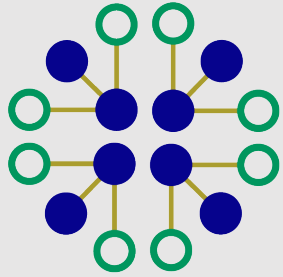


**Community
Mental Health**
FOR CENTRAL MICHIGAN

Teaching Emotional Regulation to Consumers



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What is Emotional Regulation?

What is Emotion Regulation?

- The ability to exert control over one's emotional states
- Typically reducing intensity of emotions (i.e. anger, sadness, etc.)
- Examples
 - Deep breathing
 - Stepping away
 - Reframing events
- Nonexamples
 - Road rage



Why Does Emotion Regulation Matter?

- Lack of emotion regulation
 - Escalation of emotions
 - Unsafe behaviors
 - Emotions lingering
- Effective emotion regulation
 - Process emotions faster
 - Engage in behaviors that matter to you



Recognizing Dysregulation

- What can dysregulation look like?
 - Different stages of dysregulation
- What can lead to dysregulation?
 - Internal
 - External



Emotion Dysregulation is Normal

- We all become dysregulated at times
 - Some of us are better at regulating our emotions than others
 - Not static, everyone has good days and bad days
- Triggers can be internal or external
 - Distressing thoughts/memories
 - Physiological sensations
 - Upsetting situations
 - Overstimulation



Considerations for Consumers

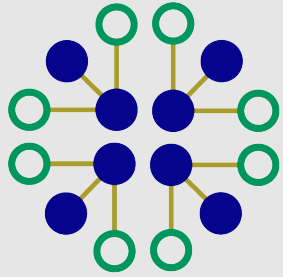
- Many consumer's lack awareness of their emotions
 - Difficulty recognizing when they are becoming dysregulated
- Sometimes limited ability to communicate needs
- They use whatever strategies they have
 - Not trying to be annoying or rude



Overall Goals of Emotion Regulation

- The goal is not to stop an emotion
- Overall goal is to accept, process, and respond to the emotion
 - Up and down regulating
- Acknowledging consumer emotions can impact support staff emotions
 - Can be hard to help someone regulate





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What Does Emotional Regulation Look Like?



Common Referrals at CMH

- Aggression
- Self-harm
- Eloping
- PICA





Emotion Regulation is a Skill

- Everyone struggles
- Emotion regulation strategies have a function
- Is a skill that can be taught and strengthened





Helpful Emotion Regulation Strategies

- Redirecting to another task (e.g., listen to music, paint)
- Use sensory toys or put on headphones when sensory overwhelm
- Talk with trusted support (e.g., staff)
- What are some positive strategies that consumers use?





Unhelpful Emotion Regulation Strategies

- Eloping – needing a break or space
- Self-Harm – sensory/grounding
- Aggression (verbal/physical) – keep somebody protected/express anger
- Attention-seeking – connection-seeking
- Substance Use – suppress emotions





Visualizing Levels of Distress





Best time to teach strategies

- When consumer is calm and wants to interact
- Avoid in these situations:
 - During crisis
 - Consumer is engaged in or wants to do another activity
 - Loud TV/noises in background





Strategies when consumer is calm

- This is when you would practice and teach new strategies
- Redirecting to positive activity (e.g., music, coloring)
- Offer to talk about emotions and validate concerns (it's normal to be angry sometimes!)
- Take a break from situation
- Find a quiet space
- Taking slow breaths
- Others? What have you used?

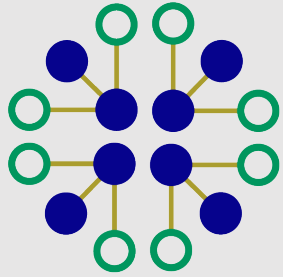




Strategies are not just for consumers!

- We all need coping strategies for high-stress moments
- Model positive emotion regulation skills
 - Use calm tone of voice
 - Validate and listen
- What can you do if you feel overwhelmed?





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Supporting Dysregulated
Consumers in the Moment

Visualizing Levels of Distress



Person is at
their baseline.

Person shows
signs they are
starting to
escalate.

Person's
statements or
behaviors show
they are upset.



Each Person is Different



- Things upset some of us more than others.
- Some of us escalate faster than others.
- Some of us calm down quick while others need more time.
- Certain emotions or events are more distressing than others.





Strategies: Getting Upset

Assess if a Response is Needed (or Helpful)

Verbal Prompting, Reminders and Validation

- Acknowledge emotions.
- Remind them of coping skills.
- Remind them of their goals.
- Redirect to calming or preferred activities.





Strategies: Getting Upset

Emotional Reflection and Support

- Listen.
- Validate emotions.
- Help them name or describe emotions.
- Allow space to be mad, sad, etc.
- Learn about what upset them.
- Ask them how they would like help.





Strategies: Getting Upset

Excitement or Sensory-Based Dysregulation

- Share and model appropriate excitement.
- Discuss why a calm body or careful actions is helpful.
- Talk in a calm tone of voice, potentially talking slower.
- Stretch, deep breathe, or do a grounding exercise together.
- Assess if there are distractions or triggers in the environment.





Strategies: Dysregulated

General Strategies

- Give options and make request rather than demanding.
- Redirect to what is available to the person.
- Continue to show/express support through validating statements.
- Monitor to see if they need time/space alone.
- Reduce or stop demands.
- Avoid complicated instructions or asking questions too quickly.
- Provide verbal praise when making safe choices.



Strategies: Dysregulated

Anger and Aggression

- Monitor placement of staff, environment, and people.
- Avoid phrases using words like “no” or “not now”.
- Increase physical space between them and others.
- Discretely remove items that could be thrown or used as a weapon.
- Use short, concrete phrases to tell consumer what behavior you are looking for.
 - “Put the chair down” or “Put your hands down”
 - “Safe hands” or “Gentle hands”



Strategies: Dysregulated

Monitor Staff Reactions

- Facial expression, tone of voice, body language, phrasing prompts.
- Limit long conversations or explanations, unless this is a way for the person to regulate.
- Note when staff need a break or need to “tag in” another staff member.
- Limit the number of staff providing prompts and redirection.
- Assist person to regulate rather making it a “teaching moment”.



Visualizing Levels of Distress



When Safety is Priority

- Teaching new, safe behaviors takes time.
 - It can be difficult to replace old ways of behaving.
- Behaviors may happen while learning new skills.
- Monitor for safety concerns.



When Safety is Priority

If a person is significantly upset to the point that safety is a concern, staff should focus on preserving the safety of the consumer and others.

- If the person threaten self-harm.
- If the person are engaging in significantly unsafe behaviors.
- If they are engaging in physically aggressive behaviors that are put themselves or others at significant risk of harm.



When Safety is Priority

CMHCM Crisis Center Hotline at 800-317-0708

CMIT (Crisis Mobilization Intervention Team)

If there is an imminent risk of severe physical harm, staff should implement the least restrictive techniques necessary to maintain safety and avoid injury.

- Emergency response policies
- Emergency Responders (e.g., 911)



Supporting Change can be Difficult

- Try not to take upsetting statements personally.
- Communicate and share tips/tricks
- Monitor your mood and physiological response
 - Take care of yourself.
- Acknowledge successes together (even if it is not perfect).
- Document
 - Incident Reports, Behavioral Data, Shift Notes



Questions?

