mindhealth FACT SHEET

EMOTIONS · RIDING THE WAVES

Emotional regulation

You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf them.



Big, fast waves
Emotions that arrive at full volume

Hard to self-soothe
Taking a long time to settle

React, then regret
Acting on the feeling in the moment

01 Emotions are messengers

Every emotion carries information: fear points to threat, sadness to loss, anger to a crossed boundary. None of them are "bad," and none last forever. Emotional regulation isn't about numbing feelings or forcing yourself to be calm; it is about feeling them without being swept away, so you can choose your response rather than be run by it.

02 Every emotion is a wave

Left alone, an emotion rises, peaks and falls, often within minutes. We get into trouble when we pour fuel on it by replaying the story, or fight it with "I shouldn't feel this," which keeps it burning. Naming the emotion and letting it move through the body (riding the wave) helps it pass far sooner than battling it does.

03 What genuinely helps

- ✓ Naming the emotion: "name it to tame it"
- ✓ Riding the wave instead of fighting or feeding it
- ✓ Slowing the body: breath, cold water, movement
- ✓ A deliberate pause between the feeling and the action
- ✓ Skills-based therapy (such as DBT) when waves feel huge

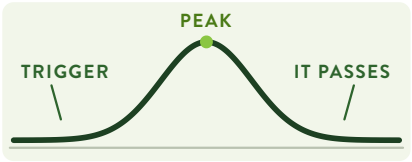
A PRACTICAL STORY

From swept away to riding the wave



THE SHAPE

Surf the wave



AN EMOTION IS A WAVE

name it · ride it · it always falls

An emotion rises, peaks and passes. Naming it and riding it out lets the wave fall on its own.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Name it to tame it

1. Pause and name what you feel
2. Let the wave rise: don't act yet
3. Breathe slowly until it crests and falls

Feelings are visitors, not residents.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If emotions feel overwhelming or hard to manage, skills-based support can make a real difference. Ask your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan to see a psychologist.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), built around skills for managing strong emotions, was developed by psychologist Marsha Linehan; her treatment manual came out in 1993.

Linehan, Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder, 1993

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

Feelings are visitors. You can let them arrive, and let them leave, without acting on every one.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

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