Emotional Regulation and Mindfulness Worksheet

Emotional regulation is typically understood as the ability to effectively manage or balance our emotional responses. This can involve learning how to sustain positive feelings while recovering more quickly from negative feelings. Mindfulness strategies have been identified as important tools for emotional regulation

# Definition

**Mindfulness** is the process of learning to be intensely present and aware of ourselves and our circumstances. It is often practiced through meditation or similar exercises, but more broadly it involves adopting a series of mental stances:

1. **Intention –** Awareness of your emotions and a deliberate decision to address them.
2. **Openness –** Willingness to explore new perspectives and ideas related to unpleasant or harmful feelings and experiences.
3. **Self-Compassion –** Acceptance of your current circumstances and feelings without evaluation or judgement.
4. **Self-reliance –** Affirmation of your ability to handle what you are feeling. Trusting yourself to get through difficult circumstances and to successfully employ self-care strategies.

# Reactive Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness practices can be useful tools during stressful sessions, to help regulate our emotional responses. A couple of simple examples are listed below, but as a group I would like us to develop a database of strategies for all of us to use. Please feel free to write in your own ideas or strategies below.

3 – Minute Breath Technique

Take three minutes before, during, or after an emotionally charged experience to practice structured, meditative breathing. Take deep, slow breaths, inhaling to a count of four, holding for a count of two, and breathing out for a count of three. During this time:

1. Spend 1 minute focused on a specific question (i.e. How am I feeling right now?)
2. Spend 1 minute focused on your breath, counting it out, paying attention to the rhythm.
3. Spend 1 minute focused on your breath and how your body feels.

## Emotional Wave

In a situation where you are feeling overwhelmed by unpleasant emotions such as stress or anxiety, take a few minutes to centre yourself and go through the following steps:

1. **Observe** your emotion, acknowledging its existence while stepping back from it.
2. **Imagine** the emotion as a wave washing over you; experience the feeling without trying to avoid or control it.
3. **Recognize** that you are not the emotion, that it is only one small part of who you are. Acknowledge that the wave is already in the process of passing by.
4. **Sit** with the emotion, without acting on it. Let the wave flow around you, without carrying you away.
5. **Practice** loving your emotions. Try not to evaluate your feelings, but instead accept them as a temporary facet of your lived experience that makes you who you are.

You can use a similar technique to celebrate pleasant emotions, imagining the positive feelings a gentle buoyancy that surrounds, lifts, and supports you, washing away unpleasant sensations.

*Based on material from “*[*22 Mindfulness Exercises, Techniques & Activities for Adults*](https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/)*”*