



PAUSE • NOTICE • CHOOSE

Emotional Regulation

WORKBOOK

Practical tools to understand emotions, calm the nervous system and respond with greater choice.

Every emotion carries information.
You can listen without letting it take over.

Understanding my emotions

Emotions are signals - not problems to eliminate.

What is emotional regulation?

Emotional regulation means noticing, understanding and responding to emotions in ways that support you. It is not suppressing feelings or staying calm all the time. Regulation may mean soothing, moving, expressing, resting, setting a boundary or asking for help.

What am I feeling right now?

- ☐ Angry / frustrated
- ☐ Anxious / afraid
- ☐ Sad / disappointed
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Ashamed / guilty
- ☐ Numb / disconnected

What is happening in my body?

- ☐ Tight chest or throat
- ☐ Fast heart / breathing
- ☐ Hot, shaky or restless
- ☐ Heavy or very tired
- ☐ Tense jaw / shoulders
- ☐ Hard to think or speak

The message my emotion may be carrying

What might this feeling be protecting, needing or drawing my attention to?

What I need most in this moment

My regulation map

Recognising the stage helps me choose the right kind of support.

My window of tolerance

Inside my window I can think, feel and respond with some flexibility. Outside it, I may move into high activation or low activation. Both are protective nervous-system responses.

HIGH ACTIVATION

- ☐ racing thoughts
- ☐ panic or anger
- ☐ sensory overload
- ☐ urge to escape

MY WORKABLE ZONE

- ☐ present enough
- ☐ able to connect
- ☐ feelings manageable
- ☐ choices available

LOW ACTIVATION

- ☐ numb or shut down
- ☐ heavy or frozen
- ☐ disconnected
- ☐ very low energy

My signs of becoming activated

My signs of shutting down

The earliest sign I want to notice

Regulation tools for the moment

Try one tool gently. Stop if it increases distress.

First ask: do I need less energy or more energy?

When highly activated, choose settling tools. When shut down, choose gently energising tools. When unsure, begin with orienting to the room and lengthening the out-breath.

SETTLE HIGH ENERGY

- ☐ Exhale a little longer
- ☐ Press feet into the floor
- ☐ Reduce sound and light
- ☐ Hold something cool
- ☐ Slow repetitive movement

RETURN TO THE PRESENT

- ☐ Name 5 things you see
- ☐ Say where you are and the date
- ☐ Notice support beneath you
- ☐ Describe one object
- ☐ Sip water slowly

GENTLY LIFT LOW ENERGY

- ☐ Open curtains or step outside
- ☐ Tap arms and legs
- ☐ Use rhythmic music
- ☐ Stand, stretch or sway
- ☐ Contact a safe person

The tool I will practise when relatively calm

My personal sensory supports

Think about sound, light, movement, pressure, temperature, texture, smell and space.

From trigger to choice

A pause creates space between the feeling and the response.

The PAUSE sequence

Pause if possible. Acknowledge the feeling. Understand the need. Support the body. Explore the next kind and effective action.

1. What happened?

Describe facts without judging yourself.

2. What did I feel and where?

Name the emotion, intensity and body signals.

3. What did I want to do?

Notice the urge: fight, flee, freeze, fix, hide or please.

4. What did I need?

Safety, rest, clarity, space, comfort, fairness or connection?

5. What response fits my values?

Choose the smallest helpful next action.

One response I want to practise next time

My emotional regulation plan

Support works best when it is personal, realistic and practised.

My common triggers

My early warning signs

Tools that help my body

People, places and supports

My plan for a difficult moment

I will pause and...

I will reduce demands by...

I will ask for...

A compassionate reminder to myself

If emotions feel unmanageable, keep returning, cause harm, or interfere with daily life, consider speaking with your GP or a qualified mental health professional. If you cannot keep yourself safe, call 999 or go to A&E. Samaritans: 116 123 (UK and ROI).