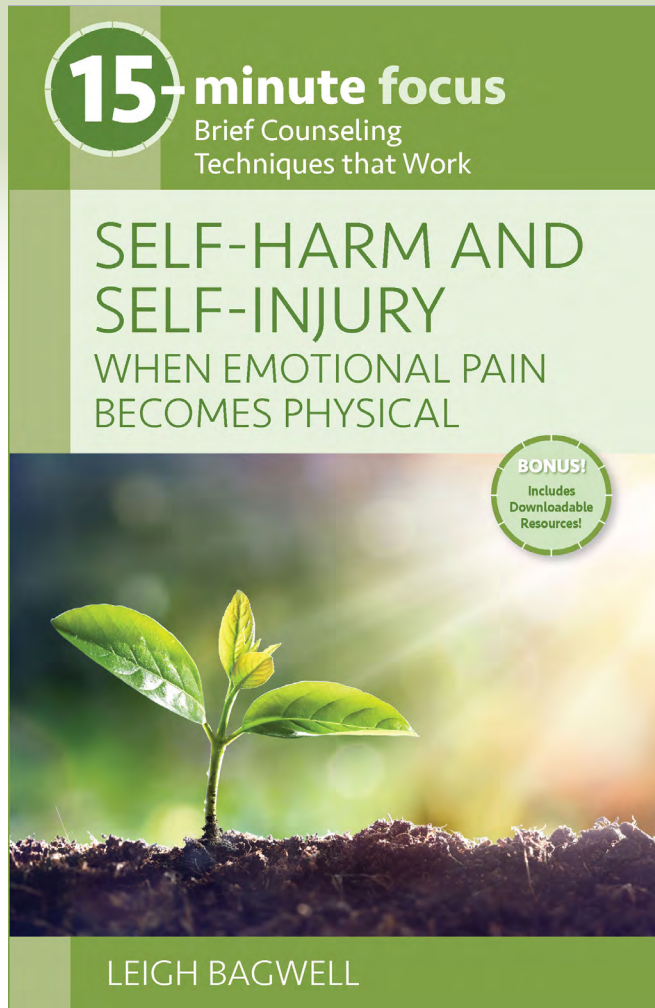


Reproducible Resources from



15-Minute Focus:
*Self-Harm and Self-Injury: When
Emotional Pain Becomes Physical*
Written by: Leigh Bagwell
ISBN: 9781953945440 \$14.95
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EMOTION REGULATION

What is it and how do we do it?



What is Emotion Regulation?

“Emotion Regulation” is a term generally used to describe a person’s ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience. Many people unconsciously use emotion regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations throughout the day.

Common **Healthy** Emotion Regulation Strategies



Talking with Friends



Exercizing



Meditation

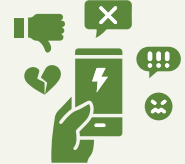
Common **Unhealthy** Emotion Regulation Strategies



Self-Injury



Substance Abuse

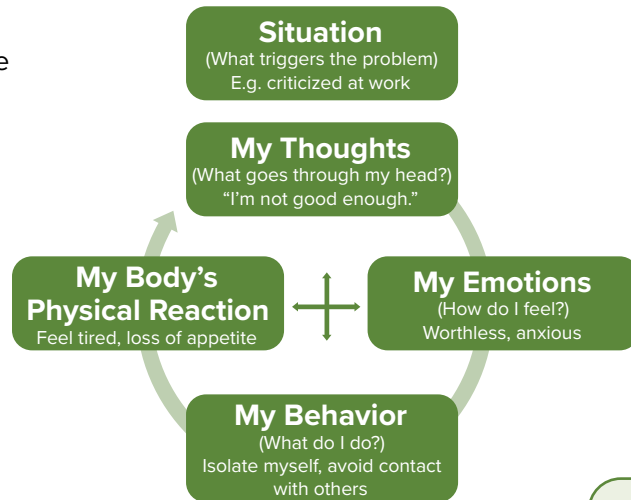


Excessive Social Media Use

Emotion Dysregulation

- Inability to regularly use healthy strategies to diffuse or moderate negative emotions
- It is the interpretation of the emotion that tends to stir up feelings and a sense of not being able to tolerate them

“Vicious Cycle”



Breaking the Cycle

- Learning how to understand and work with the relationships between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Pay attention to the way the thought-emotion-behavior relationship works for each of us

Male and Female Differences in Emotion Regulation



- Experience both positive and negative emotions more intensely
- Greater difficulties with emotion regulation skills
- More difficulty controlling ruminating behaviors
- More prone to “reflection”

VS.



- Experience both positive and negative emotions less intensely
- Less difficulties with emotion regulation skills

Tips for Regulating Emotions

Take Care of Your Physical Needs

- Good night’s rest
- Eat healthy
- Exercise your body

Engage in Activities that Build a Sense of Achievement

- Do one positive thing every day
- Pay more attention to the positive events in our lives

Changing Thoughts is Easier than Changing Feelings

- Evaluate what you are thinking that is causing the emotion
- What is it that’s really pushing my buttons here?

For More Resources

Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery
www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu

Youth Risk and Opportunity Lab
www.yro.cornell.com

Emotion Regulation Information Brief
 Rolston, A., & Lloyd-Richardson, E.
 What is emotion regulation and how do we do it?
 Cornell Research Program in Self-Injury and Recovery

SELF-HARM

REPLACEMENT STRATEGIES

Reach Out to Others

- Phone a friend.
- Call 1-800-DONT-CUT.
- Go out and be around people.

Express Yourself

- Write down your feelings in a diary.
- Cry as a way to express your sadness or frustration.
- Draw or color.

Keep Busy

- Play a game.
- Listen to music.
- Read.
- Take a shower.
- Open a dictionary and learn new words.
- Do homework.
- Cook.
- Dig in the garden.
- Clean.
- Watch a feel-good movie.

Do Something Mindful

- Count down slowly from 10 to 0.
- Breathe slowly, in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- Focus on objects around you and thinking about how they look, sound, smell, taste, and feel.
- Do yoga.
- Meditate.
- Learn breathing exercises to aid relaxation.
- Concentrate on something that makes you happy: good friends, good times, laughter, etc.

Release Your Frustrations

- Throw ice cubes at a brick wall.
- Throw eggs in the shower.
- Rip apart an old magazine or phone book.
- Smash fruit with a bat or hammer.
- Throw darts.
- Punch pillows.
- Scream into a pillow.
- Slam doors.
- Yell or sing at the top of your lungs.
- Exercise.

Express Pain and Intense Emotions

- Paint, draw, or scribble on a big piece of paper with red ink or paint.
- Write in a journal to express your feelings.
- Compose a poem or song to say what you feel.
- Write down any negative feelings and then rip the paper up.
- Listen to music that expresses what you're feeling.

Feel Guilty or Deserve Punishment

- List as many good things about yourself as you can.
- Read something good that someone has written about you.
- Talk to someone who cares about you.
- Do something nice for someone else.
- Remember when you've done something good.
- Think about why you feel guilty and how you might be able to change it.

Feel Sad or Depressed

- Take a bath or hot shower.
- Pet or cuddle a dog or cat.
- Wrap yourself in a warm/weighted blanket.
- Massage your neck, hands, and feet.
- Listen to calming music.
- Do something slow and soothing.
- Give yourself a present.
- Hug a loved one.
- Make a list of things that make you happy.
- Do something nice for someone else.
- Smell sweet-smelling essential oils.
- Smooth lotion onto the parts of yourself you want to hurt.
- Call a friend.
- Watch TV or read.

Feel Numb or Disconnected

- Call a friend (you don't have to talk about self-harm).
- Take a cold shower or bath.
- Hold an ice cube in the crook of your arm or leg.
- Chew something with a very strong taste, like chili peppers, peppermint, ginger root, or a grapefruit peel.
- Go online to a self-help website, chat room, or message board.
- Squeeze ice.
- List the many uses for a random object. (For example, what are all the things you can do with a twist tie?)
- Put a finger into a frozen food (like ice cream).
- Slap a tabletop hard.
- Stomp your feet on the ground.
- Focus on how it feels to breathe. Notice the way your chest and stomach move with each breath.

Release Anger or Tension

- Exercise vigorously (run, dance, jump rope, or hit a punching bag).
- Punch a cushion or mattress or scream into your pillow.
- Squeeze a stress ball or squish Play-Doh or clay.
- Rip something up (sheets of paper, a magazine).
- Make some noise (play an instrument, bang on pots and pans).
- Slash an empty plastic soda bottle or a piece of heavy cardboard or an old shirt or sock.
- Squeeze ice.
- Do something that will give you a sharp sensation, like eating lemon.
- Make a soft cloth doll to represent the things you are angry at. Cut and tear it instead of yourself.
- Flatten aluminum cans for recycling, seeing how fast you can go.
- Pick up a stick and hit a tree.
- Use a pillow to hit a wall, pillow-fight style.
- On a sketch or photo of yourself, mark in red ink what you want to do. Cut and tear the picture.
- Make clay models and cut or smash them.
- Clean.
- Bang pots and pans.
- Stomp around in heavy shoes.
- Play handball or tennis.

Substitutes for the Cutting Sensation

- Use a red marker pen to draw on your skin where you might usually cut.
- Rub ice cubes over your skin where you might usually cut.
- Place rubber bands on your wrists, arms, or legs, and snap them instead of cutting.
- Putting stickers on the parts of your body you want to injure.
- Drawing slashing lines on paper.
- Paint on your skin with red watercolor or tempera paint.
- Drawing on the areas you want to cut using ice that you've made by dropping six or seven drops of red food color into each of the ice-cube tray wells.

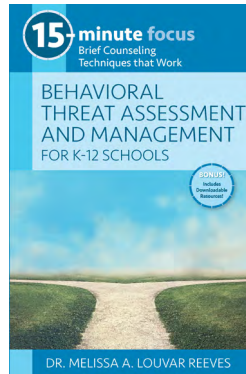
**These resources are
also available for download.
Click the links below.**

- [5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain.pdf](#)
- [5 Things to Know About Stress.pdf](#)
- [Stress Catcher.pdf](#)
- [Assessing NSSI Severity.pdf](#)
- [NIMH Ask Suicide Screening Tool.pdf](#)
- [Info-for-parents-english.pdf](#)
- [Parent-dos-and-donts.pdf](#)

15-minute focus

Brief Counseling
Techniques that Work

Other titles in this series

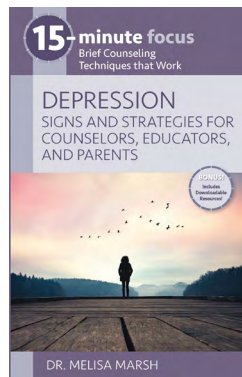


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Dr. Melisa Marsh

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