



Practical guide to managing intense emotions

If emotions overwhelm you, this guide offers practical and proven techniques. Learn to navigate emotional storms with clarity and compassion. With five key steps, you can regain balance when facing anxiety, anger, or sadness.

Managing emotions is a skill that improves with practice. Be patient with yourself; every step is a valuable investment in your emotional well-being.



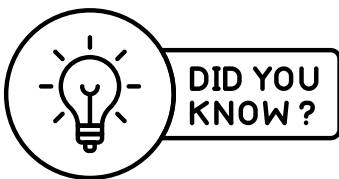


UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING OVERWHELMING EMOTIONS

Overwhelming emotions are intense feelings that, while normal, can affect our judgment and control. They arise from stress, life changes, traumatic events, or even euphoria.

Faced with these emotions, the body activates a "fight or flight" response, releasing stress hormones. This causes racing thoughts, tachycardia, shallow breathing, tension, and a feeling of disconnection. Recognizing these signs is fundamental.

The key is not to suppress emotions, but to recognize, accept, and validate them. Adopting a structured approach helps restore balance and manage them with serenity.



Did you know that...? Naming an emotion ("affective labeling") can reduce its intensity by up to 50%, by activating the prefrontal cortex which regulates the brain's emotional centers.



STEP 1: STOP AND BREATHE

When emotions overwhelm you, the first step is to stop. Although it may seem difficult in moments of stress, pausing breaks the cycle and reduces emotional intensity.



4-7-8 TECHNIQUE

Inhale for 4, hold for 7, exhale for 8. This technique calms your nervous system and reduces stress.

BOX BREATHING

Inhale, hold, exhale, and wait, all for 4 counts. Repeat 4-6 times to feel control and stability.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Breathe by moving only the hand on your abdomen for deeper, more calming breaths.

Choose the technique that feels most natural to you. The goal is to pause and allow your nervous system to calm down. Even 30 seconds of conscious breathing can make a big difference.





STEP 2: NAME THE EMOTION

After taking a breath, name the emotion you are feeling. This "emotional labeling" is powerful: by putting words to it, we go from being controlled by the emotion to having control over it.

Be as specific as possible. Instead of saying "I feel bad," identify if it's anxiety, frustration, disappointment, overwhelm, sadness, or anger. Feeling several emotions at once is normal.

For example: "I feel anxiety about the presentation and frustration about the lack of time." This specificity helps the brain better process emotions and find solutions.



Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

- Viktor Frankl



STEP 3: STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH DIFFERENT EMOTIONS

Once the emotion is identified, choose coping strategies. Each emotion requires a different approach. The key is to have varied tools and know which one to use in each situation.



COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Challenge negative thoughts, practice positive self-talk, and solve problems. Ask yourself: "Is this thought helpful?"

PHYSICAL STRATEGIES

Move, relax muscles, take a shower, or do yoga. Physical activity reduces stress and improves mood.



SOCIAL STRATEGIES

Connect with friends, family, or support groups. Seek professional help. Connection reminds us that we are not alone.

MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES

Practice mindfulness, meditation, grounding techniques, or gratitude exercises. This creates distance from the emotion.





EMOTIONS AND SIGNALS

ANXIETY

Physical signals: Racing heart, shallow breathing, sweating, butterflies in the stomach.

Mental signals: Racing, catastrophic thoughts, difficulty concentrating.

Behavioural signals: Restlessness, avoidance, excessive reassurance seeking.

ANGER

Physical signals: Clenched jaw, tense muscles, facial heat, accelerated pulse.

Mental signals: Thoughts of blame, feeling wronged, desire for revenge.

Behavioural signals: Loud voice, aggressive posture, reactive impulses.

SADNESS/GRIEF

Physical signals: Heavy chest, fatigue, tears, loss of appetite.

Mental signals: Hopeless thoughts, rumination on loss, feeling of emptiness.

Behavioural signals: Isolation, decreased activity, crying.

OVERWHELM

Physical signals: Tension headache, shallow breathing, feeling of paralysis.

Mental signals: Thoughts of "too much," difficulty prioritizing, confusion.

Behavioural signals: Procrastination, starting multiple tasks, giving up easily.



SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR COMMON OVERWHELMING EMOTIONS



FOR ANXIETY

- Use the 5-4-3-2-1 technique to ground yourself.
- Challenge catastrophic thoughts.
- Dedicate 15 minutes daily to the "worry window."
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation.



FOR ANGER

- Apply the S-T-O-P technique (Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed).
- Express anger in a safe way (exercise, writing, talking).
- Try to understand the other person's point of view.
- Use "I statements" when communicating.



FOR SADNESS

- Allow yourself to feel and express the emotion.
- Engage in gentle self-care activities.
- Connect with supportive people.
- Reflect on the message behind your sadness.



STEP 4: IMPLEMENT YOUR STRATEGY

It's time to act. Choose one or two strategies from your emotional toolkit and fully implement them. It's better to apply one technique thoroughly than to try several halfway.

Prioritize strategies that are most accessible to you. For example, in public, breathing exercises or cognitive techniques are more appropriate than physical movement. At home, you have more options.

Some strategies work immediately, others take longer. Be patient. If one doesn't work, try another; flexibility is key in emotional management.

CHOOSE YOUR STRATEGY

Select 1 or 2 techniques suitable for your situation and emotional state.

1

2

COMMIT

Dedicate your full attention to the chosen strategy for at least 5-10 minutes.

STAY PRESENT

Focus on the technique, not the outcome. Trust the process.

3

4

BE FLEXIBLE

If one approach doesn't work, switch to another without judgment.



STEP 5: RE-EVALUATE WITH A BODY SCAN

After applying your coping strategy, do a body scan. This technique helps you assess how the overwhelming emotion has changed and what you need next.



STAR WITH THE HEAD

Begin at the crown of your head. Observe any sensations (tension, warmth, tingling, relaxation) without judgment.

1

2

CONTINUE TO THE FACE

Examine your forehead, eyes, jaw, and neck. Are they relaxed or tense from the emotion?



3

SCAN THE TORSO

Observe your shoulders, chest, and stomach. How does your breathing feel? Is there lightness or heaviness?



CHECK THE LIMBS

5



4

Pay attention to your arms and legs. Do they feel heavy, light, tense, or relaxed? Note any changes.



OVERALL ASSESSMENT

How do you feel now compared to the beginning? What does your body tell you about your current emotional state?



MOVING FORWARD: DEVELOPING YOUR EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

Congratulations on learning these five key points for managing intense emotions. Like any skill, emotional regulation improves with practice.

Experiencing intense emotions doesn't make you weak; it makes you human. These feelings often reveal your needs or boundaries. By learning to work with them, you cultivate wisdom and emotional resilience.

Consider keeping an emotion journal to identify your triggers and the most effective strategies. This information is valuable for future challenges.

PRACTICE REGULARLY

Use these techniques during times of lower intensity to strengthen your skills before major challenges.

BE COMPASSIONATE

Treat yourself with the same kindness you would offer a friend.

SEEK SUPPORT

Don't hesitate to consult mental health professionals if emotions become difficult to manage.

