

## Goals of Emotion Regulation Skills Training

### I. Understand the emotions that you experience.

- Identify (observe and describe/name) emotions.
- Know what emotions do for you (are your emotions working for or against you in this moment?).

### II. Reduce emotional vulnerability and stop unwanted emotions from starting in the first place.

- Increase positive emotions.
- Decrease vulnerability to Emotion Mind.

### III. Decrease the frequency of unwanted emotions.

### IV. Decrease emotional suffering; stop or reduce unwanted emotions once they start.

- Let go of painful emotions using *mindfulness*.
- Change emotions through *opposite action*.

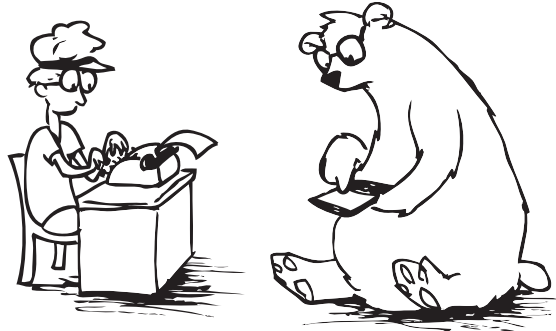
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## What Good Are Emotions?

### Emotions Give Us Information.

- Emotions provide us with a signal that something is happening (e.g., “I feel nervous standing alone in this dark alley”).
- Sometimes our emotions communicate by “gut feeling” or intuition. This can be helpful if our emotions get us to check out the facts.
- It’s a problem when we treat emotions as if they are facts about the world. For example: “If I am afraid, there must be a threat,” or “I love him, so he must be good for me.”
- We need to be mindful that emotions are *not* facts. Therefore, it is important to check the facts about the situation.



### Emotions Communicate to, and Influence, Others.

- Facial expressions, body posture, and voice tone say a lot about how you’re feeling. They communicate emotions to others (e.g., your sad face may cause someone to ask you if you are OK and to give you support).
- Whether you realize it or not, your emotions—expressed by words, face, or body language—influence how other people respond to you.



### Emotions Motivate and Prepare Us for Action.

- The action urge connected to specific emotions is often “hardwired.” For example, when we hear a loud horn beep suddenly, we startle.
- Emotions save time in getting us to act in important situations. Our nervous system activates us (e.g., we instantly jump out of the way of an oncoming car). We don’t have to think everything through.
- Strong emotions can help us overcome obstacles—in our mind and in the environment.



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# Be an Emotions Detective

Being aware of your emotions is very important. Knowing how you are feeling will help you:

- Focus on and appreciate enjoyable emotions
- Use skills to manage difficult emotions
- Catch emotions before they get too overwhelming
- Stay in Wise Mind

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Learning to be aware of your emotions is like being an Emotions Detective. This means being on the lookout for clues that might help you catch an emotion.

Look for clues in these areas:



**Body Sensations:** Emotions involve physical changes in the body.

For example: I may have tense muscles and a pounding heart when I feel anxious.



**Thoughts:** Emotions impact the way we think, including self-talk.

For example: I may say to myself “I can’t do it” when feeling depressed.



**Communication (Verbal and Nonverbal):** Emotions change how we communicate.

For example: I may clench my fists or yell when I feel angry.



**Action Urges & Actions:** Emotions affect the way we feel like behaving and the way we behave.

For example: I may have urges for self-injurious behavior when feeling guilty, or I may impulsively interrupt others when feeling excited.

# Be an Emotions Detective - Your Turn

Use your detective skills to fill in the following worksheet. Keep in mind that this is about you detecting your own emotions, so your clues might be different than other's clues. Remember to review this worksheet occasionally, so you can catch emotions red handed.

## Sadness/Depression

Body Sensations:

• *Slowed down*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts:

• *"I can't do anything right."*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Communication:

• *Avoid eye contact*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Action Urges & Actions:

• *Urge for self-injurious behavior*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

## Anxiety

Body Sensations:

• *Tense muscles*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts:

• *"I'm going crazy."*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Communication:

• *Fidgeting*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Action Urges & Actions:

• *Urge to skip school*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Body Sensations:

• *Face feels hot*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts:

• *"This is so unfair!"*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Communication:

• *Yell and curse*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Action Urges & Actions:

• *Throw things*

• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Being an emotions detective doesn't just mean noticing difficult emotions, it also means noticing more enjoyable emotions. In fact, in some cases, it can be harder to detect these emotions. Some clues could fit for several emotions. For example, tense muscles can be happy for both anxiety and excitement. Make sure to look at all the clues when you are trying to figure out what you are feeling.

**Love**

Body Sensations:

- *Faster heart rate*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts:

- *"He/She is so cute!"*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Communication:

- *Talk about positives*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Action Urges & Actions:

- *Urge to text my crush*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Happiness**

Body Sensations:

- *Relaxed muscles*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts:

- *"Life is good!"*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Communication:

- *Giggling/laughing*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Action Urges & Actions:

- *Being bouncy or bubbly*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Body Sensations:

- *Tense muscles*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts:

- *"This is so exciting!"*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Communication:

- *Talking about the future*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Action Urges & Actions:

- *Urges to sing or dance*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_