

# How good are your emotional regulation strategies?

---

## *Why does this matter?*

Our emotions help us to navigate every aspect of our lives, so we need to know how and when to trust them. We also need to know when to adapt them: for example, to regulate them down when we are over excited, or to regulate them up when we need to get motivated.

## *How good are your emotional regulation strategies?*

To identify the strategies you most commonly use to manage your emotions, rank the strategies on the following page from 1 to 10. As you rank them, write down some of the situations in which you use them: for example, when you're stressed, when there's a deadline looming, or when you are angry.

Here is the key: 1 = dominant strategy and 10 = least used strategy



Image 1. Nigel Tadyanehondo via Unsplash

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Situation when used</i>
Attention: Vigilance avoidance Repressive coping (need oriented)	I do not focus on the issue I am concerned about. I try to distract myself by thinking about something positive.		
Knowledge: Cognitive dissonance reduction (need oriented)	I tend to reject feedback I do not like. I blame others to deflect the attention from myself and my own limitations.		
Bodily manifestations (need oriented)	I rely on activities that take my mind off the issue e.g., Eating or non-eating / Drinking, Smoking/Physical exercise		
Attention: Focused distraction (goal oriented)	I focus on other tasks to keep the mind busy.		
Knowledge: Cognitive reappraisal (goal oriented)	I try to tell myself the feedback was intended for someone else. It is not about me.		

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Situation when used</i>
Bodily manifestations (goal oriented)	<p>Inhibiting emotions: I tend to hide my feelings and don't let people know how bad I am feeling.</p> <p>Redirecting strategies: I laugh when I am stressed and give out the wrong impression and/or I get quite angry about things – I have to get it off my chest.</p>		
Attention: Counter-regulation (person-oriented)	Flexible action control: I use a range of strategies to make me feel better – I work through the issue using meditation, mindfulness – seeing it differently – removing own biases.		
Knowledge: Cognitive integration	Eventually, I am able to put my feelings into perspective.		
Bodily manifestations (person-oriented)	Deep breathing: Progressive muscle relaxation		
Other strategies	What else do I do?		

## What now?

Use Kolb and Fry's (1975) experiential circle to reflect critically on the questions below. Here are the four components of Kolb and Fry's Framework.

1. Experiencing (when I last experienced or avoided this)
2. Observing and experiencing (what I did and felt in the past)
3. Forming abstract concepts (what this makes me think about now)
4. Testing in or anticipating new situations (what I will try next time)

### *Critical reflection questions*

- To what extent do you take on board feedback and/or try to do something about it?
- How long does it take you to work through how you feel and to become objective?
- What networks of support do you use to support you in understanding what you need to do?

## Make it count!

Make a commitment to test your new strategies and to reflect on them once you do. The ability to reflect critically is often tested in interviews by recruiting firms and employers, so pay this some attention!

When you're ready, make a short account of a time when you acted on feedback to improve your results. Place the account in your portfolio or with your CV so that you have a good example to give if asked in an interview.

## References

Deimann, M., and Bastiaens, T. (2010). The role of volition in distance education: an exploration of its capacities. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 11(1), 1-16.

Fried, L. (2011). Teaching teachers about emotional regulation in the classroom. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(3), 117-127.

Gross, J.J. (2001). Emotion regulation in adulthood: Timing is everything. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 214-219. Koole, S. (2009). The psychology of emotion regulation: An integrative view. *Cognition and Emotion*, 23, 4-41

Koole, S. (2009). The psychology of emotion regulation: An integrative view. *Cognition and Emotion*, 23, 4-41

These resources were developed by Professors Dawn Bennett and Carol Evans for the Developing EmployABILITY initiative.