

# MANAGING OVERWHELMING EMOTIONS

These are suggestions, try some out and make a note of the ones that work for you to help you through those big emotions

## Activities - do something like:

Call, email, text or visit a friend

Cook

Watch a favourite film or TV show

Write in a diary

Play video games

Go for a walk or exercise

Draw

Tidy your room

Read a book

Listen to music



By doing an activity you are effectively distracting yourself and completing a task at the same time.

## Contributing – do something nice for someone:

Help a friend or sibling with homework or a chore

Write someone a handwritten letter or card

Make something nice for someone else, such as baking cakes

Surprise someone with an unexpected visit or call

Give someone a hug, say something nice to someone

Ask "How can I help you?"



Compliment a stranger

Text someone you know is going through a hard time



By contributing you are accomplishing the goal of distraction, allowing you to calm down and respond in an appropriate way.

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## Comparisons – compare yourself:



Compare yourself now to a time when you were feeling worse and not managing

Think of others who are coping with similar issues and are not managing as well as you



It is natural to compare yourself to others or how you previously managed situations. If you managed better previously look at what you were doing differently at that time. If you are managing better now look at how far you have come in managing your emotional responses.

## Emotions – Create different emotions:

If you are feeling sad watch a funny film, TV show or You Tube clip



Get active



Listen to soothing or upbeat music

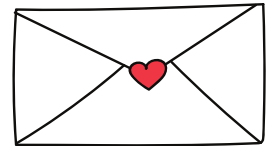


You can change the intensity of your emotions, such as sadness and anger, by encouraging an opposite emotion. For example if you feel sad try to do something that usually makes you feel happy.

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Pushing away – Push the painful emotion out of your mind temporarily:



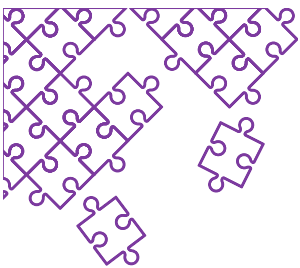
Mentally leave the situation by moving your thoughts and attention away from it

Build an imaginary wall between you and the situation.

Mentally put the emotion in a box and place it on a shelf until you feel strong enough to deal with it

This allows you the time to 'gather your thoughts' and be able to tackle the emotion when you feel able to do so effectively.

Thoughts – Replace your thoughts:



Read

Count the number of square items in a room

Do puzzles

Repeat all the songs of your favourite band

Colouring

Count how many times a certain word is said in a song



This provides you with valuable time to 'process' what has occurred and your emotional response to it.

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## Sensations –Intensify other sensations:

Hold an ice cube to reduce your emotional responses if you are not feeling in control

Squeeze a stress ball

Reduce heightened emotions with physical exercise

Listen to loud music

Take a warm or cold shower



When emotions are overwhelming different sensations can briefly distract you, allowing you the time to look at the situation from different perspectives and be in control of your responses.

## Important Information to note:



These skills do not 'remove' the emotion you are feeling but it allows you the space to 'regain control' over your emotions.

This reduces 'impulsive reactions' to situations and emotions which can lead to feelings of guilt and remorse.