

Personal Emotion Manual

Mental Health Mastermind

The Role of Emotions

Your emotions are messengers, giving you essential information about the world around you, decisions you're facing, your wants, needs, wellbeing, and more. They can act as a call to action or a signal to rest, and they can give us valuable insight into the way we're thinking.

As valuable as our emotions are, we can have difficulty recognizing, allowing, and responding to them. You've likely received many messages in your life about "good" and "bad" ways to feel. And you probably have personal experiences that tell you what emotions feel "good" and "bad." Over time, we develop habitual responses to our emotions and craft a story about what they mean. Sometimes those responses and stories are constructive, and other times, they can make a painful situation feel even worse.

Our goal this week is to begin to uncover your habits and stories about your emotions, learn what you intuitively know about responding to them, and identify helpful steps you can take to further support your **emotional wellness**.

What do you know about the stories you tell yourself about your emotions?

Tells, Triggers, and Glimmers

Learning your tells, triggers, and glimmers is a helpful step in supporting your emotional wellbeing. Knowing these helps us be more mindful in our response to our emotions. Keep in mind that no emotions are "bad" and that emotional pain doesn't need to be "fixed."

Tells: personal indicators that you're experiencing a particular emotion. In other words, how you can tell you're feeling one way or another. It can be especially helpful to recognize our tells that a common challenging emotion has been triggered or that our emotions are becoming intense or overwhelming.

Triggers: cues to your body that you are in danger. A trigger can be internal or external. Places, situations, something about your environment, something someone says or does, and upcoming events are all examples of external triggers. Internally, your own thoughts, feelings, actions, or physical states like being tired or hungry could be triggers.

Glimmers: cues to your body that you are safe. Glimmers are like triggers for feeling peace, joy, calm, or wellbeing. These can be the simple things around you that put you at ease it can be like the sound of your favorite song or the wind rustling through the palm trees

Putting it All Together:

What do you know about your personal tells?
What are common triggers for painful, confusing, or overwhelming emotions?
What do you know about your glimmers?
When have you found it helpful to allow yourself to feel whatever you're feeling? When has it been helpful to move yourself to a different emotional state?

Types of Coping

You've been responding to your emotions your whole life, and you've developed many coping skills along the way. Many of these are probably intuitive, meaning you just do them without realizing you're coping. Sometimes your coping strategies are helpful, and sometimes no. It can be helpful to turn intuitive coping strategies, whether you think they're helpful or unhelpful, into intentional coping strategies.

Here are few general categories of coping styles you may recognize from your own life:

Emotion-focused coping: Doing things to feel, express, understand, and shift your feelings.

Examples: journaling, meditating, distractions, seeking emotional support, talking about feelings, changing your perspective, self-soothing, acceptance

Solution-focused coping: Tackle problems by finding solutions, tactics, and strategies.

Examples: creating a to-do list, time management, researching a problem, engaging in problem-solving, making changes in your life to change a problem

Solitude: Using alone time for wellbeing or coping.

Examples: giving yourself "me time," taking a break to read a book, meditation, exercise, going for a walk by yourself, journaling, giving yourself space from others

Social Support: Spending time in healthy relationships, reaching out for support when you need it.

Examples: calling a friend, planning a social event, asking for advice, asking for help, venting, spending quality time with someone you care about, taking a break with an important person

Grounding: Calming your mind and body.

Examples: time in nature, listening to music, doing something just because it feels soothing, breathing, meditation, exercise, playing with a pet

Name Your Coping Style

What are helpful things you do to cope with challenging situations or emotions?

Are there any coping strategies you've used that seem unhelpful or unhealthy? Which category do they fall into?

What would it look like to be even more intentional about your coping style?

Recognizing Relief

It's common to want to feel happy as quickly as we can when dealing with a painful situation, yet our emotions might not work that way. Sometimes, relief can look like frustration after hopelessness, boredom after anger, or disappointment after total despair. Whatever coping skills you use, pay attention to the small signs of relief.

What do you know about what relief looks and feels like when you're experiencing a painful emotion?