

## Regulation Strategies

This document provides several strategies for supporting individuals with regulating emotions.

### Regulation and Dysregulation

Individuals who regulate their emotions can adapt their behavior when the situation demands it. When experiencing regulated emotions, individuals can control their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Dysregulation means an individual struggles to manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in a more typical manner. When emotionally dysregulated, your brain has difficulty managing or regulating emotional signals.

### Regulation Strategies

#### Breathing Exercises

Breathing exercises are a self-regulation technique that helps individuals increase their awareness and slow their breathing. There are many variations and ways to practice Breathing Exercises.

##### *Example 1: Belly Breathing*

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
2. Place hands on knees or belly, shoulders relaxed.
3. Inhale through your nose slowly to the count of five.
4. Feel your belly expand as you breathe in.
5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth to the count of five.
6. Repeat as necessary.

##### *Example 2: Figure 8 Breathing*

1. Print out a figure 8 or trace one on a surface (e.g., desktop, person's arm).
2. Individual places their finger in the center of the 8.
3. Individual traces their finger down the left side of the figure 8 and inhales.
4. Individual crosses their finger to the right side of the figure 8 and exhales.
5. Repeat as necessary.

#### Grounding Activities

Grounding activities are mindfulness strategies that encourage individuals to focus on the present while helping to regulate heightened emotions.

### *Example 1: Five Things*

Look around you and identify and name:

1. 5 things you see
2. 4 things you feel
3. 3 things you hear
4. 2 things you smell
5. 1 thing you taste

### *Example 2: Body Scan Meditations*

Scripted or guided meditation

1. Get comfortable and close your eyes
2. Take a few deep breaths
3. Start at the top of your body and notice tension, pain, or other occurrences
4. Move down to the next part of your body and continue the process, finishing at your feet

## **Positive Self-Talk Strategies**

Self-talk refers to the talk or thoughts one directs at oneself. Positive self-talk uses compassionate, affirming, and supportive talk and thoughts directed at oneself.

### *Example 1: Positive Reflection*

Individuals are given a hand mirror and a list of positive thoughts and affirmations. Individuals then cut out and decorate their mirrors with positive thoughts and affirmations they have for themselves. Individuals are encouraged to practice reading the thoughts and affirmations aloud while looking at themselves in the mirror.

### *Example 2: Scripting*

Individuals create and practice a script to recite to themselves that contains compassionate, affirming, and supportive talk and thoughts.

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