

Handling Emotions in a Healthy Way



1) Notice what is happening in your body

-Emotions have a way of storing themselves in our bodies, and so oftentimes we have a physical reaction to our emotions. It's important that we pay attention to what's happening in our bodies. Doing a body scan can be a great way to bring awareness to your body sensations (see body scan handout).

2) Identify the emotion

-Make sure you are getting to the core emotion. Oftentimes, there is a deeper lying emotion than the one we are experiencing. For example, when you feel angry, there may be something else lying under the anger, such as feelings of unworthiness, rejection, worry, etc. Take the time to dig in and see what's going on.

-If you cannot pinpoint the emotion, take some time to read through the list of emotions, you might just find that one or a couple pop out to you. (See emotions list handout)

3) Recognize the trigger

-Usually something caused the emotion to come up inside of you, but sometimes we aren't totally aware of the trigger until we take the time to think about it.

-Was it a conversation you had that left you feeling insecure? Was it a memory that popped up that made you feel shame? Is it old feelings of resentment? Are you trying to please someone but feel like you are falling short?

****Do not stuff the emotion, allow it to come up. You don't need to sit in it all day, but you do need to acknowledge it so that it doesn't bubble up at a later time. If you are feeling too overwhelmed to do so, seek professional help to have someone who can walk with you through this process.**

4) Compassionate Truth talk

-We are always talking to ourselves in some form. We need to make sure we are taking a compassionate approach when it comes to dealing with our emotions because shaming ourselves will only spin us deeper into the emotional spiral.

-Speak to yourself as you would a friend who was feeling the same way. (Hey, I know this is hard, and it's okay you feel this way. You aren't crazy, you are just struggling right now. We all struggle. Let's do the next best thing to deal with these emotions)

5) Release the emotions

-Once you have identified the feelings, triggers and truths, do something to release the emotions in a healthy manner. Talk to someone you trust (there is so much power in bringing what is in the dark into the light), journal all your emotions out into the paper, deep breath and meditate on a scripture that helps you in hard times, do something you love (i.e. Cooking, art, etc.)

-If you feel a lot of your emotions physically, do something physical to help release that energy. Deep breathing, yoga, going for walk/jog or dancing can be a very therapeutic release.

Truth Statements to remember:

-Emotions are temporary, I will not always feel this way even if my brain is telling me I will. "This too shall pass".
-God knows my future, my emotions do not. I am choosing to believe His truth even though my feelings are BIG.

Helpful Verses to Memorize:

Psalm 46: 1-3 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Isaiah 41:10 SO do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

2 Corinthians 12:9 My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

1 Peter 5:10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Body Scan:

A body scan is a helpful way to bring awareness to the physical sensations in your body. Oftentimes our body tells us that there is something going on inside of us, not just physically, but emotionally. Start by sitting on a chair, and get comfortable. Take some deep breaths and start by focusing on your feet. How do your feet feel? What sensations do you notice? Bring your full attention to your feet. Then, move up to your calves. Do the same things there. Move up through your entire body, spending about 10-15 seconds focusing on each major body part. You might notice your stomach in knots, tension in your back, tingling sensations in your arms, light headedness, or heaviness on your chest. These can all be clues to how you are doing emotionally.

Try the body scan later once you feel you are in an emotionally better place. Notice how your body feels different when you aren't as emotionally charged.

Emotions List:

Abandoned	Irritated
Angry	Jealous
Annoyed	Joy
Anxious	Lonely
Ashamed	Lost
Bitter	Loving
Bored	Miserable
Comfortable	Motivated
Confused	Nervous
Content	Overwhelmed
Depressed	Peaceful
Determined	Proud
Disdain	Relieved
Disgust	Resentful
Eager	Sad
Embarrassment	Satisfied
Energetic	Scared
Envious	Self-conscious
Excited	Shocked
Foolish	Silly
Frustrated	Stupid
Furious	Suspicious
Grieving	Tense
Happy	Terrified
Hopeful	Trapped
Hurt	Uncomfortable
Inadequate	Worried
Insecure	Worthless