



## Why should I regulate my emotions?

Every time we respond to an emotion in a helpful way, we create new emotion regulation habits.

Our mind is sorting through a lot during our teenage years and twenties. Feelings or emotions are intense, changing rapidly from day to day. We have no idea why our mind is throwing all this weird stuff at us. But our minds are secretly developing important habits.

Emotions are directly connected to our thinking and behaviour. Every time we respond to an emotion with a behaviour or a thought, our mind remembers, and a habit is created. Learning how to regulate emotions creates good habits for your mind. Like learning any new skill, regulating emotions takes a bit of coaching and a lot of practice.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T HAVE HELPFUL EMOTION REGULATION HABITS?



If you have trouble controlling how you respond to emotions you might:

- Get overwhelmed by feelings
- Often feel irritable and agitated
- Not be able to shake off a negative mood
- Act in ways you regret
- Avoid doing things
- Argue with others or pick fights
- Have problems in your relationships with friends and family
- Have problems learning
- Blame others when you don't achieve your goals
- Get frustrated and feel hopeless when you repeat the same behaviours
- Use alcohol or other drugs to get a handle on your feelings
- Use eating to control feelings
- Harm yourself



Regulating emotions means that you have control over **HOW YOU RESPOND** to your emotions.



### GET TO KNOW YOUR EMOTION REGULATION HABITS

Scientific studies have shown that good emotion regulation habits protect us from developing mental health problems. This exercise asks you to notice how you respond to feelings. Put a tick next to the strategies you remember using to cope with uncomfortable feelings during the past week.

Was OK with how I felt and I didn't try to change my feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drank alcohol or took drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thought it through and put myself in someone else's shoes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ate until I felt uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thought of ways to solve my problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt myself	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercised, meditated, did a breathing exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly worried about things	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talked it through with someone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Got out, escaped...left a situation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked a fight	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watched TV, had a bath, took a nap, was kind to myself	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other habits?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Don't criticise yourself or be judgemental about the ways you regulate emotions. Just notice your habits. Are any of these habits preventing you from having fulfilling relationships? Are they stopping you from achieving your goals?

### WRITE DOWN THE TWO HABITS YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE:

1.

2.



### PRACTICE & REFLECT

For the next week, pay attention to the different habits you have developed to regulate your emotions. Put a tick in the calendar when you notice using one of these habits.

<b>MON</b>	<b>TUE</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THUR</b>	<b>FRI</b>	<b>SAT</b>	<b>SUN</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>