

Taking Care of Ourselves With Emotional Regulation

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Why does it matter...

Emotional Regulation is an important way to take care of yourself so you can continue to show up and get through your case.

We cannot outsmart our feelings. Just because we do not *want* to feel something and we do not think we *should* feel it, trying to suppress our feelings will not help us in the long run.

What is an emotion?

- Emotions are chemical/neural processes in your body that give you information.
- Primary emotions are often seen as rooted in our survival as a species. They are one way our body helps us survive.
- For example: feeling fear serves to get chemicals moving in your body so you can survive by fleeing, fighting, freezing and/or fawning.

Humans are very complicated

There are many emotions that come up— even emotions about emotions!

Today we will focus on soothing our fight/flight/ freeze/fawn response so that our brains can work at their best for us. We will also learn about one very important secondary emotion...

...Shame.

What does your body do when emotions get high?

Talk in small groups and share out

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/fight-or-flight>

Progressive muscle relaxation

Facilitator lead exercise

Tips:

Ask your therapist to practice this with you.

Practice every day. Muscle memory, like riding a bike.

Shame vs. Guilt

“I believe that guilt is adaptive and helpful—it’s holding something we’ve done or failed to do up against our values and feeling psychological discomfort.

I define shame as the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging—something we’ve experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection.”- Brene Brown, Shame researcher

In Summary

Emotions need space to be felt.

We do not have to act at the height of our emotions in accordance with our impulses.

Emotions are chemical processes that can pass through us, like weather.

Is shame helpful?

Most people learn how to regulate emotions from their parents. Circumstances in the modern world sometimes make that very difficult.

There are lots of reasons we may not have learned emotional regulation as a child. Life experiences can be a barrier for families to pass on ancestral knowledge around emotional regulation. Biology, historical trauma, and many individual factors can also be at play.

Does blaming/shaming parents help with emotional regulation?

Living with shame

- Recognize shaming thoughts and accept them.
- Common thoughts we can recognize as the voice of shame are
 - I'm unlovable.
 - I'm a bad person.
 - I'm a failure.
 - I don't deserve happiness.
 - I'm not important.



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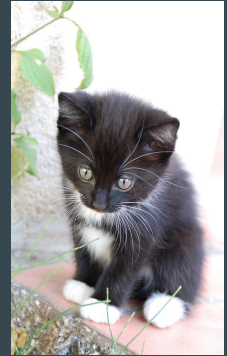
Healing shame

Shame is a part of many cycles that can hurt us including: addiction, codependency, and domestic violence (for both parties)

Recognize it and accept it.

Practice self-compassion and find a safe place to bring your shame.

Bring in others. Say it to someone. Write it down in your notes app and bring it to your therapist. Bring it to confession or go to your religious leader, if that feels right to you. Just make it someone you trust. .



Creating an affirmation/prayer for ourselves as a gift.

Let us take some time to choose a phrase we will practice saying to ourselves when shame starts to take over and inside our head gets really mean.

It can be a prayer. “Let go and let God”

It can be a phrase (“I am worthy” “I also deserve love”)

It can be something that reminds you of someone who loves you or makes you laugh.

