

Getting Back Into the Window

REGULATION TOOL

Practical tools to ground, work with activation
and return to choice and the next honest action.

Breathe. Ground. Regulate.

I can come back to this moment.
I do not have to do this alone.

NOTICE

Name my state

REGULATE

Choose one tool

RESPOND

Take one next step

MY COPY

Name or initials

Started on

Compulsive sexual behaviour | Sexualised substance use | Alcohol recovery

Break cycles. Heal patterns. Thrive.

Coaching and mentoring | Not therapy, medical care or crisis support

SECTION 01

Why this tool matters

When I move outside my Window of Tolerance, urgency, craving, shame or numbness can feel like truth. I can regulate first, then reflect and choose.

1 Notice

Name the state without shame: "I am activated." Notice what is happening in my body and the story my mind is offering.

2 Regulate

Use breath, grounding, body contact, movement, sensory awareness or support. Choose one manageable tool.

3 Respond

Return to the next honest action: truth, support, a boundary, rest or repair. I do not have to solve everything at once.

Sober Truth reminder

I can come back into the body, widen the window of choice, and then take the next right action.

Finding my way

Recognise my state p3 | Choose a tool p4
Breathing p5 | Grounding p6 | Ear massage p7
Recovery phrases p8 | My plan p9 | Support p10

Using my copy

I can type in the PDF fields or Word answer boxes, save my own copy, or print and write by hand. Short answers are enough. I keep my completed copy private.

SECTION 02

The Window of Choice

In my window, I can feel and think at the same time. I may still feel emotion, but I have enough presence to pause and choose.

1

HYPERAROUSAL

Too much activation

Racing thoughts, panic, urgency, anger, impulsivity, hyper-vigilance or emotional overwhelm.

2

WINDOW OF CHOICE

Regulated enough

Present, curious, emotionally aware, honest and connected. Able to pause and choose.

3

HYPOAROUSAL

Too little activation

Numb, flat, collapsed, disconnected, ashamed, passive or shut down. Hard to think or act.

The aim is enough room to choose

I do not need to stay calm all the time. I practise noticing when I leave the window and returning with care.

What am I noticing in myself now

My state, body sensations or early signs

SECTION 03

Choose a tool for my state

I begin with what I notice. I try one small response, then check whether it helps. I can change tools or reach for support.

Overwhelmed

Sit or stand with feet planted. Slowly scan the room and name neutral objects. Let my eyes move gently.

Shaking or trembling

Slow the breath. Wrap in a blanket if helpful. Let the body settle without forcing it to stop.

Numb

Gently squeeze forearms or hands. Notice sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.

Hyper-vigilant

Lengthen the spine comfortably. Follow the rise and fall of the breath. Orient to what is safe now.

Racing heart

Move attention to my feet. Feel the floor. Let attention settle downwards while breathing comfortably.

Collapsed

Press hands into a wall or chair. Feel strength through arms, legs and feet. Breathe gently.

Disconnected

Slow what I am doing. Gently press or squeeze arms, thighs or calves. Walk slowly.

Frozen or panicked

Sit, wrap up and exhale gently. Try: "I can be here now." Reach for support if I need it.

Keep safety in view

I do not assume physical symptoms are "just activation". If I feel unsafe or need urgent help, I use the support guidance on page 10.

SECTION 04

The power of breath

I do not force the breath. I invite it. If a breathing practice feels uncomfortable, I return to natural breathing, open my eyes and ground instead.

Simple belly breath

Inhale gently and imagine the breath travelling low into the belly and pelvis. Let the exhale leave without effort. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Rolling bell jar breath

Inhale softly. At the top of the inhale, let the breath round and roll naturally into the exhale. Notice the front, back and sides of my body.

4 x 4 x 4 x 4 breathing

If comfortable: inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, pause for 4. Repeat slowly for 1 to 4 minutes. Skip holds or stop if they feel difficult.

Longer exhale breath

Inhale for a natural count. Let the exhale be slightly longer than the inhale, without pushing or straining. Return to my normal breath whenever I need to.

A phrase to return to

“Breathe first. Think later. I am safe enough to return.”

The breathing practice that feels manageable

I can choose grounding instead. What helps me stay comfortable?

SECTION 05

Grounding through the body

The body is often a doorway back to choice. I use feet, hands, movement and senses to come out of the story and back into now.

Feet on the floor

Sit or stand. Feel heel, ball of foot, toes and contact with the ground.
Name: "I am here."

Wall push

Place hands on a wall and press firmly without aggression. Feel strength in arms, shoulders, legs and feet.

Slow walking

Walk slowly. Notice the heel, foot roll, knees, hips and shoulders. Let movement bring me back.

Forearm squeeze

Gently squeeze forearms, hands, thighs or calves. Notice pressure, warmth and aliveness.

Five senses

Name 5 things I see, 4 I feel, 3 I hear, 2 I smell and 1 I taste. I can adapt this to the senses available to me.

Shake off freeze

Gently shake arms and legs or lightly bounce. Exhale as the body lands. Keep it safe and comfortable.

The grounding tool I want to practise

What do I notice before and after trying it?

SECTION 06

Ear massage reset

A gentle way to bring attention to the body. I use light pressure and stay with what feels comfortable. There is no need to force a settling response.

1

Arrive

Bring awareness to both ears. Notice temperature, tension or sensitivity without judging.

2

Upper ridge

Place a finger along the upper inner ridge of the outer ear. Make tiny circles with light pressure.

3

Around the opening

Keep the finger outside the ear canal, near its opening. Press softly towards the back of the head and make small circles.

4

Outer ear

Massage around the outer ear. Notice any side that feels more sensitive, tight or relaxed.

5

Repeat gently

Move between both ears for 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Breathe naturally and notice any changes.

6

Return

Pause. Feel feet, breath and body. Choose one grounded next action.

Choose comfort

I stop if this feels unpleasant, painful or overwhelming. I can choose grounding instead.

What I noticed and what I need next

A brief observation is enough

SECTION 07

Using thoughts wisely

I am not arguing with the Addict Mind. I am noticing the story, naming my state and choosing a recovery phrase that helps me return.

“ This is activation, not truth.

“ I do not need to obey the Addict Mind.

“ The urge is real. The conclusion may not be true.

“ Feet. Breath. Ground.

“ Take the data, not the shame.

“ I am safe enough in this moment.

“ I can be here - right here, right now.

“ The next honest action is enough.

Not every moment needs solving

I can pause or step away from a painful topic consciously, then make a plan to return to it with support.

The recovery phrase I want to use

Choose one above or write my own

SECTION 08

My regulation plan

I complete this when calm so I can use it when activated. I keep the plan simple, specific and easy to find.

My early signs

Thoughts, body sensations or changes in behaviour

The tools that help me

Breathing, grounding, movement or connection

The story my mind offers

What does the Addict Mind or Alcohol Mind usually say?

My recovery phrase

What helps me remember that I have a choice?

The support I can contact

Name, number or service, and how I will reach them

My next honest action

One manageable step that supports my recovery

I do not have to carry this alone

I can receive support, regulate safely and return to one honest action.

SECTION 09

Support and the next step

I use this guide gently. It supports reflection and practice alongside the help I need.

Coaching and mentoring

The Sober Truth Coach provides coaching and mentoring support. This is not therapy, counselling, psychotherapy, medical treatment, psychiatric care, legal advice or emergency support. It does not diagnose or treat mental health conditions.

When I need urgent support

If I am in immediate danger or cannot keep myself or someone else safe, I contact emergency services.

For urgent advice, I can contact NHS 111, my GP or my local crisis team. I can also contact a local addiction service or Samaritans on 116 123.

A simple return practice

- 1 Pause and name: "I am activated."
- 2 Feel feet, hands, breath or chair.
- 3 Use one tool from this guide.
- 4 Tell one safe person if risk is rising.
- 5 Choose the next honest action.

A gentle reminder

"I am safe. I am loved. I am held.
I can breathe, regulate and return."

COACHING AND MENTORING

Would it help to work through this together

Sometimes a workbook helps you see the pattern.
Putting it into practice can still feel difficult.

Your free clarity call

We have 30 minutes to talk about what is happening, what you want to change and whether working together feels right. Ask questions and share as much as feels manageable. There is no pressure or obligation.

Paid coaching and mentoring

I bring together practical recovery tools and learning from my own journey through addiction and recovery. We explore your patterns, agree useful actions and build supportive accountability around putting them into practice.

If we decide to work together, we agree the focus, cost and support included before you commit.

Book a free 30-minute clarity call

calendly.com/thesobertruthcoach/freeclaritycall

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The workbook remains free. Coaching and mentoring are optional.

Coaching is not therapy, medical care or crisis support.
For urgent help, use the support information in this guide.