

The Pain Cycle¹⁵

Similar to the relationship cycles, there is also a cycle known as the Pain Cycle.

Begin with “When I feel...” - think of a time when you felt upset or dysregulated. Can you identify those emotions? Put them in that box.

“I cope or react...” - when you felt those emotions, how did you respond? (Usually, we act in ways that we may regret later.) Write those behaviors in that box.

“Then others react...” - reflect on how others respond to your actions. This isn’t about justifying or condemning them for their response, but this is about pausing to consider how your behavior impacted them or how they responded to your actions. You don’t know what they really thought or felt, so try to focus on what you could observe in their response, not what they thought or felt.

	...when I feel...	
...then others react...		...I cope or react...

¹⁵ Frigaard, N. (2022). A playful approach to restoration therapy: Helping kids play their way from pain to peace. Taylor & Francis.; Hargrave, T. D., & Pfitzer, F. (2011). Restoration therapy: Understanding and guiding healing in marriage and family therapy. Routledge.; Hargrave, T. D., Zasowski, N. E., & Hammer, M. Y. (2019). Advances and techniques in restoration therapy. Routledge.