...

...how you now feel and note how your perspective on the situation has changed. The external situation may have not changed but your thoughts and feelings are more likely to have positively shifted.

R – Respond...

...rather than react. You will feel more empowered to make a choice rather than panic and stress more in order to deal with yourself and the given situation. If you can at this point find a safe place for you that brings comfort. This may be sitting by a tree or near water, it may be a coffee bar or a particular room in your home or garden.

Bring your attention to colours such as the blue sky, smells like the scent of flowers, sounds like running water, eat some fruit/food and drink water or something that you like and when you do, intake slowly to gain full pleasure from your taste senses. Any colour, scent, sound and taste that brings you a sense of calmness is ok. When you feel ready continue with your day or night in a way that feels safe and fruitful to you.