

Appendix A: Advice and instructions

The following advice and instructions will help you effectively apply all ‘use’ and ‘use with caution’ strategies in the emotion regulation wheel.

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Deep belly breathing - Use this strategy <p>Deep belly breathing involves breathing deeply into the belly rather than shallowly into the chest. This type of breathing is one of the best things you can do to deal with emotions like anxiety and anger.</p> <p>Focusing on breathing deeply shifts your attention to your body and away from thoughts that might make you feel worse. It also sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax, which can help to enter a more relaxed state of thinking and feeling.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position with your back straight.2. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen.3. Breathe in slowly through your nose, ensuring that your abdomen (not your chest) rises as you fill your lungs.4. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then exhale slowly through your mouth, allowing your abdomen to fall.5. Continue this for 5-10 minutes, focusing on the rise and fall of your abdomen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Muscle relaxation - Use this strategy <p>Tensing and relaxing different muscle groups in the body is a proven way to relieve stress and tension.</p> <p>Also, focusing on your body helps you get “out of your head” and prevent yourself from thinking thoughts that may intensify your emotions.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find a quiet spot where you won't be distracted or interrupted.2. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.3. Start at your toes and work your way up to your head. Move systematically from your toes to your feet, legs, abdomen, chest, arms, hands, neck, and face.4. Tense each muscle group for about 5-10 seconds. For example, curl your toes tightly and release, tense your calf muscles and release, tighten your thigh muscles and release, and so on.5. As you slowly release the tension, focus on the sensation of relaxing for 10-20 seconds before moving to the next muscle group.

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>● Expressive writing - Use this strategy</p> <p>Expressive writing, or journaling, is an effective way to work through difficult emotions. It helps you organize your thoughts and ideas so that you can get a better understanding of what you are feeling.</p> <p>Until you do this, your brain might repeatedly replay the same (often unhelpful) thoughts, which can cause you to become stuck and feel worse.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dedicate 15-20 minutes for writing. 2. Choose a private, comfortable space where you feel safe and won't be disturbed. 3. Write continuously without worrying about grammar, spelling, or structure. 4. Write about your emotions and experiences, even if it feels uncomfortable at first. 5. After writing, take a few minutes to read what you wrote and think about how you feel.
<p>● Meditation - Use this strategy</p> <p>Meditation can help you observe difficult emotions and notice the 'noise' created by your thoughts. Meditation often invites you to focus on a specific body part; while this might sound easy, it's often more challenging than expected.</p> <p>Seated meditation helps you pay attention to your breathing, notice when your attention wanders, and understand how to refocus it without judgement.</p>	<p>Seated Meditation: Basic Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit down in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. 2. Observe how your body connects with the chair or floor. Notice any sensations without trying to change them. Maybe you notice other physical sensations, like pain in your back or tension in your shoulders. Just observe them without attempting to make them go away. 3. Notice the sensation of air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and abdomen rise and fall with each breath. 4. Sooner or later, often sooner, you will find yourself distracted. When this happens, gently bring your focus back to your breath without judgement. 5. When you're ready, slowly open your eyes and return your attention to the room. <p>For full, detailed guidance please see Appendix B.</p>

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>● Positive imagery - Use with caution</p> <p>Positive imagery involves intentionally creating mental images of calming or joyful scenarios.This can help shift your focus away from distressing emotions.</p> <p>Do use: when you have acknowledged and allowed emotional pain or discomfort to be present. Bringing to mind positive things can help to set your mind on other things and not become overwhelmed by a difficult emotion.</p> <p>Do not use: to avoid or distract yourself from emotional pain. If you use positive imagery in this way, it is a form of suppression.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position in a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. 2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. Allow your body to relax. 3. Think of a place, person, or activity that makes you feel happy, relaxed, or content. Maybe a beautiful beach, a serene forest, a cozy room, or a joyful memory with loved ones. 4. Visualise the colours and shapes, hear the sounds, smell the scents, feel the textures, and even taste.Try to make the image as vivid and detailed as possible. 5. Notice how your body feels. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the image. 6. When you're ready, slowly bring your awareness back to the present moment. Open your eyes and take a few more deep breaths. Notice any changes in how you feel.
<p>● Venting - Use with caution</p> <p>Venting is the release of emotions, particularly unpleasant ones, by talking about them.This can help release built-up emotions, preventing them from escalating.</p> <p>Do use: to "release" your feelings to a trusted person in a safe and supportive way, instead of holding them in, where they can bottle up and lead to further tension and stress.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose someone you trust who is willing to listen without judgement, like a friend, partner, family member, or coworker. 2. Ensure you have a safe and private space to talk. Let the listener know you are seeking understanding and emotional support, not solutions. 3. Describe the situation that triggered your challenging emotions. Be honest

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>Do not use: to dwell on the challenging situation and go over and over it, as this may serve to fuel your emotional distress rather than relieve it.</p>	<p>and specific about your thoughts and emotions. Stick to the facts and avoid harsh language or criticising others, as the goal is to vent, not to gossip.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Be considerate and don't overwhelm the other person; check with them to ensure they're comfortable and still happy to listen. 5. After venting, take a moment to reflect on what you've shared. Notice if you feel any sense of relief or clarity. You can also discuss with the listener any insights or perspectives they may have offered.
<p>● Distraction - Use with caution</p> <p>This is when you divert your attention away from challenging emotions or thoughts by focusing on something else.</p> <p>Do use: to temporarily put your mind on other things than your emotion or the emotional situation. Distracting yourself can prevent you from getting completely absorbed by an emotion.</p> <p>Do not use: as a way to block your feelings. Of course, distraction only works for as long as you are distracting yourself. It is not a long-term solution. If you use distraction as a way not to feel your feelings, it's a dangerous strategy that is similar to suppression in that the feeling will likely return later, sometimes even stronger than before.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you notice you're experiencing a challenging emotion, first acknowledge that it's acceptable to feel this way, but it's also okay to take your mind off it temporarily. 2. Select an activity that you enjoy, like reading a book, watching a movie, exercising, playing a game, cooking, or a hobby. 3. While distraction is useful, decide in advance how long you will engage in the distraction activity (e.g., 30 minutes to an hour). 4. Fully immerse yourself in your chosen activity and let yourself become absorbed in it. The more engaging the activity, the more effective it will be at distracting you from difficult emotions. 5. After the distraction period, take some time to reflect on how you feel. Notice if the intensity of the emotions has decreased.

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>● Attentional counter-regulation - Use with caution</p> <p>This might sound complicated but attentional counter-regulation is simply focusing on things that are opposite to what you feel. For example, if you're frustrated and deflated because of a tough day at work, you might watch a TV show that always makes you laugh.</p> <p>Do use: to put your mind on other things than your emotion or the emotional situation. Focusing on other things can prevent you from getting completely absorbed and overwhelmed by an emotion.</p> <p>Do not use: as a way to block your feelings. If you use to focus on other things as a way not to feel your feelings, it's a dangerous strategy that is similar to suppression.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge the difficult emotion you are experiencing without judgement. For example, "This is embarrassment" or "I feel shame." 2. Look for positive (or neutral) aspects of your current surroundings, such as a pleasant sound, a nice view out of a window, a soft and comforting texture, or a pleasant thought or memory. 3. Shift your attention to this aspect of your surroundings and use all your senses to immerse yourself in the experience. 4. Take a moment to observe the colours, shapes, and movements in your environment. Look for small details you might usually overlook and pay attention to the sounds you hear. What do you see, hear, smell, feel, and taste? 5. If your mind wanders back to the difficult emotion, gently redirect it back to your surroundings. 6. After a few minutes, reflect on how you feel, noticing any changes in your emotions.
<p>● Acceptance - Use with caution</p> <p>This involves allowing difficult emotions to be present without trying to change them.</p> <p>Do use: to learn to tolerate difficult emotions. Acceptance means you allow yourself to experience difficult emotions. This is the opposite of suppression, where you push difficult emotions away. By allowing your emotions to be present, you allow yourself to be human. After all, we all experience difficult emotions. Also, over</p>	<p>Acceptance of Emotions Meditation: Basic Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you notice that you're experiencing a difficult emotion, close your eyes (if possible), take a few deep breaths in through your nose, and exhale through your mouth. 2. Label the difficult emotion, e.g., "I am feeling anxious" or "I feel isolated." 3. Notice how the emotion feels in your body. Pay attention to any bodily

Strategy & Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>time, acceptance creates a more “friendly” relationship with your emotions: because you allow them to be present, you become less afraid of them, feel less of an urge to push them away, and become more forgiving towards yourself for having them.</p> <p>Do not use: to constantly focus on difficult feelings. Acceptance does not mean we should force ourselves to feel our emotions constantly. It means we allow emotions to come and go: we welcome emotions when they present themselves and have the power to focus on other things after welcoming them.</p>	<p>sensations without trying to change them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Silently acknowledge and accept the emotion without trying to change it or push it away, e.g., “I am feeling anxious, and that is okay” or “It’s ok; you’re allowed to be here.” 5. Allow any sensations to be there without pushing them away. If distracted by thoughts, gently refocus on the sensation of breathing in and out. 6. When you feel ready, open your eyes and return to your surroundings. <p>For full, detailed guidance please see Appendix B.</p>
<p>● Introspection - Use with caution</p> <p>This involves looking inward at your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours to help manage difficult emotions.</p> <p>Do use: to learn about yourself. Emotions are messengers; they are trying to tell us something. When you can look at your own emotions with curiosity, you can learn valuable lessons from them. For example, anger may tell you that another person has crossed one of your boundaries. This information can help you learn about your needs and what you believe is important.</p> <p>Do not use: to find an answer to every emotion. In some cases, it is unclear what emotion wants to tell us. Rather than trying to analyse what the emotions mean by constantly thinking about them, it is sometimes better to let go of the desire to understand the emotion. Thinking too much about the meaning of emotions can easily cause you to “get stuck in your head.”</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, name the precise emotion(s) you’re feeling. Ask yourself, “What am I feeling right now?” 2. Consider what your emotions might be signalling about your current situation. Ask yourself: “What is this emotion trying to tell me?” For example, anxiety might tell you that something important needs your attention, while happiness might indicate that you’re enjoying what you’re doing. 3. Consider what you can learn from your emotional experience. Ask yourself, “What can I learn from this?” For instance, if you felt frustrated, you might learn that certain situations need different approaches or more preparation.

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>● Cognitive reappraisal - Use with caution</p> <p>This involves thinking of a situation or event in a way that helps you feel better.</p> <p>Do use: to step back from how you are thinking about a challenging situation and try looking at it in a new way. Cognitive reappraisal can help you see things in a different light, and because of this new perspective, reduce the emotional pain. For example, after making a mistake, you may reframe the mistake and associated regret as something ‘to learn from.’</p> <p>Do not use: to force yourself into ‘positive thinking’ about the situation while discounting how you are feeling, to feel better quickly.</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Label the difficult emotion you are experiencing and describe the situation that led to it. 2. Ask yourself, “What immediate thoughts came to mind?” Write down the initial thoughts that arose in response to this challenging situation. 3. Then, ask yourself, “Is this thought really true, or is there a more realistic way to view this situation?” 4. Create more balanced and realistic thoughts about the situation. Ask yourself, “How can I think about what happened in a way that reflects reality?” For example, instead of thinking, “This is a disaster,” a realistic alternative might be, “This is challenging, but I can handle it.” 5. Repeat the new thought to yourself; pay attention to how you feel about the situation and notice any changes in your emotions.
<p>● Cognitive restructuring - Use with caution</p> <p>This involves challenging irrational thoughts about emotions and replacing them with accurate, rational alternatives.</p> <p>Do use: to free yourself from the burden of faulty thinking. Many emotions are the result of how we think about things. For example, the thought “this could only happen to me” can result in stronger feelings of failure. This thought is an example of a faulty thought: obviously, you are not the only person this could happen to. Learning to see through such faulty</p>	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you feel a difficult emotion, write down the specific thoughts creating distress. For example, “I’m a failure because I didn’t get the promotion” or “No one likes me, I’m just a bad person.” 2. Examine the evidence for and against this thought. Ask yourself the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence supports this thought? • What evidence contradicts this thought? • Are there any examples where this thought has not been true?

Strategy &Description	Instructions for Effective Use
<p>thoughts and replacing them with more realistic ones can save a lot of emotional pain.</p> <p>Do not use: to suppress negative feelings by finding arguments that prove that you have “no right” to feel this way. Also, constantly trying to challenge your thoughts can cause you to disconnect yourself from the emotion. When this happens, you are stuck in thinking. Rather than feeling the emotion and “going through the emotional experience,” you are blocking yourself from the emotional experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would I say to a friend who had this thought? <p>3. Create more balanced and realistic alternative thoughts to replace the negative ones. For example, instead of thinking, “I’ll never succeed,” a more rational alternative could be, “I have faced challenges before and overcome them; I can do it again.”</p> <p>4. Repeat the new rational thought to yourself. As you do so, pay attention to how you feel, noticing any changes in your emotions.</p>

Appendix B: Detailed advice for meditations

Seated Meditation

Seated meditation can help you notice the ‘noise’ created by your thoughts. Though focusing on a specific body part seems simple, it can actually be quite challenging.

This meditation uses your breath as the main focus of attention and will help you observe it, notice when your attention wanders, and teach you how to return your focus without judgement.

Instructions

1. Have the audio for the Seated Meditation ready; check the volume and ensure it's at a comfortable level.
2. Take a moment to remind yourself of your in-session practice.
3. Sit upright with a straight back, preferably with closed eyes. Ensure your shoulders are relaxed. Whatever you sit on, your knees should be lower than your hips so your spine is self-supporting and your lower back has a gentle inward curve.
4. If you struggle to sit on a cushion, you have options to make the practice more comfortable. Try sitting close to a wall to support your back and using additional cushions or a folded blanket to get the height and position right. When using a cushion is not an option, consider using a chair. If a chair is not an option, consider completing the meditation reclined or lying down.
5. Don't worry about 'getting it right' or making mistakes; this is the start of your journey, so be kind to yourself. This takes time and practice.
6. Don't be harsh or critical when your attention inevitably wanders; it's ok and completely natural. As soon as you realise your mind has wandered, you are already back in the present moment. In other words, simply noticing that you are not present is a success, and your wandering mind makes this success possible.
7. If you feel that the meditation is becoming too much at any point, open your eyes and stop.
8. When you are ready, play the audio for the Seated Meditation and begin.
9. After practising, complete the reflection questions in your Logbook.

The Acceptance of Emotions Meditation

Acceptance involves fully experiencing emotions without trying to change or avoid them; it's about recognising them as a natural part of being human.

The goal of acceptance is not to eliminate difficult emotions but to change how you relate to them. Practising this meditation regularly allows you to see challenging emotions as normal and temporary rather than something to be feared or avoided. This shift helps you recognise that unpleasant emotions will naturally fade over time if you allow them.

Instructions

1. Have the audio for the Acceptance of Emotions Meditation ready; check the volume and ensure it's at a comfortable level.
2. Find a comfortable position somewhere you won't be disturbed or distracted.
3. In this meditation, you will be asked to think about a situation that worries you, something that happened in the past, or something that might happen in the future. Choose a scenario that brings up an emotional reaction for you. Like your practice in session, you'll imagine yourself in that scenario in this meditation.
4. Take a moment to remind yourself of your in-session practice.
5. Don't worry about 'getting it right' or making mistakes; this is the start of your journey, so be kind to yourself. This takes time and practice.
6. If you feel the meditation is too much, you can open your eyes anytime and stop. Wiggle your fingers and toes to help bring yourself back to the present moment. You can also try focusing your attention back on your breath.
7. If you feel overwhelmed, you can do this exercise again later and improve your emotional acceptance through smaller steps. For example, you might start by briefly allowing emotions to be present and gradually extend the time you do this. Slowly increasing the time can help you feel more comfortable accepting your emotions.
8. When you are ready, play the audio for the Acceptance of Emotions Meditation and begin.
9. After practising, complete the reflection questions in your Logbook.