

# Drinking or Drugging at Someone

## Purpose:

This exercise is designed to help you recognize and interrupt the behavior of using substances to target, retaliate, or act out at someone else. In this exercise you learn to slow down, notice triggers, and respond in ways that align with your values while responding your emotions naturally instead of numbing them with substance use.

## Part 1: Understanding the Behavior

“Drinking or drugging at someone” means using substances as a way to express anger, frustration, jealousy, or control toward another person.

### Common patterns:

- You feel an urge to use and need an excuse → you provoke an argument → the argument becomes your excuse to use.
- You feel hurt or dismissed → substance becomes your weapon of choice.
- Conflict arises → use escalates → relationship consequences follow.

Habit reinforces the idea that substances “help manage” interpersonal stress. This is usually a learned automatic response. The behavior may feel justified in the moment but rarely solves the underlying relationship problem.

## Part 2: Identifying Triggers

Triggers are the sparks that lead to this behavior of “drugging at” someone. Instead of learning effective communication and effective boundaries, substance use becomes the preferred method of dealing with difficult relationships.

### Questions to consider:

Who or what situations make me want to drink or use at someone?

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What emotions are present (anger, hurt, jealousy, shame)?

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What body sensations appear (tension, racing heart, stomach tightness)?

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Your Relationship Triggers (example: blaming, shaming, guilt-tripping):

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### Part 3: Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Pause

If relationship issues are acting as a trigger for you, follow these steps before reacting:

- Step outside if possible, or sit somewhere connected to the natural world.
- If you can't go outside, try to look out of a window.
- If you can't look out of a window, close your eyes and imagine yourself in your favorite soothing natural setting.
- Feel your feet or body in contact with the ground.
- Take 5–10 slow, intentional breaths.
- Observe your surroundings: colors, sounds, smells, textures.
- Notice what emotion is present without judging it.

Reflection:

What did I notice about my body, thoughts, or urges?

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## Part 4: Reframing and Alternatives

Now reframe the urge to “drug at” someone and plan a healthier response.

### Example Reframe:

Original thought: “They hurt me, I’ll show them by drinking or other substance use.”

Reframe: “Their behavior is uncomfortable, but I can regulate my response without having to rely on substances. I can take responsibility for my own behaviors.”

Now write your reframing and alternatives here:

Original thought:

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Reframe:

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Alternative actions to try:

- Take a mindful walk outside.
- Write down feelings in a journal while noticing natural surroundings.
- Call a supportive friend or mentor.
- Engage in a grounding exercise (hands in soil, barefoot on grass, listening to wind or water).

Your Reframes and Alternatives:

Trigger / Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

Reframe: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Trigger / Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

Reframe: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Response: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 5: Nature as a Mirror

Mindfulness-based ecotherapy teaches that nature mirrors our internal states, and our internal states can mirror nature as well. The more time we spend in nature, observing and describing our thoughts and feelings, the more we can allow the healing power of nature to reflect the person we want to be.

When you feel the urge to use relationship difficulties as an excuse for substance use, first go outdoors and try to find a natural environment like a park, a backyard, or a lawn. Take a few deep breaths and notice the nature around you, then answer the following questions:

### Observe:

How does tension relax when you engage with natural elements?

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What does patience in a tree, a river, or wind teach you about handling conflict?

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### Nature Reflection

What lessons can nature teach you about how to respond positively to relationship conflict instead of yielding to the temptation to use substances as a coping mechanism?

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