

# Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Chronic Pain

Session 5: Active Acceptance

# Theme - Acceptance


- **Acceptance** as **allowing** experience, as it is, without fixing or changing it
  - Different from “giving up”, “quitting”, “resignation”
- Acceptance of internal experience (T/F/S) - not unacceptable situations such as injustice or violence
- Steps:
  - **Awareness** of difficult T/F/S
  - **Pausing**, cradling experience in **kindness**
  - **Choosing** how to **respond**



# Struggle Switch

[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=rCp116GCXI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCp116GCXI)

# Being in Silence



Opening Practice  
Seated/Lying/Standing  
Meditation - Being in Silence

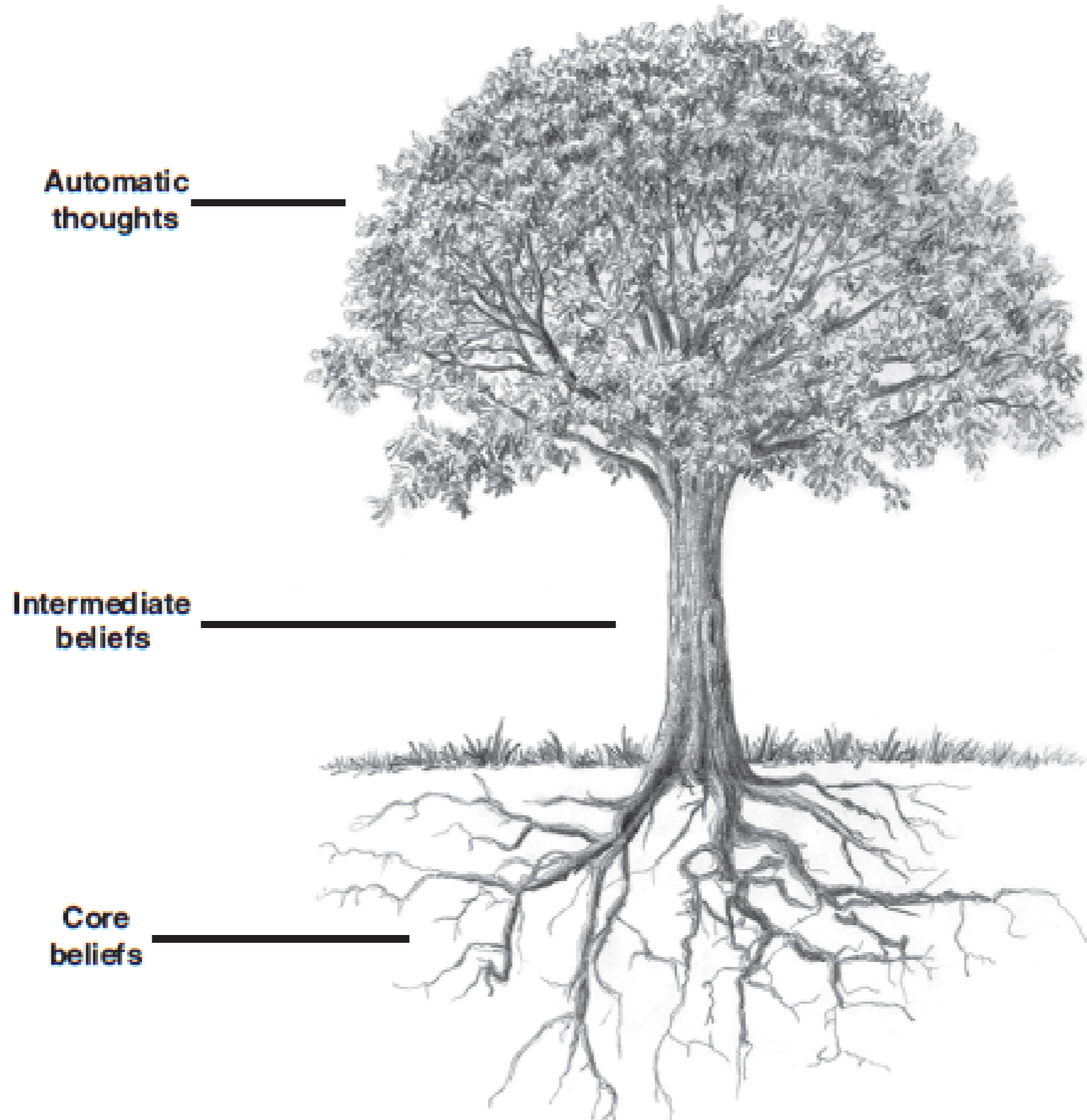
# Observing Thoughts as Mental Events





# Core Beliefs

# Roots of Thoughts About Pain



# Uncovering Core Beliefs using the Downward Arrow Technique

“If this thought were true, what would this mean about me/others/the world?”

Situation: **Sitting in chair, watching kids go off to school and partner go to work**



Automatic hot thought: **"I hate that I cannot work anymore; I contribute nothing to my family"**



What does this thought mean to you?



Intermediate Thought: **"I should be able to provide for my family"**



If that's true, and right now you are unable to work, what does that mean about you as a person?



Core belief **"I am defective" or "I am worthless"**

# Core Beliefs

- **Themes about self** related to our **lovability, worth,** and **capability**
- **Themes about others and the world** related to **trust** and **safety**
- May be quite painful
- Remember:
  - Thoughts are real but not true
  - Thoughts are just thoughts

# Working with Difficulty

- Contacting the rawness of the experience with a lightness of touch - like "touching a bubble with a feather"
- Start by bringing awareness to the difficulty



See where the difficulty is experienced in the body

Thoughts as the **visible tip of an iceberg** which includes body sensations and emotions

Breathe with the sensation in the body



Surprise



Neutral



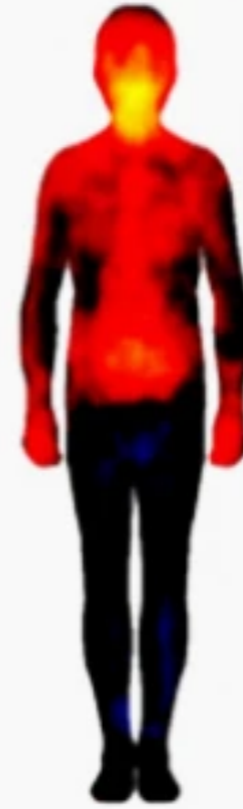
Anger



Fear



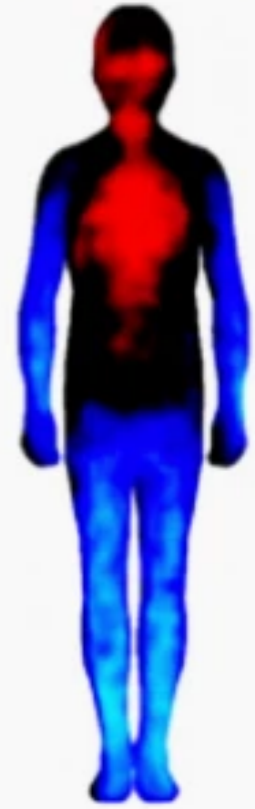
Disgust



Happiness



Sadness



Shame



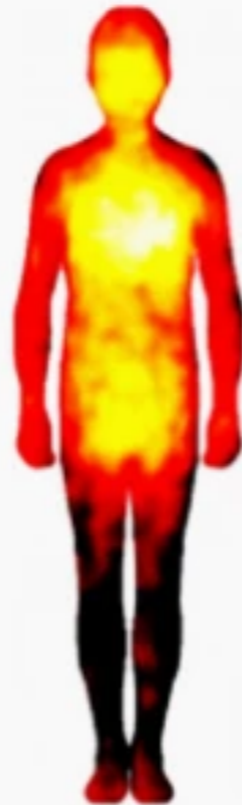
Envy



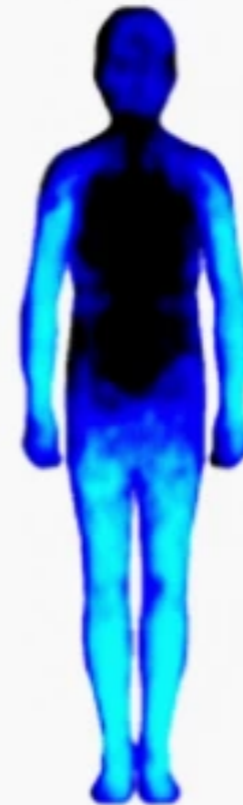
Anxiety



Love



Depression



Contempt

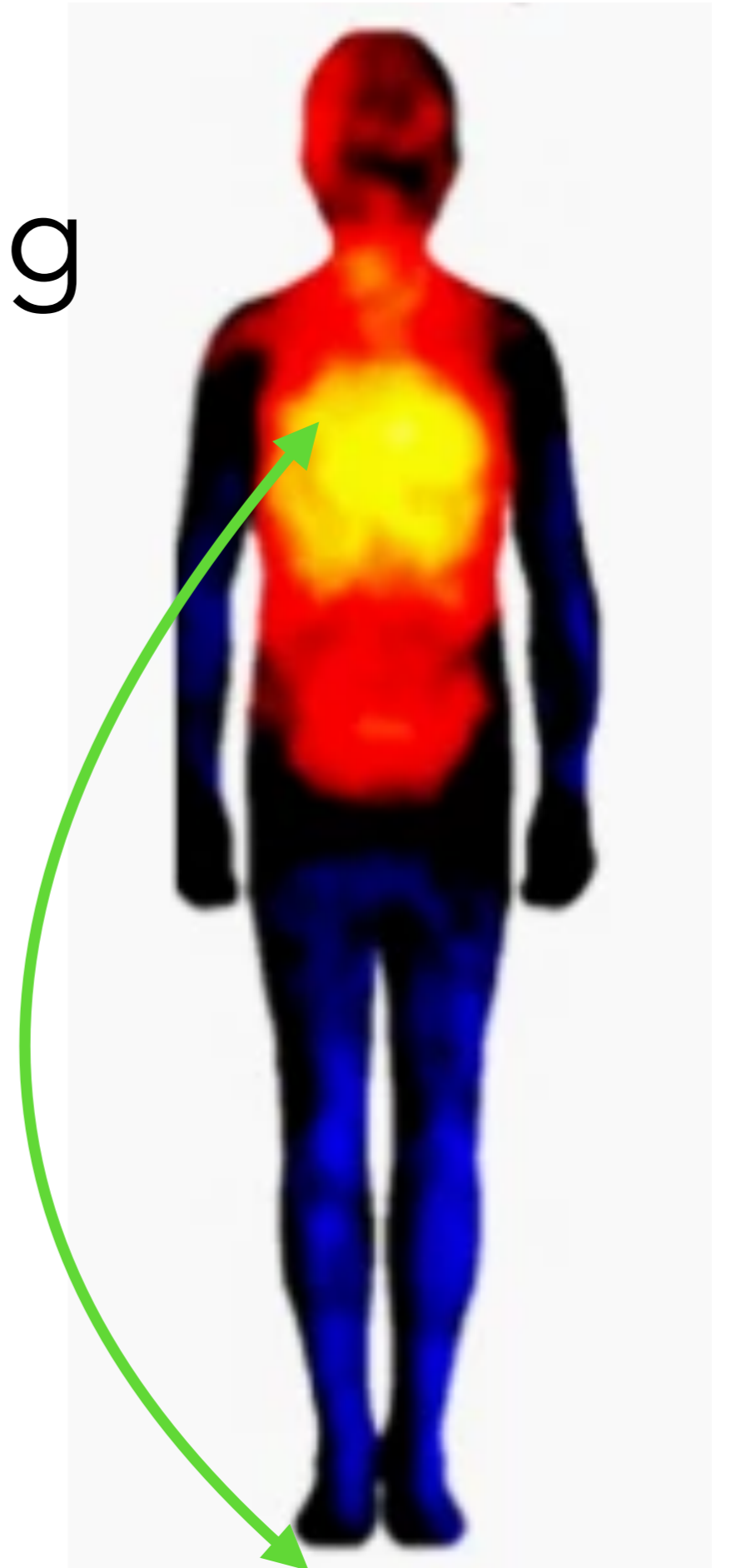


Pride



# Working with Difficulty - Pendulation or Resourcing

Staying with the difficulty  
with openness while  
***being kind to yourself***



# Bringing Curiosity to Aversion

- **Natural tendency to tense, brace, or push away** pain or physical discomfort
- Can bring **curious, friendly and open awareness** to our tendency to push our experience away
- Staying with difficulties, and bringing a **gentle curiosity** to them is part of **acceptance**

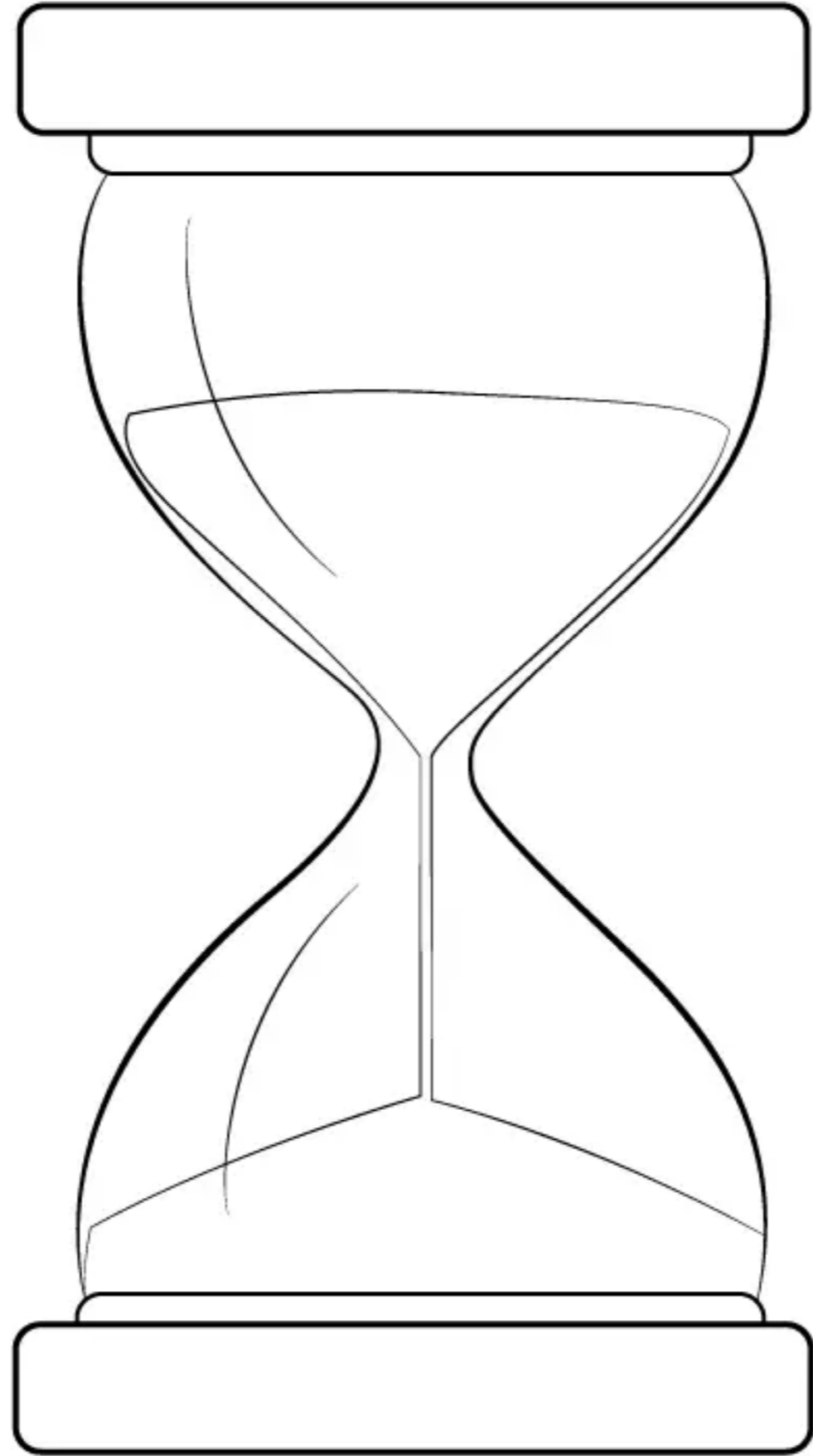


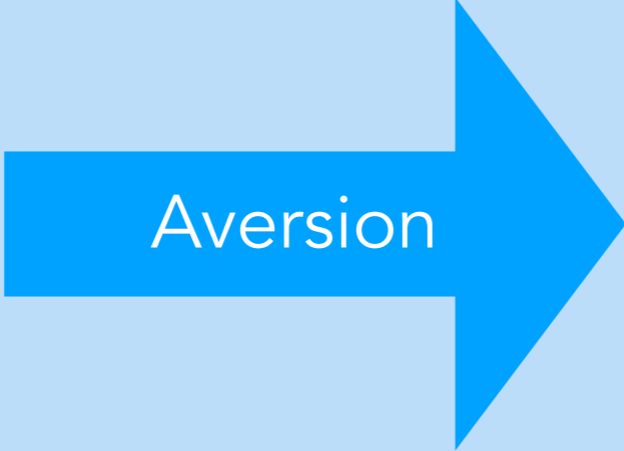


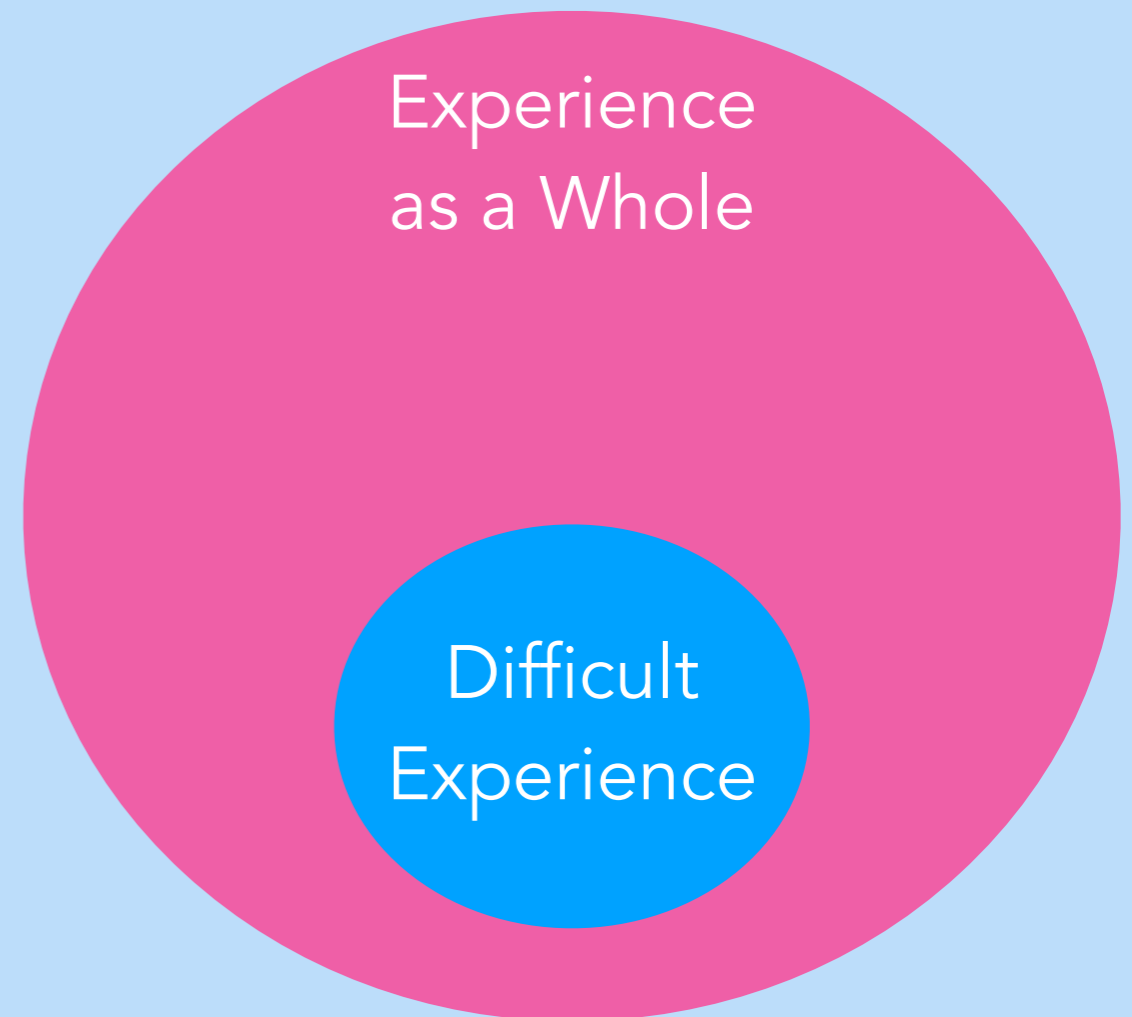
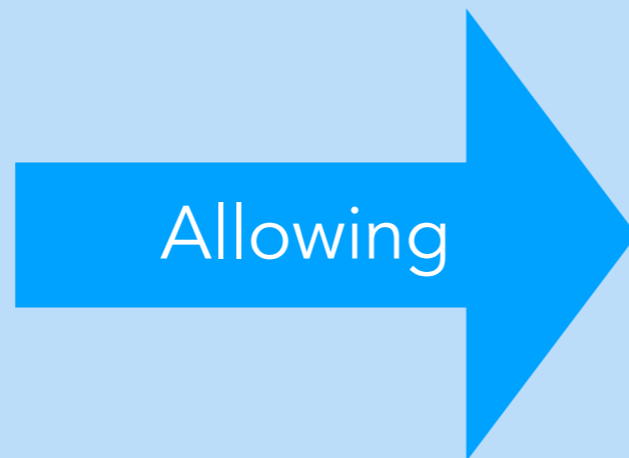
# 3 Minute Responsive Breathing Space

# Responsive 3 min Breathing Space

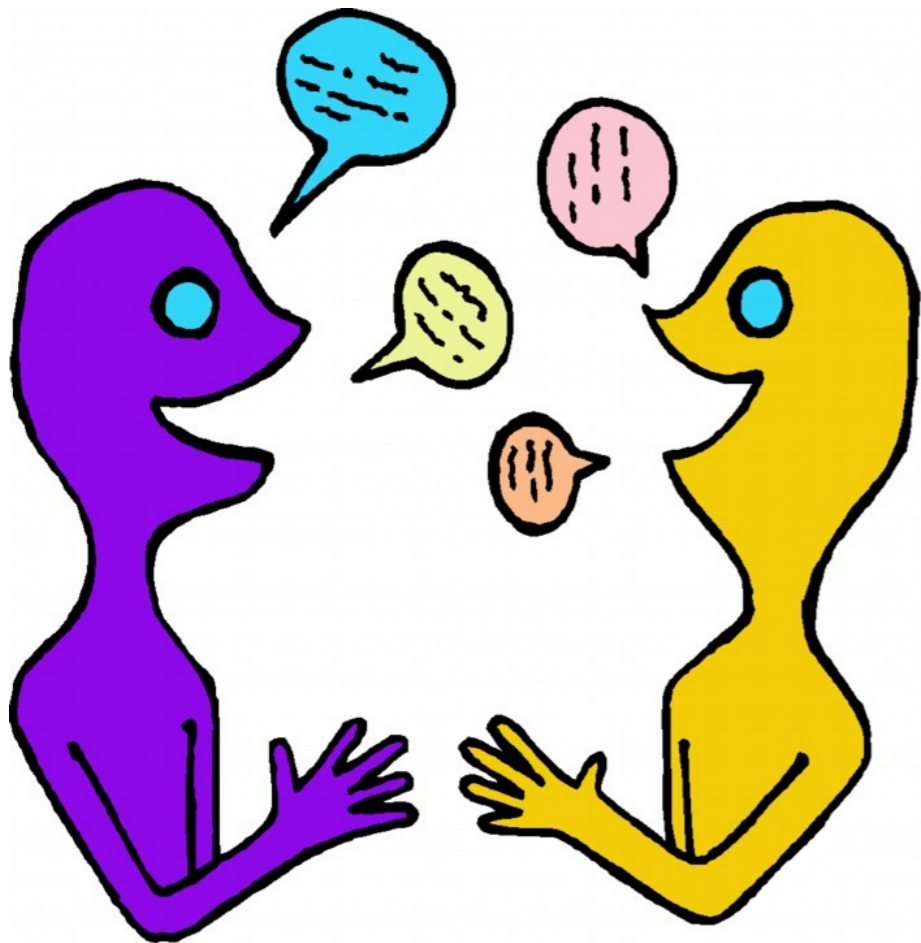
1. **Awareness** - Stop, switch from "doing" to "being" mode, notice and acknowledge what is present
  - *"Anger is arising" or "self-critical thoughts are present"*
2. **Anchoring** - to the present moment (breath, sounds, feet)
3. **Opening** - Expand awareness to include breath and body, holding it all in open, spacious awareness
  - Breathe in to and out of the area of greatest intensity
  - Softening and releasing
  - *"It's already here, let me be with it"*







# Break out room



- In what ways was this practice different to how you might typically relate to difficulties?
- How do you think working with difficulties beyond pain, such as thoughts, emotional responses, or interpersonal difficulties etc., might affect your day-to-day living with pain?

# Suggested Home Practice Week 5

- Mindfulness of **Breath, Body, Sounds, Thoughts and Working with Difficulty**, and **Sitting in Silence**, alternating each day
- Three **3-Minute Breathing Spaces** at regular times
- Practice **3-Minute Responsive Breathing Space** whenever stress-pain thermometer rising
- Read "Getting Down to the Root of our Thoughts and Beliefs about Pain" handout. Ask "What does this thought mean to me? About me?", goal to build awareness of thoughts in order to respond wisely

# Uncovering Core Beliefs using the Downward Arrow Technique

[https://feelinggood.com/2017/05/29/039-  
uncovering-techniques/](https://feelinggood.com/2017/05/29/039-uncovering-techniques/)

# Discrepancy Based Processing

Being vs Doing: The Difference Between "Being" and "Doing"

<https://www.mindful.org/difference-between-being-and-doing/>

Helpful article to **help reduce rumination and allow experience**