



Emotional Regulation OnePage

Expressing and coping with emotions in a healthy is something many survivors struggle to do. **For many of us, handling emotions in our family of origin was done very poorly and sometimes dangerously.** Emotional chaos reigned! Perhaps no one taught us how to how to express our emotions in a healthy way, and sometimes we weren't allowed to express emotions at all.

To complicate matters, if we are abused over a prolonged period of time, damage to the emotional control center in our brain, the amygdala, can be done. It enlarges and this makes controlling our emotions even harder. We carry this unhealthy coping with emotions into adulthood and it affects all of our relationships, even the one we have with ourselves.

The capacity to control one's emotions rather than being controlled by them is referred to as Emotional Regulation. **Learning how to master emotional regulation can be extremely useful for survivors by making our lives less emotionally chaotic and unstable.** That will, in turn, improve our relationships with everyone including ourselves.

Some tips and strategies to help you learn Emotional Regulation:

- **Learn to separate your emotions from your identity**, i.e. you might feel shame but that does not make you a shameful person.
- Develop the capacity to **identify the emotions** you're feeling and those being expressed by others
- Recognize the role that emotions play in our lives – **they are not meant to be a tool to control us or anyone else.**
- **Take responsibility for your emotions**, dispel the myth that someone else can “make” you feel something. **Only you can choose what you allow or who you allow to affect you.**
- **Important:** a lack self-care contributes to a build-up of distressing emotions for you then modify your self-care, i.e., get enough sleep, eat well, **surround yourself with healthy people who make healthy choices.**
- Learn how to tolerate emotional distress. (**Please review our Episode/OnePage on developing a Crisis Management Plan*)
- Develop a solid repertoire of self-soothing techniques. We will go into depth during discussion tonight.
- Learn how to effectively and consistently convert distressing emotions to pleasant ones with behavior choices and changes.

Pro Tip: Remember... We now have a choice!

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