

How to regulate your emotions.

Relevant to: Depression:  Anxiety:  Irritability/Anger:  General emotional control: 

It is important to develop our ability to regulate our emotions, and there are several ways of developing it, all of them important.

ABC PLEASE, one of Linehan's great acronym's, ABC standing for:

Accumulate positive emotions.
Build mastery, so you feel more competent and effective.
Cope ahead: develop a plan to cope with difficult situations.

And PLEASE take care of your body:

Physical illness, treat it if possible.
Eat healthily.
Altering-mood substances, avoid them!
Sleep well.
Exercise, get it!



A is for Accumulate positive emotions,

for instance by learning how to do pleasant activities:

- Have a list of activities you find pleasant.
- Schedule activities into your day.
- Immerse yourself fully in the activity.
- Apply mindfulness to enjoy the activity.
- Apply mindfulness so that you don't think of things that would spoil the activity for you.
- Find activities that other people find pleasant as well, so that you can do them together.

B is for Build mastery,

for example by:

- Planning out at least one goal for the day – and doing it.
- Succeeding at things, by planning things you can do. Things that are worth achieving and achievable.
- Grading the difficulty level of tasks you tackle: if you can manage a bit more difficult (and rewarding) do that; if you need to make it a bit easier do that.
- Looking for challenges, so long as they have a good payoff for you.

C is for Cope ahead,

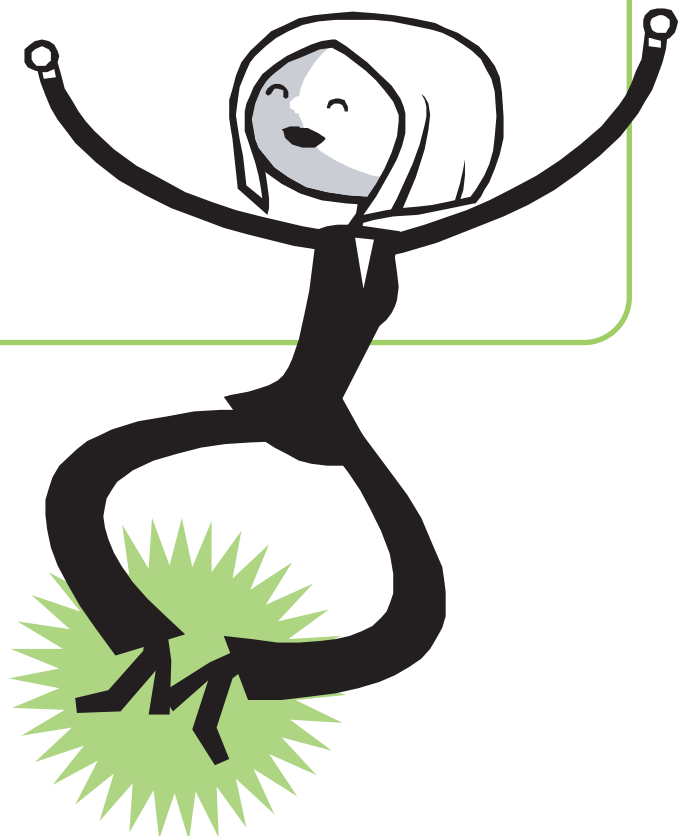
with a sequence as follows:

- Notice an upcoming situation that you will find difficult. Describe why it will be difficult.
- Plan out what skills you need to cope with the situation.
- Mentally rehearse using these skills in the situation.
- Apply the skills in the situation.
- Review how well you did and what you could do better next time.

Suggested Projects:

Regulating our emotions is so important that it's worth working at some interesting projects, for instance:

- Learning what ABC PLEASE stands for.
- Accumulating positive emotions by practising doing what it says under that heading.
- Building Mastery by getting in the habit of doing what it says under B: Build Mastery.
- Coping ahead, by practising what it says under C: Cope ahead.
- Practising the PLEASE part of the ABC PLEASE by doing what it says to look after your body.



Mythbuster

Myth: Some people are just born unable to regulate their emotions, there's nothing you can do about it.

Not true: there may be a biological element to it, but there is a lot we can do to smooth out our emotions.

Acknowledgement.

The information on this sheet is largely based on the work of Marsha Linehan, author of Dialectical Behavior Therapy.