ēquilia

5 simple steps to calm your emotions

Learn how to soothe how you feel when it all gets a bit much.

From time to time, all humans experience unpleasant emotions like fear, sadness, anger, and anxiety. It's perfectly normal to feel this way, especially during tough times.

When it feels like your emotions are taking over, try these five psychological strategies to help you feel a little bit more at ease;

1 Describe how you feel

Notice the physical sensations you're feeling and try to name the emotion(s) coming up. Be kind to yourself - you're not judging these emotions as 'good' or "bad"; you're simply acknowledging that they are there, so you can do something helpful to ease them.

2 Take a few 'belly' breaths

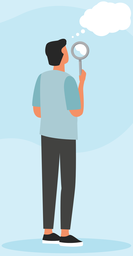
Place a hand on your stomach and take a few slow breaths so your belly rises and falls instead of your upper chest. Breathe in for the slow count of 3, hold for a second, and breathe out slowly and fully, letting your shoulders soften and fall to relieve the tension.

3 Check on your thoughts

Ask yourself,

'Is the way I'm thinking right now making me feel worse than I need to?'

Use the following steps to help you reframe any unhelpful thoughts:



Step 1
Describe what's going on:
What am I feeling? What am I thinking, picturing or predicting?

Step 2
Consider your thoughts:
Is the way I'm looking at the situation making me feel worse than I need to?

Step 3
Challenge your thoughts:
Is what I'm thinking true?
Is it helpful? Is it kind?

Step 4
Expand your thoughts:
Is there another way I can look at this situation that'd make me feel better?

Step 5
Choose how you respond:
What can I do here that will be helpful to me going forward?

4 Resist the urge to react

Strong emotions can make you feel like doing something you might later regret. Luckily, our feelings don't determine our actions and the urge to react will pass if you learn to "ride the waves" of your emotions without getting pulled under. Use the "belly breaths" to help you learn to surf!

5 Allow your emotions to pass

The less you resist, avoid, or fight against an unpleasant feeling, the quicker it will pass by! Practice allowing your emotions to come and go without engaging with them, reminding yourself that all strong emotions eventually pass.

You can use "belly breaths" to let an emotion wash over you without reacting to it, or come up with a kind and gentle way to talk yourself through whatever you're feeling.

For example, when you notice an emotion come on, say to yourself:

"Hello, _____, my old friend. Thanks for stopping by.
I know you're here for a reason, so you can stay for a little while, but if it's OK with you, I'll leave you to it".

It will take a bit of practice, but once you find a way to take a step back from your emotions that feels natural to you, it will become easier!