



Mindfulness of Current Emotions: Letting Go of Emotional Suffering

OBSERVE YOUR EMOTION

- Step back and just notice your emotion.
- Experience your emotion as a WAVE, coming and going.
- Now imagine surfing the emotion wave.

- Try not to BLOCK or SUPPRESS the emotion.
- Don't try to GET RID of or PUSH away the emotion.

- Don't try to KEEP the emotion around.
- Don't HOLD ON to it.
- Don't AMPLIFY it.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF BODY SENSATIONS

- Notice WHERE in your body you are feeling emotional sensations.
- Experience the SENSATIONS as fully as you can.
- Observe how LONG it takes before the emotion goes down.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT YOUR EMOTION

- Do not necessarily ACT on your emotion.
- Remember times when you have felt DIFFERENT.

PRACTICE LOVING YOUR EMOTION

- RESPECT your emotion.
- Do not JUDGE your emotion.
- Practice WILLINGNESS.
- Radically ACCEPT your emotion.

Managing Extreme Emotions

Follow these suggestions when emotional arousal is very **HIGH**—so extreme that your ability to use your skills breaks down.

First, observe and describe that you are at your **SKILLS BREAKDOWN POINT**:

- Your distress is extreme.
- You are overwhelmed.
- You cannot focus your mind on anything but the emotion itself.
- Your mind shuts down; your brain stops processing information.
- You cannot solve problems or use complicated skills.

Now check the facts. Are you really “falling apart” at this level of distress?

If no, **USE YOUR SKILLS.**

If yes, go to Step 1: You are at your **SKILLS BREAKDOWN POINT.**

Step 1. Use crisis survival skills to bring down your arousal:

(See Distress Tolerance Handouts 6–9a.)

- TIP your body chemistry.
- DISTRACT yourself from the emotional events.
- SELF-SOOTHE through the five senses.
- IMPROVE the moment you are in.

Step 2. Return to mindfulness of current emotions.

(See Emotion Regulation Handout 22.)

Step 3. Try other emotion regulation skills (if needed).



Troubleshooting Emotion Regulation Skills: When What You Are Doing Isn't Working

1

CHECK YOUR BIOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

- **ASK:** Am I biologically more vulnerable?
Do I have untreated physical illness or distress?
Am I out of balance on eating, use of drugs, sleep, exercise?
Have I taken medications as prescribed?
- **WORK** on your PLEASE skills.
 1. Take care of physical illness and distress.
 2. Take medications as prescribed. Check if others are needed.
 3. Try again.

2

CHECK YOUR SKILLS

- **REVIEW** what you have tried.
Did you try a skill likely to be effective?
Did you follow the skill instructions to the letter?
- **WORK** on your skills.
 1. Review and try other skills.
 2. Get coaching if you need it.
 3. Try again.

3

CHECK FOR REINFORCERS

- **ASK:** Do my emotions . . .
COMMUNICATE an important message or influence people to do things?
MOTIVATE me to do things I think are important?
VALIDATE my beliefs or my identity?
FEEL GOOD?
- **IF YES:**
 1. Practice interpersonal effectiveness skills to communicate.
 2. Work to find new reinforcers to motivate yourself.
 3. Practice self-validation.
 4. Do **PROS AND CONS** for changing emotions.
(See *Emotion Regulation Worksheet 1.*)

(continued on next page)

4

CHECK YOUR MOOD

- ASK: Am I putting in the time and effort that solving my problem will take?
- IF NO:
 1. Do PROS AND CONS for working hard on skills.
 2. Practice RADICAL ACCEPTANCE and WILLINGNESS skills.
 3. Practice the mindfulness skills of PARTICIPATING and EFFECTIVENESS
(See *Mindfulness Handouts 4 and 5.*)

5

CHECK FOR EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD

- ASK: Am I too upset to use complicated skills?
- IF YES, ask: Can the problems I am worrying about be easily solved now?
 - IF YES, do PROBLEM SOLVING.
(See *Emotion Regulation Handouts 9, 12.*)
 - IF NO, practice mindfulness of CURRENT EMOTIONS.
(See *Emotion Regulation Handout 22.*)
- IF your emotions are too high for you to think straight:
 - Go to TIP skills.
(See *Distress Tolerance Handout 5.*)

6

CHECK FOR EMOTION MYTHS GETTING IN THE WAY

- CHECK FOR:
 - Judgmental myths about emotions (e.g., “Some emotions are stupid,” “There is a right way to feel in every situation”)?
 - Beliefs that emotions and identity are the same (e.g., “My emotions are who I am”)?
- IF YES:
 1. Check the facts.
 2. Challenge myths.
 3. Practice thinking nonjudgmentally.

EMOTION REGULATION WORKSHEET 9 (p. 1 of 2)

([Emotion Regulation Handouts 14–20](#))

Steps for Reducing Vulnerability to Emotion Mind

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

For each emotion regulation skill, note whether you used it during the week, and describe what you did. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS: SHORT TERM

INCREASED daily pleasant activities (circle): M T W Th F S Sun

Describe: _____

ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS: LONG TERM; BUILDING A LIFE WORTH LIVING

VALUES considered in deciding what goals to work on (see Emotion Regulation Handout 18):

LONG-TERM GOALS worked on (describe):

AVOIDED AVOIDING (describe):

MINDFULNESS OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WHEN THEY OCCURRED

Focused (and refocused) attention on positive experiences: _____

Distracted from worries if they showed up: _____

BUILD MASTERY

Scheduled activities to build a sense of accomplishment (circle): M T W Th F S Sun

Describe: _____

Actually did something difficult, **BUT** possible (circle): M T W Th F S Sun

Describe: _____

COPE AHEAD

Describe a situation that prompts unwanted emotions (fill out Steps 1 and 2 of checking the facts on Emotion Regulation Worksheet 5 if necessary):

Way that I imagined coping effectively (describe):

Way that I imagined coping with new problems that might arise (describe):

(continued on next page)

PLEASE

Skills

Have I . . .

Treated Physical illness? _____

Balanced Eating? _____

Avoided mood-Altering substances? _____

Balanced Sleep? _____

Exercised? _____

EMOTION REGULATION WORKSHEET 16

([Emotion Regulation Handout 24](#))

Troubleshooting Emotion Regulation Skills

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

When you just can't get your skills to work, try doing this worksheet to see if you can figure out what is going wrong. Check off each box in order, follow the directions and keep going until you find a solution.

EMOTION NAME: _____ **INTENSITY (0–100) Before:** _____ **After:** _____

List the skill you were trying to use that did not seem to help: _____

1. Am I biologically more vulnerable?

- NO:** Go to next question.
- NOT SURE:** Review the PLEASE skills. (*See Emotion Regulation Handout 20.*)
- YES:** Work on PLEASE skills. (*See Emotion Regulation Worksheet 14.*) Consider medication.
Did this help? **No** (*Go to next question*) **Yes (Fabulous)** **Didn't do it**

2. Did I use the skill correctly? Check out the instructions.

- YES:** Go to next question.
- NOT SURE:** Reread the instructions or get coaching. TRY AGAIN.
Did this help? **No** (*Go to next question*) **Yes (Fabulous)** **Didn't do it**

3. Are my emotions being reinforced (and maybe I don't really want to change them)?

- NO:** Go to next question.
- NOT SURE:** Review Emotion Regulation Handout 3/Worksheets 2, 2a.
- YES:** Do a PROS and CONS for changing emotions. (*See Emotion Regulation Worksheet 1.*)
Did this help? **No** (*Go to next question*) **Yes (Fabulous)** **Didn't do it**

4. Am I putting in the time and effort that emotion regulation takes?

- YES:** Continue practicing.
- NO:** Practice radical acceptance and willingness. (*See Distress Tolerance Handouts 11b and 13.*)
Practice participating and effectiveness. (*See Mindfulness Handouts 4 and 5.*)
Use problem solving to find the time to work on skills. (*See Emotion Regulation Worksheet 8.*)
Did this help? **No** (*Go to next question*) **Yes (Fabulous)** **Didn't do it**

5. Are my emotions too extreme right now for skills? Am I going around in so many circles that I have fallen into the emotional sea of dyscontrol?

- NO:** Go to next question.
- YES:** If possible *now*, solve the problem. (*See Emotion Regulation Handout 12, Worksheet 9.*)
If not possible, *attend to physical sensations*. (*See Emotion Regulation Handout 22.*)
If too extreme for skills, go to TIP skills. (*See Distress Tolerance Handout 5.*)
Did this help? **No** (*Go to next question*) **Yes (Fabulous)** **Didn't do it**

6. Are myths about emotions and emotion regulation getting in my way?

- NO.**
- YES:** Practice nonjudgmentalness. Check the facts and challenge the myths.
Did this help? **No** **Yes (Fabulous)** **Didn't do it**