

# DBT Skills: Introduction to Emotion Regulation

## Objective

To learn the DBT skill of identifying feelings, then observing and naming them as a way of helping you to regulate your emotions.

## You Should Know

Most of us go through the day experiencing a range of emotions—from pleasant to unpleasant, some of which are in our awareness and others are out of our awareness. Sometimes the emotions that happen outside of our awareness can cause us to make poor decisions, say things we regret, or take actions that cause us or others harm.

You can learn specific skills that can help with “emotion regulation,” that is, controlling your emotions and keeping them more in balance rather than shifting between extremes. In this worksheet, you will learn about the range of emotions and then practice simply observing and naming your own.

## What to Do

In order to manage an emotion, you need to know what it is. The first step in learning emotion regulation is to become familiar with the range of emotions that we can experience. Read the following list of pleasant and unpleasant emotions.

### Pleasant

affectionate  
amused  
appreciative  
calm  
caring  
comfortable  
confident  
curious  
delighted  
empowered  
encouraged  
excited  
friendly  
fulfilled  
grateful  
hopeful  
joyful  
loving

mellow  
open  
optimistic  
passionate  
peaceful  
pleased  
relaxed  
relieved  
rested  
safe  
satisfied  
secure  
strong  
surprised  
thrilled  
trusting  
warm  
Unpleasant  
aggravated

agitated  
ambivalent  
angry  
annoyed  
anxious  
apprehensive  
ashamed  
bad  
bored  
confused  
contemptuous  
depressed  
disappointed  
disconnected  
discouraged  
disgusted  
disheartened  
edgy  
embarrassed

enraged  
exasperated  
exhausted  
frightened  
frustrated  
furious  
guarded  
guilty  
helpless  
impatient

insecure  
irritated  
lonely  
needy  
nervous  
overwhelmed  
remorseful  
resentful  
restless  
sad

scared  
self-conscious  
suspicious  
tense  
terrified  
tired  
uncomfortable  
unhappy  
upset  
vulnerable

Are these feelings all familiar to you? Which ones are? Which ones aren't? Write some reflections on the lines below the list.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Now, note down a few situations or experiences in which you become aware of (notice) your feelings in the coming week. By labeling your feelings, you can use the power of your mind to take a step back and assess (mindfulness), then, over time, learn how to make a good choice about what to do next.

Start with PLEASANT or UNPLEASANT. Then try to identify the general feeling you notice, such as HAPPY, SAD, ANGRY, SCARED. Then, if you feel ready, try to be more specific. Use the above list of feelings as a guide, but feel free to use different words for feelings that come to mind that might not appear on this list.

Day	Situation/experience when you noticed a feeling	Pleasant or unpleasant?	General (happy, sad, angry, scared)	Specific (see list)
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

## Reflections on This Exercise

1. What emotions did you become aware of that you weren't previously aware of?

---

---

---

2. What was the main obstacle you encountered in identifying your emotions?

---

---

---

3. What was easy about it? What would you like to do to continue the practice of naming and noticing your emotions? Be specific.

---

---

---

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?

---

---

---