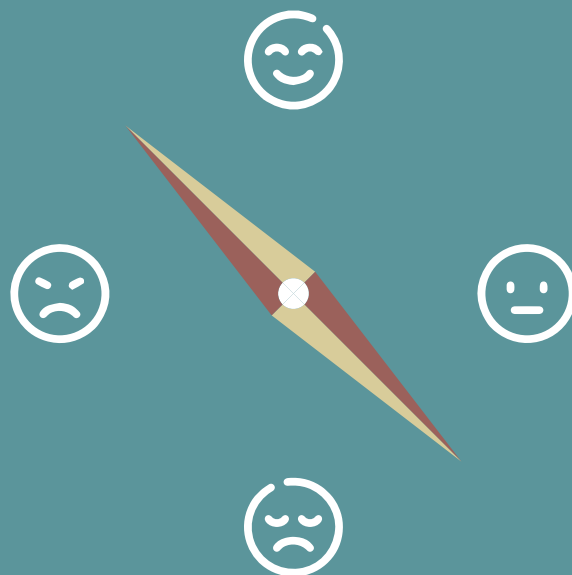


# Your Emotional Compass:

## A Guide to Navigating Your Feelings

Building Skills for Emotional Balance and Well-being



# Emotions are a normal part of everyday life.

You feel frustrated when you are stuck in traffic.  
You feel sad when you miss your loved ones.  
You can get angry when someone lets you down or does something to hurt you.

While we expect to feel these emotions regularly, some people start to experience emotions that are more volatile.

They feel higher highs and lower lows, and these peaks and valleys begin to impact their lives.



# KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOODS vs EMOTIONS

## Moods:

**Duration** → Minutes to hours

**Provocation** → Lowers threshold needed to trigger emotions

**Modulation** → Regulation mostly unaffected

**Expression** → No unique nonverbal expressions

**Awareness** → Difficult to identify exact triggers causing mood

## Emotions:

**Duration** → Seconds to minutes

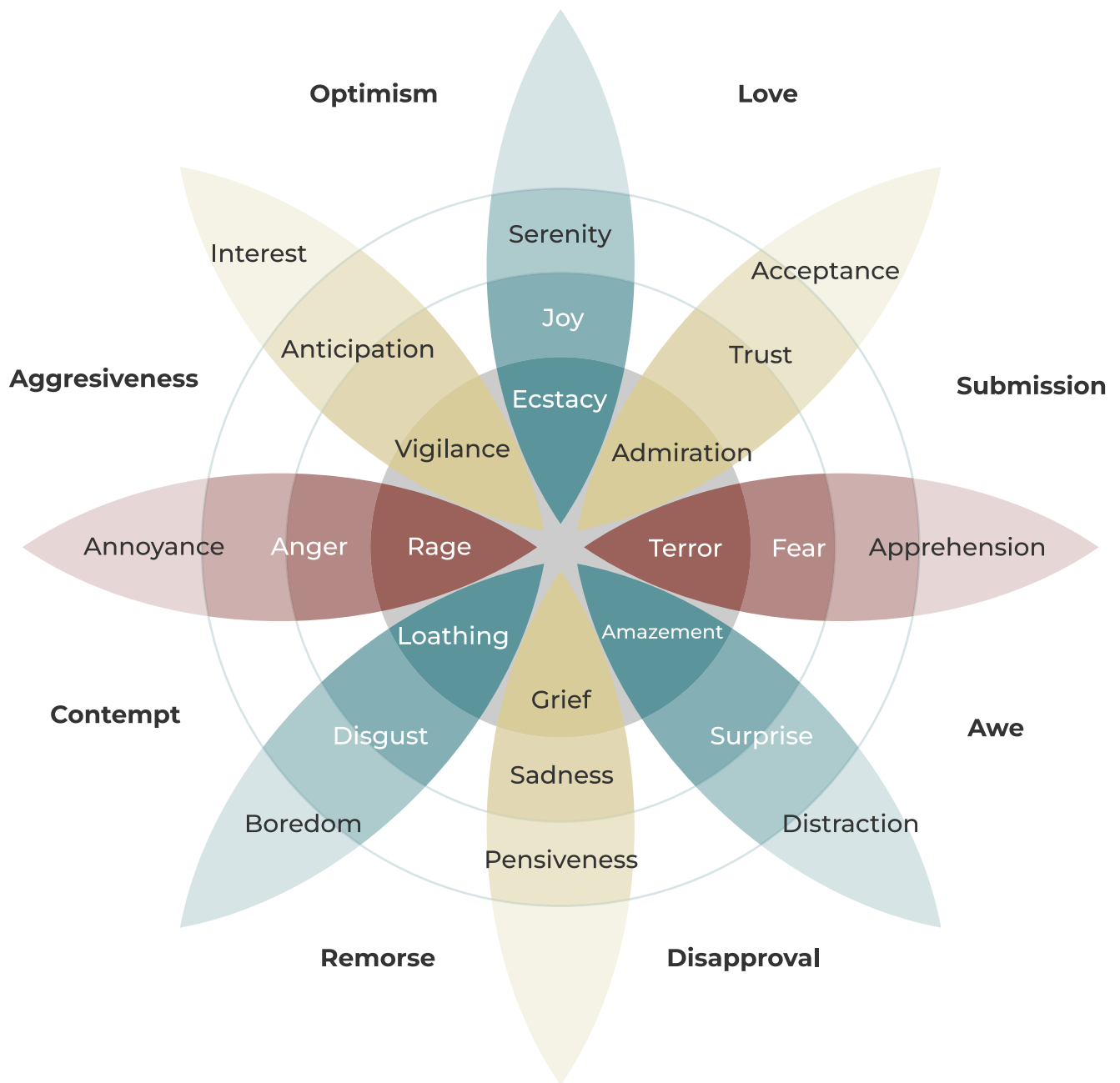
**Provocation** → More easily experienced within moods belonging to same “family”

**Modulation** → More difficult to regulate if experienced within mood

**Expression** → Universal facial expressions

**Awareness** → Triggers more easily identifiable

# Plutchik's Wheel of emotions





# Why Emotional Dysregulation Happens?

Emotional dysregulation happens when you find it challenging to manage and respond to your emotions effectively.

This difficulty can be influenced by various factors such as past trauma, chronic stress, or conditions like anxiety and depression.

Neurobiological factors, such as imbalances in brain chemicals or genetic predispositions, may also contribute.

A lack of emotional awareness or ineffective coping strategies can worsen emotional dysregulation

# How Emotional Dysregulation Happens?

Emotional dysregulation occurs when your brain's regulatory systems, including the prefrontal cortex and amygdala, become imbalanced.

Your amygdala, responsible for processing emotions, may become overactive, while your prefrontal cortex, which normally regulates these emotions, may not function optimally.

This imbalance can result in heightened emotional responses and difficulty in calming yourself down.

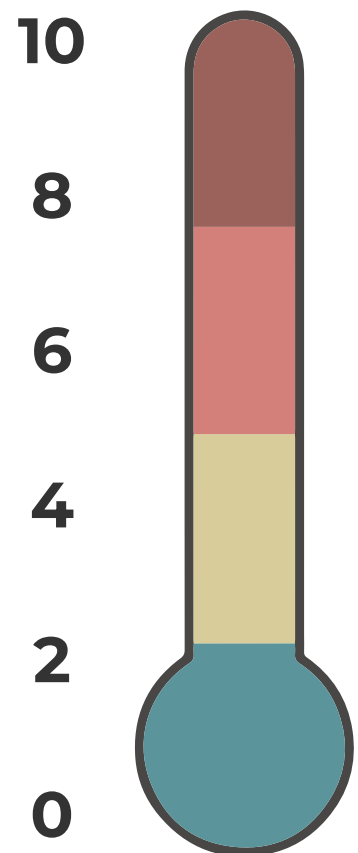
External stressors or triggering events can further disrupt this balance, leading to intense and prolonged emotional reactions.



**Fill in the blanks with your current rating for each emotion on a scale of 1 (lowest intensity) to 10 (highest intensity).**

## Emotion Rating (1-10)

Joy: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sadness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Anger: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fear: \_\_\_\_\_  
Excitement: \_\_\_\_\_  
Calmness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Anxiety: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gratitude: \_\_\_\_\_  
Frustration: \_\_\_\_\_  
Love: \_\_\_\_\_



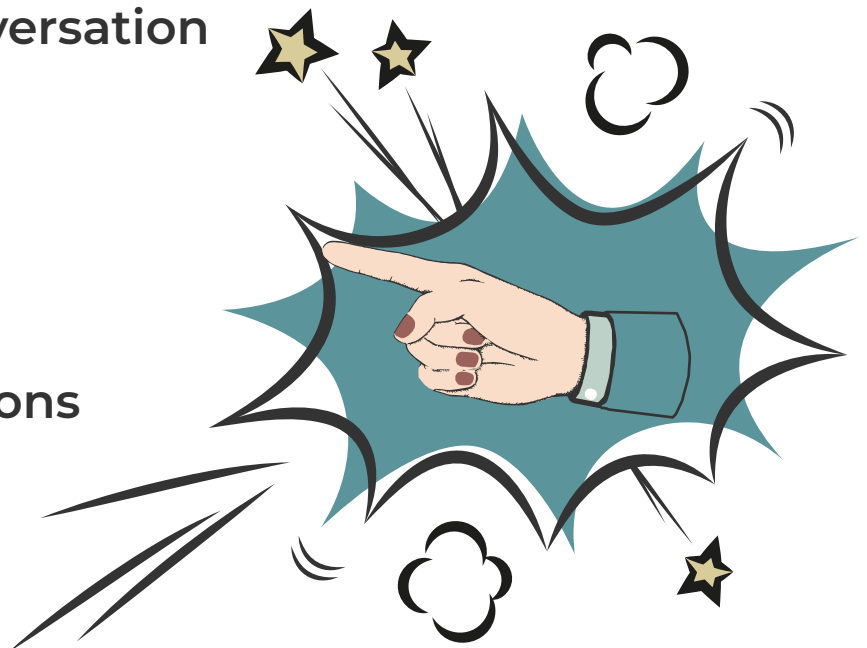
# Emotional Triggers:

Emotional triggers are situations, people, or events that evoke strong emotional responses within us.

They can activate deep-seated feelings based on past experiences or current sensitivities.

## Common Triggers:

- Certain relationships
- Work stress
- Specific topics of conversation
- Financial issues
- Health concerns
- Traffic or commuting
- Social media interactions





# I allow my emotions to be here.

My rainbow of feelings that bursts from my sun is made up of many colors.

Write a feeling word in each rainbow beam below:



# I statement for Emotional Regulation:

## Identify Your Emotions:

"I recognize and acknowledge what I am feeling in this moment."

## Pause and Breathe:

"I take a moment to pause, breathe deeply, and calm my mind."

## Evaluate Triggers:

"I reflect on what triggered these emotions and why they affect me."

## Choose a Response:

"I consciously choose how to respond, aiming to manage my emotions effectively."





# Practicing "I" Statements

## Identifying Emotions

**1- Think about a recent situation where you felt strong emotions.**

Describe the situation briefly:

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**2- Write down three emotions you experienced in that situation using "I" statements.**

Example: "I felt frustrated when..."

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## Using "I" Statements in Communication

**1- Choose a recent conversation or interaction where emotions were involved.**

Briefly describe the interaction:

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**2- Rewrite one statement from that conversation using an "I" statement to express your feelings.**

Original statement:

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Rewritten "I" statement: "I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_"

# **What are some characteristics of distress intolerance?**

**Distress intolerance is the inability to cope with uncomfortable emotions.**

**Common beliefs that people with distress intolerance have when experiencing negative emotions include (note which ones may ring true to you):**

- **I can't stand this.**
- **It's unbearable.**
- **I hate this feeling.**
- **I must get rid of it.**
- **I can't cope with this.**
- **I'm going to lose control.**
- **This feeling will keep going on forever.**
- **It's wrong to feel this way.**
- **It's weak.**



# ACCEPTS

**Activities:** Engage in distracting activities.

**Contributing:** Do something for others.

**Comparisons:** Compare yourself to those less fortunate.

**Emotions:** Create different emotions.

**Pushing away:** Distract yourself with thoughts.

**Thoughts:** Challenge and reframe negative thoughts.

**Sensations:** Engage in intense physical sensations.

# ANXIETY BUSTING!

The next time your mind is stuck on anxiety and worry, try the following simple exercise!

*Look around your and notice:*

5 things you can see: Your hands, the sky, a plant.



4 things you can feel: Feet on the ground, the chair.



3 things you can hear: Birds chirping, your breath.



2 things you can smell: Coffee, your lunch, clothes.



1 thing you can taste: A mint, gum, the fresh air.





# Developing Distress Tolerance Skills

## 1- Identify Your Triggers:

Reflect on situations or events that typically trigger strong emotional reactions in you. What are they, and how do you usually respond?

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## 2- Practice Mindful Awareness:

Think about a recent stressful situation. How did you react initially, and how might practicing mindfulness have helped you respond differently?

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## 3- Distraction Strategies:

Name a few activities or hobbies you find absorbing or enjoyable. How can these distractions help shift your focus during times of distress?

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# Cognitive reframing

**Examine & challenge your thoughts patterns to gain different perspectives on situations, ideas, or relationships.**





# Cognitive Reframing

## Self-Isolation:

“My friends and I **can’t see** each other.” → “My friends and I are **protecting** each other.”

“I’m **stuck** at home.” → “I’m **safe** at home.”

“I have **lost** all my freedom.” → “I have **relinquished** my freedom for a **noble purpose**.”

“I **miss** the things I love.” → “I’m increasing my **gratitude** for the things I **love**.”

*STAY POSITIVE IN TOUGH TIMES  
FOR YOUR EMOTIONS*



# Cognitive restructuring for Emotional Regulation

## 1- Identify Negative Thoughts:

Reflect on a recent situation where you experienced negative thoughts or beliefs about yourself or a situation. What were these thoughts, and how did they make you feel?

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## 2- Challenge Negative Thoughts:

Write down one of the negative thoughts you identified. How can you reframe this thought to be more balanced or realistic?

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## 3- Explore Alternative Perspectives:

Think about another way to interpret the situation that might be less negative or more empowering. How does this alternative perspective change your feelings about the situation?

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## 4- Practice Positive Affirmations:

Create three positive affirmations or statements about yourself or the situation. How do these affirmations help counteract negative thinking?

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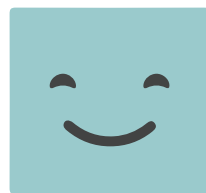
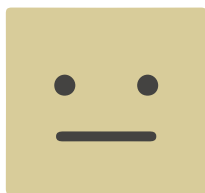
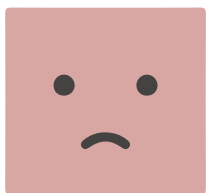
## 5- Applying Reframing Techniques:

Choose a challenging situation you anticipate facing soon. How can you apply cognitive reframing techniques to approach this situation with a more positive mindset?

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# Emotional Regulation: Key Focus Areas

- **Identify Emotional Triggers:** Pinpoint situations or people that typically provoke strong emotional responses.
- **Name Your Emotions:** Clearly label your emotions to understand what you're feeling.
- **Pause Before Reacting:** Take a moment to breathe deeply and think before responding.
- **Challenge Negative Thoughts:** Reframe negative or irrational thoughts with more balanced perspectives.
- **Use Visualization:** Imagine a calm and positive outcome to help manage stress in the moment.
- **Create an Emotional Toolbox:** Develop a set of go-to strategies (like listening to music, journaling, or taking a walk) for managing intense emotions.
- **Track Emotional Patterns:** Keep a journal to identify recurring emotions and triggers, helping you prepare and respond more effectively in the future.





# Zones of Regulation: Feelings Sort

Put the emotions  
into the right zone for you

Blue Zone	Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Red Zone

Tired	Silly	Frustrated	Aggressive
Calm	Surprised	Lonely	Mad
Out of control	Nervous	Sad	Happy
Focused	Super excited	Proud	Bored

# 5 SIGNS

## You Need to Set Boundaries for Emotional Regulation

1. If you frequently feel overwhelmed or emotionally drained, it may be a sign that you need to establish boundaries to protect your mental well-being.
2. Struggling to say no to requests, even when you're already stretched thin, indicates a need for setting limits to prioritize your needs.
3. Experiencing growing resentment towards friends, family, or co-leagues often stems from a lack of boundaries and feeling taken advantage of.
4. If you find yourself constantly putting others' needs before your own and neglecting self-care, it's a sign that boundaries are necessary to ensure your health and happiness.
5. Feeling emotionally exhausted or burnt out, especially after social interactions, suggests that you need to set clear boundaries to manage your energy and emotional resources effectively.





# 4 Simple Ways to Set Boundaries for Regulating Emotions

## Communicate Clearly.

Express your needs and limits openly and honestly with others. Use "I" statements to assert your feelings and preferences without blaming or accusing.

## Learn to Say No.

Practice saying no when you feel overwhelmed or when a request doesn't align with your priorities. It's okay to prioritize your well-being over others' demands.

## Schedule Self-Care.

Dedicate regular time to activities that rejuvenate and relax you. Treat self-care as a non-negotiable part of your routine to maintain emotional balance.

## Limit Exposure to Stressors.

Identify and reduce time spent in environments or with people that consistently drain your energy or trigger negative emotions. Create a healthy distance to protect your mental health.



# Identify Your Boundaries:

Think about a recent situation where you felt overwhelmed or drained. What boundaries could you set to protect your emotional well-being in a similar situation?

## Practice Saying No:

Reflect on a time when you said yes but wished you had said no. How did it affect you, and how could you handle a similar request differently in the future?

## Schedule Self-Care:

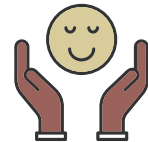
List three self-care activities that help you feel rejuvenated and relaxed. How can you incorporate these activities into your weekly routine?

## Evaluate Stressors:

Identify one person or environment that consistently causes you stress. What steps can you take to limit your exposure or create a healthier distance?

# Activities for Boosting Positive Emotions:

Practice gratitude.



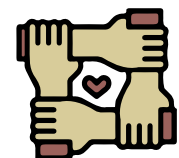
Spend time with loved ones.



Engage in hobbies or activities you enjoy.



Help others.



Practice mindfulness and savoring positive experiences.







# Practicing Gratitude for Emotional Regulation

## Daily Gratitude Journal:

List three things you are grateful for today and explain why.

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## Gratitude Letter:

Write a letter to someone you appreciate, detailing why you are grateful for them and how they have positively impacted your life.

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# Engaging in Acts of Kindness

## Random Acts of Kindness:

Plan and perform three random acts of kindness this week.  
What will you do, and for whom?

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## Reflecting on Kindness:

How did performing acts of kindness make you feel?  
How did the recipients react?

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## Kindness Chain:

Think about how kindness can create a ripple effect.  
Who inspired you with kindness, and how can you pass it on?

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# Mindfulness and Meditation

## Mindful Breathing:

Spend 5 minutes practicing mindful breathing.  
Describe how you felt before and after the exercise.

Before:

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After:

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## Daily Mindfulness:

Identify three daily activities where you can incorporate mindfulness (e.g., eating, walking, washing dishes). Describe how you will practice mindfulness during these activities.

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# Positive Visualization

## Future Self Visualization:

Visualize your future self achieving a major goal.  
Describe the scene and the emotions you experience.

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## Success Visualization:

Think about a past success. Visualize the moment and describe the positive emotions you felt.

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## Daily Visualizations:

Plan three short visualization sessions for the week.  
What positive outcomes will you focus on?

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# Physical Activity

## Exercise Plan:

Create a weekly exercise plan that includes activities you enjoy.  
How will you incorporate physical activity into your daily routine?

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## Reflecting on Exercise:

After completing a workout, reflect on how you feel physically  
and emotionally.

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## Exercise Goals:

Set three specific exercise goals for the month. How will achieving  
these goals improve your emotional well-being?

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# Creative Expression

## Artistic Activities:

Choose an artistic activity (e.g., drawing, painting, writing, music) and set aside time to engage in it this week. What activity will you choose, and why?

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## Emotional Expression:

Reflect on how creative expression helps you process and manage your emotions. Describe an instance where it was particularly beneficial.

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## Creative Goals:

Set three creative goals for the month. How will these activities help you boost positive emotions and regulate your emotions?

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# “Permission to Feel”

*the RULER Method*

**R – Recognition** *of emotions in oneself and others*

**U – Understanding** *the causes and consequences of emotions*

**L – Labeling** *emotions accurately*

**E – Expressing** *emotions appropriately*

**R – Regulating** *emotions effectively*



*“How you react emotionally is a choice in any situation.”*