

# SOBER: A mindfulness based ACT framework

## S — Stop

Interrupt the automatic. A single pause before reacting creates the gap in which choice becomes possible. Without it, the storm runs the ship.

## O — Observe

Notice what is happening — in the body, in the mind — without immediately believing it. What thoughts are present? What does the body feel?

## B — Breathe

A few slow, deliberate breaths downregulate the nervous system just enough to widen the window of tolerance — making the next step possible.

## E — Expand

Broaden awareness to the whole situation: to the experience, to the history behind the moment, and crucially, to values.

## R — Respond

Act from values, not from the heat of the moment. This is not a perfect response — it is a chosen one, which is all that matters.

SOBER works because it mirrors what psychological flexibility actually requires:

- a moment of space,
- a willingness to see clearly,
- a physiological anchor,
- a widening of perspective,
- and finally a step in the direction of what matters.

Each stage is doing something distinct.