Emotion Regulation Skills for Individuals with Learning Challenges

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Presentation Topics

• Emotion Regulation Basics

• Overview of the Skills List and System Tools

The Process Model of Emotion Generation
(Gross & Thompson, 2007)

What is an Emotion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Attention</th>
<th>Appraisal</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation happens</td>
<td>Situation has meaning to the person &amp; he/she brings attention to it</td>
<td>The person assesses the situation using cognitive processing</td>
<td>Emotions create experiential, behavioral, physical, and neurobiological changes</td>
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What is Emotion Regulation?

The individual engages in processes to up- or down-regulate emotions depending on his/her goal. These processes can impact the intensity and duration of the emotional experience.
Cognitive Deficits outlined in the DSM-5 Diagnosis for ID

- Verbal comprehension
- Working memory
- Learning from experience
- Academic learning
- Abstract thinking
- Quantitative learning
- Perceptual learning
- Problem solving
- Priority setting
- Planning
- Strategizing
- Cognitive flexibility
- Judgment
Feelings Rating Scale - Handout 1

**Overwhelming Feeling:**
At a 5, I harm myself, others, or property

**Strong Feeling:**
At a 4, I have a hard time talking & listening and staying on-track

**Medium Feeling:**
At 0-3 feelings, I can talking & listening and staying on-track

**Small Feeling:**

**No Feeling:**

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**Emotional Dysregulation**

- **Slow Return to Baseline**
- Impulsively try to feel better; relying on past behaviors
- Attention goes to Off-Track Thinking & Urge Rather than Goals
- Lack of Strategic Focus & Goal-Directed Thinking
- Unaware of situations

**Strong Emotions Trigger Fast Reactions**
Assembling Adaptive Chains of Behavior

The Skills List

1. Clear Picture
2. On-Track Thinking
3. On-Track Action
4. Safety Plan
5. New-Me Activities
6. Problem Solving
7. Expressing Myself
8. Getting It Right
9. Relationship Care
There are NINE Skills in the Skills System. Here is a list of the nine skills and how they help us.

**All-the-Time Skills**

1. **Clear Picture:** Clear Picture helps me notice what is happening inside and outside of me right now. I see the situation as it is.
2. **On-Track Thinking:** On-Track Thinking helps me think clearly about what I want and what will work to help me reach my goals.
3. **On-Track Action:** Once I get a Clear Picture and have On-Track Thinking, I take an On-Track Action to do something positive to move towards my goals.
4. **Safety Plan:** I use a Safety Plan to handle risky situations that are happening right now or may happen in the future.
5. **New-Me Activities:** I do New-Me Activities to help me focus my attention, make me feel better, distract me, and to have fun.

**Calm Only Skills**

6. **Problem Solving:** I take time to solve problems in my life, so that I can be happier and reach my goals.
7. **Expressing Myself:** I share what is on my mind and in my heart to help me stay on track with myself and other people.
8. **Getting It Right:** Getting It Right helps me work with people to get what I want.
9. **Relationship Care:** Relationship Care helps me understand how to have on-track relationships with myself and others.

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**The Skills System- Handout 2**

**How Our Skills Help Us**

**Feelings Rating Scale**

0-1-2-3-4-5

The Feelings Rating Scale is a 0-1-2-3-4-5 scale I use to rate how strong my feelings are. The Feelings Rating Scale helps me know what skills and how many skills I link together in a situation.

**Categories of Skills**

- **All-the-Time**
  - 0-5 Emotion
- **Calm Only**
  - 0-3 Emotion

There are two Categories of Skills: All-the-Time skills and Calm Only skills. I can use All-the-Time skills at any level of feeling: 0-1-2-3-4-5. I can only use Calm Only skills when I am at a 0-1-2-3 feeling.

**Recipe for Skills**

The Recipe for Skills helps me know how many skills I need to link together in a skills chain. The Recipe tells me to add 1 skill for every level of feeling (including 0). So, if I am at a 3 sad, I need to use 4 skills...
Feelings Rating Scale - Handout 1

**Overwhelming Feeling:**
At a 5, I harm myself, others, or property

**5 Strong Feeling**
At a 4, I have a hard time talking & listening and staying on-track

**4 Medium Feeling**
At 0-3 feelings I can talking & listening and staying on-track

**3 Small Feeling**

**2 Tiny Feeling**

**1 No Feeling**

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Categories of Skills - Handout 1

Once I know my Level of Emotion (0-1-2-3-4-5), I know what Category of Skills I can use:

1. Clear Picture
2. On-Track Thinking
3. On-Track Action
4. Safety Plan
5. New-Me Activities
6. Problem Solving
7. Expressing Myself
8. Getting It Right
9. Relationship Care

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Once I know my level of feeling (0-1-2-3-4-5), I use the Recipe for Skills to decide how many skills I link together in a skills chain.

**Recipe for Skills**

- **Combine 1 skill for EVERY level of Emotion:**
  - Level 0 Feeling: At Least 1 Skill
  - Level 1 Feeling: At Least 2 Skills
  - Level 2 Feeling: At Least 3 Skills
  - Level 3 Feeling: At Least 4 Skills
  - Level 4 Feeling: At Least 5 Skills
  - Level 5 Feeling: At Least 6 Skills

**Helpful Hints:**

- **Bigger Feelings Need More Skills**
  Smaller feelings can pass in a few moments. Larger feelings are more intense and last longer. I use more skills one after another in skills chains to deal with larger feelings.

- **Double Up on All-The-Time Skills at a Level 5 Feeling**
  At a Level 5 feeling, I need 6 skills. If I can’t use my Calm Only Skills over a 3, what is the 6th skill I use? I do more All-The-Time skills such as On-Track Actions and New-Me Activities.
2. On-Track Thinking - Handout 1

CHECK IT Does the urge help me reach my goal?

Helpful? 💖 or Not Helpful? 😞

Turn It Up to On-Track Thinking

Keep It Up Lots of on-track thoughts coach me to Do What Works to get me to my goal

"I don’t want to go off-track"
"I want to reach my goal"
"I will make the best of it"
"I can handle this"

Make a Skills Plan

Can I use Calm Only skills? 📱
How many skills do I need? 📚
What skills will I link together to help me reach my goal? 💼

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Take an On-Track Action

3. On-Track Action - Handout 1

Reaching My Goals

Staying On-Track

Get Back On-track

Off-Track

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3. On-Track Action- Handout 2

Reaching my Goals

5. Let It Go & Move on

4. Accept the Situation

3. On-Track Action Plan

2. Shift Tracks

1. Take a Step to my Goal

4. Safety Plan

3 Levels of Risk

- LOW Risk
- MEDIUM Risk
- HIGH Risk

3 Types of Safety Plans

- Thinking Safety Plans
- Talking Safety Plans:
  - Writing Safety Plans

3 Ways to Handle Risk

- Refocus on a New-Me Activity
  - in LOW Risk Situations
- Move Away
  - in MEDIUM Risk Situations
- Leave the Area
  - in HIGH Risk Situations
I want to see small problems as small problems, so I don’t overreact and drive up my feelings to higher levels. I also want to see big problems as big problems, so I do enough to fix them. Ignoring problems can make problems bigger & feelings stronger.
7. Expressing Myself- Handout 1

What is Expressing Myself?

*When I Express Myself I share things that are*

**On My Mind** & **In My Heart**

- Thoughts
- Concerns
- Needs
- Feelings
- Likes & Dislikes
- Hopes & Dreams

*I Express Myself in many different ways:*

- Talking (in person, phone, video, signing)
- Writing
- Letter
- Email
- Texting
- Pictures
- Body
- Language

*I Express Myself when I do New-Me Activities like:*

- Singing
- Dancing
- Playing Music
- Drawing
- Acting

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8. Getting It Right- Handout 1

Getting What I Want!

*Right Mind*

*Right Words*

*Right Tone*

*Sugar- Be nice*

*Explain the Situation*

*Ask for what you want*

*Listen*

*Seal a Deal*

*Right Time & Place*
Relationship Care is a Calm Only skill. This means that I can only use Relationship Care when I and the other person are at 0-3 level of emotion. When either person is over a 3, he or she may not be thinking clearly enough to manage relationships well. I use Clear Picture and On-Track Thinking to build, balance, and change my relationships.

A. Building On-Track Relationships
   With Myself               With Others

B. Balancing On-Track Relationships
   One-Way Street            2-Way Street

C. Changing Off-Track Relationships
   Finding Middle Ground     Steps of Responsibility