

# EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Why is moderating emotions necessary?

Psychology Today defines emotional regulation as “the ability to exert control over one’s own emotional state.” It is the ability to recognize, manage, and respond to your emotions.

Why is emotional regulation important? Emotionally regulating oneself improves general well-being and leads to healthy relationships. Those who regulate maintain balance and react to difficult situations with a proportionate response. Regulation helps one to buffer the emotional feeling before reacting to the emotion.

Emotional regulation can help you:

- Feel balanced and in control of your emotional reaction
- Stay calm during challenging situations
- Better manage stress
- Protect important connections
- Actively listen to the needs of others
- Express your needs in constructive ways
- Remain appropriately behaved in situations
- Refrain from taking things personally

People are expected to have this skill by adulthood. The opposite of controlling your emotions is called emotional dysregulation (allowing emotions to dictate your actions), and that often leads to saying or doing things you later regret.

Negative impacts are experienced when people are repeatedly dysregulated. Dysregulation can hurt relationships, employment, and overall well-being. Emotional dysregulation means that sometimes our reactions are not in proportion to the situation or may be socially inappropriate.

Signs of dysregulation include:

- Abrupt changes in mood
- Binge eating
- Crying spells
- Emotional outbursts
- Persistent interpersonal conflict
- Aggression or violent outbursts
- Self-harm
- Substance use
- Poor tolerance for frustration

Emotional regulation is a taught skill that takes practice and time to develop and strengthen. Some techniques to help regulate emotions include:

## 1. CALMING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM BY

- Taking a cold shower
- Holding an ice cube in one hand
- Moving gently
- Listening to music
- Putting your hand on your pet’s heart and counting the beats



## 2. ACCEPTING HOW YOU FEEL

- Stop and recognize the physical signs of your emotions
- Name your emotion
- Allow yourself to feel that emotion
- Know that emotion is normal to feel and it will pass soon

## 3. PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OR BEING IN THE MOMENT

- Deep breathing or breathing exercises
- Engaging your five senses (notice one thing you can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell)
- Journaling
- Meditation
- Yoga

## 4. MANAGE YOUR STRESS

- Sleep 7-8 hours a night
- Eat healthy, balanced diets
- Eat at regular intervals to avoid sugar dips
- Exercise for 30 min per day, everyday
- Show love to your pets and family members
- Enjoy the outdoors
- Practice relaxation

## 5. SEEK THERAPY


- Call your insurance company and ask for information for mental health professionals accepting your insurance
- Make an appointment
- Remember that mental health is just as important as physical health

### Resources:

Emotional Regulation. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/emotion-regulation#how-we-control-emotions>

Lebow, H. & Casabianca, S. (2022). Do you know how to manage your emotions and why it matters? Retrieved from: <https://psychcentral.com/health/emotional-regulation#recap>

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