



Hannah Beech MSc

INTEGRATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

hannah@hbpsychotherapy.co.uk

www.hbpsychotherapy.co.uk

[@hannahbeechpsychotherapy](https://www.instagram.com/hannahbeechpsychotherapy)

Welcome! You've clicked on my downloadable document most likely because you're wanting to learn more about how to *effectively regulate your emotions*.

Well look no further! In this **FREE** downloadable document, I will go through all the necessary steps to help guide you through intense or overwhelming emotions, to help you regain control over them (and your life).

The steps we will cover are:

- What is emotion regulation
- What is emotion dysregulation
- Fight, Flight, or Freeze
- Regaining control

Sound like something you could benefit from?
Then continue reading . . .

"Between stimulus and response, there is space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."

Viktor E. Frankl

We all have emotions, but not all of us know how to effectively regulate them...

This is my *bread and butter*. Emotion regulation is at the core of everything I do. You might think that it just includes me saying 'and how does that make you feel?' within my sessions with clients, but there is so much more to it than that.

- Our ability to regulate our emotions stems from our attachment with our primary care givers.
- Our emotional responses to trauma are not about the incident themselves. They are about our interpretation of and ability to regulate these emotions as a result.
- Our emotions can make or break our relationships.
- I work with complex emotional needs so understand how complex emotions can be.

I am going to teach you what it means to be emotionally regulated, and give you clarification on how it can ***change your life.***

What is emotion regulation?

→ **Emotion regulation is a term generally used to describe a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience.**

All of us feel and experience emotions- negative and positive- every single day. It is believed that the average person has more than **400** emotional experiences every day.

The problem with emotions, is that our brains are hard-wired to give emotions the upper hand over logic and rational thought. They are influenced by a network of interconnected structures in our brain known as the limbic system.

Emotion has a substantial influence on the cognitive processes in humans, including perception, attention, learning, memory, reasoning, and problem solving. It also has a strong influence on attention.

Emotions can play a significant role in how we think and behave, and can influence to make particular decision based on how we feel.

So in short, the three main components you need to know when understanding the role of our emotions are:

1) Subjective component: How you experience the emotion

2) Physiological component: How your body reacts to the emotion

3) Expressive component: How you behave in response to an emotion

How we interpret emotions is based on:

1) Our perception

2) Our resilience

3) Our ability to cope / coping mechanisms

"Don't make a permanent decision based on a temporary emotion."

→ **Sad emotions tend to last longer than happy emotions.**

It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real)

→ **Love is not an emotion.** Love is an attachment within you in which you experience varying emotions: joy, awe, anger, frustration, happiness, excitement etc.

→ **There are 6 basic emotions:** anger, sadness, fear, surprise, happiness, and disgust.

→ **Conflict can trigger strong emotions.** If you aren't comfortable with your emotions, or how to manage them

in times of stress, you will find it more challenging to resolve conflict effectively.

→ **We can feel more than one feeling at a time.** Emotions are complicated, and it’s very common to experience more than one emotion at a time.

The emotions themselves are not what people find challenging. It is more likely the behavioural responses, psychological thought processes, or physiological bodily responses we have as a reaction.

Healthy responses to emotions	Unhealthy responses to emotions
Talking with friends	Abusing alcohol or other substances
Exercising	Engaging in self-injury
Talking therapy	Avoiding or withdrawing from difficult situations or conversations
Writing in a journal	Physical or verbal aggression
Meditation or grounding techniques	Excessive social media use, to the exclusion of other responsibilities

What is emotion dysregulation?

→ **Emotion dysregulation is a term used to describe an inability to regularly use healthy coping strategies to diffuse or moderate negative emotions.**

→ **What causes emotions to feel so overwhelming?**

Emotions themselves are not what cause or contribute to our difficulties. It's the interpretation of our emotions that tend to lead to us developing an inability to tolerate them.

EXAMPLE:

Scenario: A friend walks past you in the street without acknowledging you.

Emotions: You will most likely experience feelings similar to confusion, disappointment, anger, or self-doubt.

Thoughts: Your emotions will quickly lead to a series of thoughts (e.g. "what did I do wrong?", "are they mad at me?", "did they just not see me?").

Behaviours: These thoughts will then often lead to impulsive behaviours, such as texting your friend a passive-aggressive message, going home to dwell on it, or buying something you can't afford to 'take your mind off of it'.

→ **It is understandable how our emotions can spiral out of control sometimes, and cause us to say or do things we wouldn't normally. This cycle can be even more intense when events that occur are more triggering or somehow tie into earlier negative experiences such as trauma or abuse.**

Be aware of how the cycle can begin, and the different stages within it:

→ Situation

- Emotional response
- Negative thoughts
- Bodily physical reactions
- Behavioural response

Some people will learn to cope with intense emotions in unhealthy ways, such as **suppressing with alcohol, engaging in self-harm, or avoiding difficult conversations that bring up negative emotions.**

Whilst these begin as coping mechanisms, they quickly become habits or safety mechanisms, and can lead to more difficulties down the road.

Keep reading to find out how you can change these unhelpful coping behaviours

"The only thing that can combat fear is action. This is when our fight or flight comes into play."

Fight, flight, or freeze- what will you do?

Psychologist Connie Lillas uses a driving analogy to describe the three most common ways people respond when they're overwhelmed by stress:

Foot on the gas: An angry or agitated stress response. You feel heightened, stressed, and overly stimulated.

Foot on the brake: A withdrawn or depressed stress

response. You shut down, space out, feel little energy or emotion.

Foot on the gas and the break: A tense and frozen stress response. You **'freeze'** under pressure, and can't do anything. You look or feel bewildered, but under the surface you are extremely agitated.

How is our fight, flight, or freeze linked to our emotions?

Our emotions serve a purpose, to keep us safe. Whether it be anger, sadness, or fear. They help our brain to meet our needs for self-preservation and safety.

Increased activity will occur in the body:

- Blood circulation increases blood supply to the brain, muscles, and limbs, meaning we can think less and react more instinctively.
- Our liver releases extra sugar for energy.
- Sweating increases to speed heat loss.
- Adrenal glands release adrenaline to fuel response.

Decreased activity will occur in the body:

- Digestion slows down or stops- we might feel sick or be sick.
- Kidney, large intestine and bladder slow down. We often feel we need to go to the toilet: this being our bodies way

of 'lightening the load'

→ Immune response decreases.

Signs that your fight, flight, or freeze response is being activated:

→ Increased heart rate or palpitations

→ Difficulties breathing

→ Feeling nauseous

→ Your temperature rising

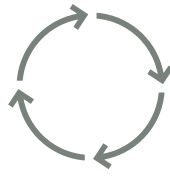
→ Feeling more agitated or confrontational

→ Withdrawing from the conversation

→ Very heightened emotions such as anger, mistrust, jealousy, sadness

"We learn about emotions as a child. If we learn that we always have something or someone to fear, that we can't trust people, that people are to be feared, or that anger is

Breaking the cycle of emotion
dysregulation



For us to actively change the way we think and behave in response to intense or overwhelming emotions, we need to pay attention to our own personal emotions. The ultimate goal is to **lengthen the amount of time between negative / challenging emotions arising, negative automatic thoughts, and ultimately, negatively associated behaviours.**

Try asking yourself:

- What thoughts trigger off the most negative emotions for me?
- Which emotions are hardest for me to tolerate?
- Which emotions are easiest for me to tolerate?
- What behaviours do I tend to use to calm down these feelings?
- How well do these work in the short and long term? Do I want to continue using these behaviours to cope with intense emotions?
- What are the underlying beliefs about myself, others, or life in general that tend to most strongly perpetuate negative cycles?
- What thoughts and beliefs do I have that assist me most

in generating positive feelings?

DISCLAIMER: Situations, people and thoughts might trigger certain emotions in you, but YOU are the only person responsible for regulating them effectively

Just because a certain thought, belief, person or situation has made you feel a certain way, YOU are responsible for managing how you behave as a result of the intense emotions you might be experiencing

Tips for regulating your emotions:

- Take care of your physical needs
- Engage in activities that build a sense of achievement
- Changing thoughts is easier than changing feelings

Ask yourself:

- What is it that is really pushing my buttons here?
- Why am I reacting so strongly?
- What is the worst (or best) thing that could happen?
- How important will this be tomorrow? Next week? Next month?
- What am I afraid of?

"Research shows that the process of labelling emotional experience is related to greater emotion

Brené Brown

Identifying your emotions: activity

This is an Emotion and Feelings Wheel. It shows you the 6 primary emotions in the middle, and then separates associated emotions through the colours.

If we don't have a wide emotional vocabulary, we might use blanket emotions such as angry, or sad, to describe how we are feeling.

Instead, try and see whether there are any emotions on here that you associate with more, depending on your current situation.

Labelling our emotions accurately is the first step towards better understanding why we find them difficult. It also helps us to communicate our feelings effectively and accurately to others.

EMOTION & FEELING WHEEL

The wheel is divided into four main quadrants, each representing a primary emotion. Each quadrant is further divided into sub-quadrants, and each sub-quadrant contains a list of related emotions.

- Anger (Pink Quadrant):**
 - Sub-quadrant 1: Aggravated, Resentful, Jealous, Contempt, Revolted, Agony, Hurt, Depressed, Sorrow, Dismayed, Displeased, Regretful, Guilty, Isolated, Lonely, Grief, Powerless, Shocked, Dismayed, Disillusioned, Perplexed, Astonished, Awe-struck, Speechless, Astounded, Stimulated, Touched, Pleased, Satisfied, Amused, Delighted, Jovial, Blissful, Triumphant, Illustrous, Eager, Hopeful, Excited, Zeal, Euphoric, Jubilation, Enchanted, Rapture, Romantic, Fondness, Sentimental, Attracted, Passion, Infatuation, Caring, Compassionate, Relieved, Satisfied, Frightened, Helpless, Panic, Hysterical, Inferior, Inadequate, Worried, Anxious, Mortified, Dread, Hate, Hostile, Agitated, Frustrated, Annoyed, Aggravated.
 - Sub-quadrant 2: Irritable, Envy, Disgust, Suffering, Sadness, Disappointed, Shameful, Neglected, Despair, Stunned, Confused, Amazed, Overcome, Moved, Content, Happy, Cheerful, Proud, Optimistic, Enthusiastic, Elation, Enthralled, Affectionate, Longing, Desire, Tenderness, Peaceful, Scared, Terror, Insecure, Nervous, Horror, Rage, Exasperated.
- Sadness (Purple Quadrant):**
 - Sub-quadrant 1: Agony, Hurt, Depressed, Sorrow, Dismayed, Displeased, Regretful, Guilty, Isolated, Lonely, Grief, Powerless, Shocked, Dismayed, Disillusioned, Perplexed, Astonished, Awe-struck, Speechless, Astounded, Stimulated, Touched, Pleased, Satisfied, Amused, Delighted, Jovial, Blissful, Triumphant, Illustrous, Eager, Hopeful, Excited, Zeal, Euphoric, Jubilation, Enchanted, Rapture, Romantic, Fondness, Sentimental, Attracted, Passion, Infatuation, Caring, Compassionate, Relieved, Satisfied, Frightened, Helpless, Panic, Hysterical, Inferior, Inadequate, Worried, Anxious, Mortified, Dread, Hate, Hostile, Agitated, Frustrated, Annoyed, Aggravated.
 - Sub-quadrant 2: Irritable, Envy, Disgust, Suffering, Sadness, Disappointed, Shameful, Neglected, Despair, Stunned, Confused, Amazed, Overcome, Moved, Content, Happy, Cheerful, Proud, Optimistic, Enthusiastic, Elation, Enthralled, Affectionate, Longing, Desire, Tenderness, Peaceful, Scared, Terror, Insecure, Nervous, Horror, Rage, Exasperated.
- Surprise (Light Blue Quadrant):**
 - Sub-quadrant 1: Agony, Hurt, Depressed, Sorrow, Dismayed, Displeased, Regretful, Guilty, Isolated, Lonely, Grief, Powerless, Shocked, Dismayed, Disillusioned, Perplexed, Astonished, Awe-struck, Speechless, Astounded, Stimulated, Touched, Pleased, Satisfied, Amused, Delighted, Jovial, Blissful, Triumphant, Illustrous, Eager, Hopeful, Excited, Zeal, Euphoric, Jubilation, Enchanted, Rapture, Romantic, Fondness, Sentimental, Attracted, Passion, Infatuation, Caring, Compassionate, Relieved, Satisfied, Frightened, Helpless, Panic, Hysterical, Inferior, Inadequate, Worried, Anxious, Mortified, Dread, Hate, Hostile, Agitated, Frustrated, Annoyed, Aggravated.
 - Sub-quadrant 2: Irritable, Envy, Disgust, Suffering, Sadness, Disappointed, Shameful, Neglected, Despair, Stunned, Confused, Amazed, Overcome, Moved, Content, Happy, Cheerful, Proud, Optimistic, Enthusiastic, Elation, Enthralled, Affectionate, Longing, Desire, Tenderness, Peaceful, Scared, Terror, Insecure, Nervous, Horror, Rage, Exasperated.
- Joy (Green Quadrant):**
 - Sub-quadrant 1: Agony, Hurt, Depressed, Sorrow, Dismayed, Displeased, Regretful, Guilty, Isolated, Lonely, Grief, Powerless, Shocked, Dismayed, Disillusioned, Perplexed, Astonished, Awe-struck, Speechless, Astounded, Stimulated, Touched, Pleased, Satisfied, Amused, Delighted, Jovial, Blissful, Triumphant, Illustrous, Eager, Hopeful, Excited, Zeal, Euphoric, Jubilation, Enchanted, Rapture, Romantic, Fondness, Sentimental, Attracted, Passion, Infatuation, Caring, Compassionate, Relieved, Satisfied, Frightened, Helpless, Panic, Hysterical, Inferior, Inadequate, Worried, Anxious, Mortified, Dread, Hate, Hostile, Agitated, Frustrated, Annoyed, Aggravated.
 - Sub-quadrant 2: Irritable, Envy, Disgust, Suffering, Sadness, Disappointed, Shameful, Neglected, Despair, Stunned, Confused, Amazed, Overcome, Moved, Content, Happy, Cheerful, Proud, Optimistic, Enthusiastic, Elation, Enthralled, Affectionate, Longing, Desire, Tenderness, Peaceful, Scared, Terror, Insecure, Nervous, Horror, Rage, Exasperated.

Scenario: I interpret that I have done something that others will be disappointed in (either real or perceived).

Emotions: I feel disappointed in myself (I might also feel other associated emotions such as frustration, regretful, or agitated).

Thoughts: “I’m rubbish at everything”, “I’m not surprised that no one cares about me”, “I will never amount to anything”.

Behaviour: Excessive attempts at reconciliation, neglecting my needs to prioritise others in an attempt to get them to be happy with me again, buy something I can not afford in order to make myself feel better.

So what can I do instead?

- 1)** If I have done something or behaved in a way that has disappointed someone, I can take accountability and acknowledge my behaviours / mistakes, and learn from them.
- 2)** If I have perceived disappointment, I can check in for evidence that what I am thinking is rational.
- 3)** Be compassionate towards myself, and acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes, and that it is not a reflection on who I am as a person.
- 4)** Single out the incident or scenario, and remember that it is not in relation to anything else. It is a singular event. Sometimes similar emotions that arise take us back to something that happened a while ago, that made us feel a similar way, and we associate the two scenarios.
- 5)** Identify whether anything has happened in my past that could be interfering with how I feel (was I told I was a

disappointment as a child? Did my teachers make me feel like I was a disappointment?)

"Mindfulness is deliberately paying full attention to what is happening around you– in your body, heart, and mind. Mindfulness is awareness without criticism or judgement."

Jan Chozen Bays

Mindfulness

Who else thought that mindfulness was just learning to breathe in and out to the count of 7? **Same.**

Mindfulness is actually the process of paying full attention to how you are feeling, in a particular moment. These tips will help you to be more mindful, and create more of that space we were talking about earlier between your **negative emotions, negative automatic thoughts**, and ultimately **negatively associated behaviours**:

→ **Create space:** Emotions happens fact. We don't think 'now I will be angry, or pissed off, or riddled with guilt'. So the number one skill when learning to regulate emotions is *learning to pause*. Take a breath. Slow down the moment between trigger, and response.

→ **Notice what you feel:** An equally important skill involves the ability to become aware of what you're feeling (go back to the emotions wheel earlier). Practice curiosity about how you are feeling emotionally, mentally, and physically. How does your body feel?

→ **Name what you feel:** (back to that emotions wheel again), labelling what we feel accurately can give us and people around us a better understanding as to what we are feeling. For example, if you feel fear, what are you afraid of? If you feel angry, what are you angry about or towards?

→ **Accepting the emotion:** A lot of the time, people try to suppress negative emotions, or avoid them all together. Rather than beating yourself up about feeling angry or scared, recognise that your feelings are valid. Practice compassion. Your emotions are a response to a situation.

→ **Practice mindfulness:** Whilst focusing on your breathing can help you feel more grounded, becoming aware of what is happening inside of you and around you in any given moment, can provide you with a sense of control and peace. These skills help you to stay calm and avoid engaging in negative thought patterns when you are in the midst of emotional pain.

Some of my favourite mindfulness affirmations are:

- *I am experiencing life through all of my senses*
- *I allow myself to focus on completing one step at a time*
- *Right now, I am focusing on allowing my body to rest, even if sleep is not yet achievable*
- *I will not worry about things I can not control*
- *I focus on what I can control, and let go of what I cannot*
- *I have the ability to overcome my doubts, worries, and fears*
- *I release worst case scenario thinking and choose to*

focus on this present moment

- I take care of the future by taking care of the present moment

"Take complete ownership of your outcomes, by holding no one responsible but yourself."

Gary Keller

That leads us onto; the take aways about emotion regulation

Here are the most important things you need to remember about emotion regulation:

- We learn to regulate our emotions from our primary care givers as children. If we learn that people cannot be trusted, or if our parents were dysregulated themselves, we will most likely have some work to do in this department.
- Our emotions are natural responses to situations. They are not the enemy. They are there to keep us safe.
- It is **NOT** anyone else's responsibility to regulate your emotions. Don't be reliant on other people making you feel a certain type of way.
- Do not run from your emotions, they are trying to tell you something.

- Our emotions are not just feelings. They are linked to our thoughts, our bodily responses, and our behaviours.
- Be mindful in the present, and try to lengthen the time between emotion and response.
- It is easier to manage and reframe our thoughts than it is to stop our emotions.
- Don't avoid your emotions, welcome them with compassion and non-judgement.
- Dig deep, label your emotion, and identify the root cause or trigger.

We all have emotions, about 400 a day, so don't try and avoid them. Show yourself compassion, and work towards regulation.

Still unsure how to regulate your emotions effectively? Enquire with me via email or on my website to find out why I specialise in helping people to regain control over their emotions, and life.



HANNAH BEECH PSYCHOTHERAPY

hannah@hbpsychotherapy.co.uk

www.hbpsychotherapy.co.uk
