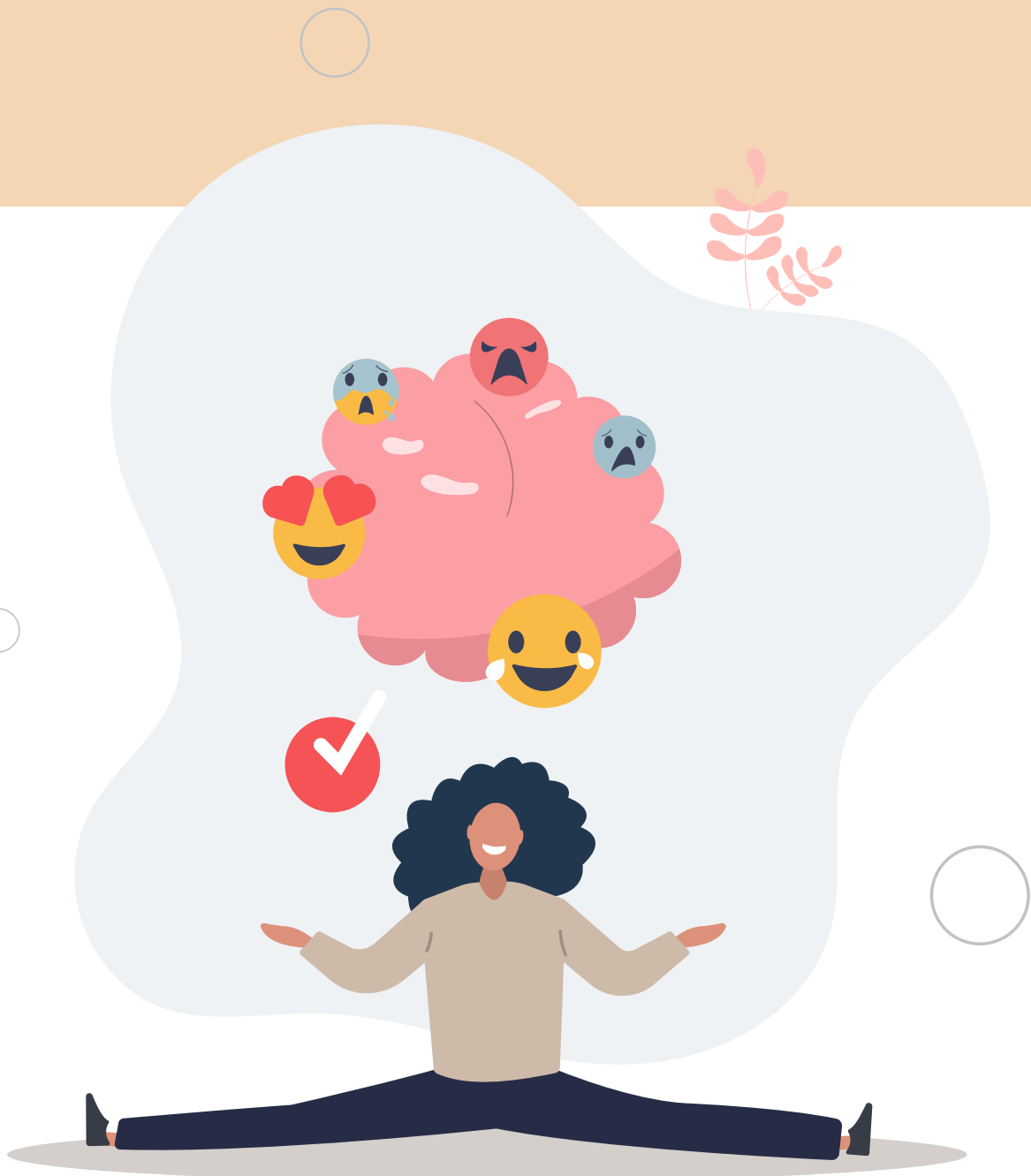


EMOTION REGULATION SKILLS

A TOOLBOOK FOR CLIENTS



GOALS OF EMOTION REGULATION

1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMOTIONS

The first step in regulating emotions is learning to identify and label your emotions. Learning the purpose your emotions serve or the needs they fulfill is helpful so that you can identify what gets in the way of reducing painful emotions.

2. REDUCING EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY

The goal is to reduce emotional vulnerability by learning to decrease negative emotions and to increase positive emotions.

3. DECREASING EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

We can learn to let go of painful emotions by being mindful of them, instead of fighting them or walling them off. We can also learn to change negative or painful emotions by acting in a manner opposite to them.

TAKING STEPS TO GET BACK IN CONTROL OF YOUR EMOTIONS

1. Start by taking a time-out.
2. Stop what you're doing. When you feel warning signs of strong anger or distressing feelings slow down and pause what you are doing. This may help you calm down and think more clearly.
3. Try to Relax by: Counting to 10 or 100, Getting a drink of water, Taking a walk, Taking several slow deep breaths
4. Return when you're calm. Once you've got your overwhelming emotions under control, go back and talk to the person or face the situation that triggered your emotional distress.

Relinquish & Transcend
Counseling + Consulting
YOUR STORY IS NOT OVER YET



A NOTE ON ANGER

Angry feelings almost always follow and replace a different initial emotion that is too “uncomfortable” to let ourselves acknowledge. We quickly skip over this uncomfortable feeling—so fast that we’re usually not even aware of it—and replace it with an angry type of feeling. The anger is really a reaction to that initial emotion, whether we’re consciously aware of it or not

EXAMPLES:

When you were too busy to talk to me, I felt < (ABANDONED) > “angry”.

When you don’t let me help you, I feel < (OUT OF CONTROL) > “frustrated”.

When you criticize me, I feel < (INADEQUATE) > “enraged”.

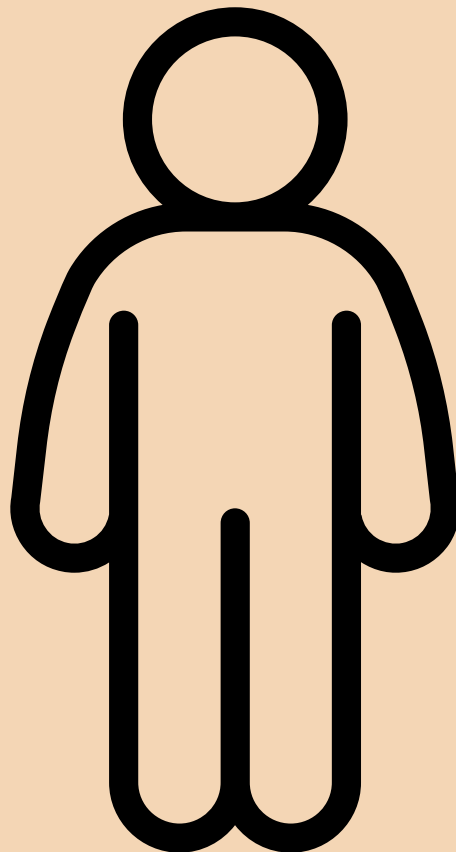
ANGRY FEELINGS are valid and important, but are most beneficial when used as indicators that someone or something is triggering an uncomfortable feeling in you. To accurately figure out what you are reacting to, it’s necessary to backtrack and identify the feeling that came FIRST before the angry reaction replaced it.



WHERE DO YOU FEEL
EMOTIONS IN YOUR BODY?

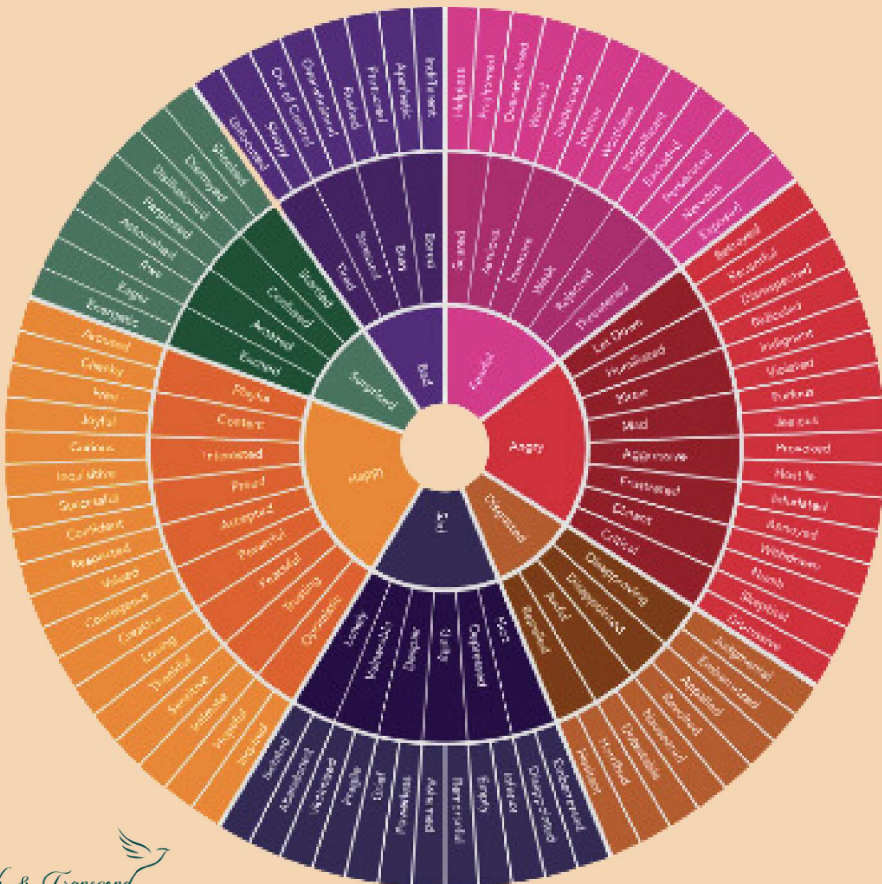
Draw where in your body you feel: love,
joy, sadness, shame, fear, guilt, anger, etc.

What emotion is easiest to identify? What
emotion is hardest?



EMOTION WHEEL

Sometimes it is hard to name the specific emotion you are feeling. Being able to name and identify your emotions allows you to increase your emotional awareness and learn more about what your emotions are trying to tell you. When you have this emotional insight, it allows you to take action!



EMOTION DIARY

Pick two emotions you have recently been feeling and respond to these questions below:



Name of emotion:

Day of emotion:

Event (what happened):

Emotion Function (What are you trying to communicate, how does it serve you, what do you need?):

MINDFULNESS OF MY
EMOTIONS

Name of Emotion:

Intensity (0-100)

Prompting event or trigger for my emotion
(who, what , when where – just the facts):

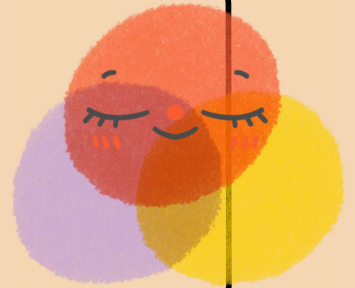
Thoughts/interpretations (beliefs, assumptions):
about the trigger

Body sensations (where in my body do I feel this
emotion? What was my body language—facial
expression, postures?):

Action (What did I do? What did I say?):

How did the emotion affect me afterwards?
(Were there secondary emotions? What did I do
after the event or trigger?):

3 WAYS TO MANAGE UNCOMFORTABLE EMOTIONS



1. Observe your emotion

Notice its presence. Step back! Get unstuck.
Detach from your emotion.

2. Experience your Emotion

Experience it as a wave, coming and going.
Open yourself to the flow of the emotion. Don't
push the emotion away. Don't try to get rid of
emotion. At the same time, don't try to keep
emotion around. Your emotions are temporary
even if they don't feel like it in the moment.
Remember: You are not your emotion. Don't
necessarily act on emotion. Remember when
you have felt different.

3. Practice Loving your Emotion

Don't judge your emotion. Practice willingness.
Radically accept your emotion. Respect your
emotion. Don't assume it's irrational or based
on distortions.



HOW TO INCREASE COMFORTABLE EMOTION

1. Build Positive Experiences Short Term:

Do enjoyable things that are possible now.

Do one thing each day that brings you joy.

Creating a list on your phone of things you enjoy doing to pull from can be helpful.

2. Build Positive Experiences Long Term

Make changes in your life so positive events will occur more often. Build a “life worth living”. Work towards goals. Make a list of positive things you want to have happen. List small steps towards goals. Attend to relationships.

3. Be Mindful of Positive Experiences

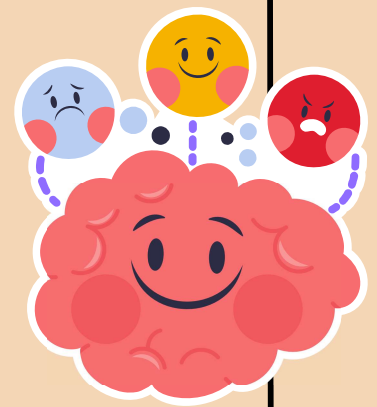
Focus your attention on the positive things that happen. Re-focus when your mind wanders to the negative.

4. Be Un-Mindful of Worries

Distract yourself from thinking about when the positive experience will end. Since our emotions are temporary, distraction is often very effective in taking your mind off of uncomfortable emotions.

14 QUESTIONS TO IMPROVE
YOUR MOOD

1. My favorite movie of all time is...
2. My favorite song of all times...
3. My greatest accomplishment...
4. My perfect day...
5. My most cherished possession is...
6. My favorite cheer me up music is...
7. I enjoy reading...
8. My fantasy vacation...
9. I don't do it much, but I enjoy...
10. If I could lighten up a little, I'd let myself...
11. If I weren't so stingy with myself, I'd buy myself...
12. Two people I admire are...
13. I am proud of myself for...
14. I am grateful for...



TRY AN EXPERIMENT

1. Rate your mood on a scale from 1-10 (worst - best):

2. Think of an activity that you find pleasant (Walking in nature, taking a bath, doing your nails, drinking a cup of good coffee, etc.)

3. IMAGINE yourself doing this activity be in it 100%. Experience the activity with all your senses.

Alternatively: If you have the time and resources, engage in the activity instead of imagining it!

4. Rate your mood again on a scale from 1-10:

What did you observe? Did anything shift for you? Notice that even thinking about doing a pleasant activity makes you feel better. Allow yourself to have “IMAGINE” breaks during the day and see what happens

