



Staying Centered and Moving Forward

Part 1: Calming and Grounding Techniques

1. Deep Breathing Exercise

Take a deep breath in for four counts, hold for four, and slowly exhale for four. Repeat this five times, paying close attention to the sensation of your breath.

2. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

- Name **5 things** you can see around you.
 - Touch **4 things** you can feel.
 - Listen for **3 sounds** in your environment.
 - Notice **2 scents** you can smell.
 - Pay attention to **1 taste** you can identify.
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Part 2: Focusing on What's in Front of You

- **Reflection Question:** What are at least two or three things in your life right now that you have control over that can support your ongoing recovery?

 - **Exercise:** Write down three small actions you can take this week to support your substance use and mental health goals. Focus on actions that don't depend on external situations.
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Part 3: Keeping Personal Goals on Track Despite External Events

- **Reflection Exercise:**
 - Think about your main recovery goals. Write down two or three that feel most important to you right now.
 - For each goal, answer: *How can I make sure my focus on this goal remains steady, regardless of changes happening around me?*

- **Discussion:**
 - How do you avoid letting strong external emotions (whether positive or negative) impact your daily routine and goals in recovery? What will help keep you focused on what you can control?



Part 4: Relapse Prevention and Staying in Control

It's natural to feel triggered by strong positive or negative emotions from external events, but it's crucial to recognize these feelings and respond with healthy coping skills. This applies to everyone as emotions like excitement can be triggering just like disappointment and everything in between.

- **Relapse Prevention Exercise:**

- Identify one or two past triggers that were related to strong emotions or reactions to events beyond your control.
- Write down a coping skill or strategy you could use if these emotions came up again. Examples might include grounding exercises, reaching out to a support person, journaling, or refocusing on a goal.

- **Group Discussion:**

- "How can we respond to intense emotions or thoughts without letting them negatively impact our recovery? What specific strategies, skills, and actions help us feel grounded and prevent relapse?"

Part 5: Takeaways and Reflection

As we wrap up, let's think about what we're taking forward from today.

- **Takeaway Question:**

- What is one or two lessons, skills, or commitments from today's exercise that you want to carry with you this week and beyond?

- **Inspiring Quote to Close:**

"We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails."

Use this reminder as a grounding thought in the weeks ahead. Even when we can't control what's happening around us, we have the power to steer ourselves toward steady progress and resilience.