




WEEK 7: Staying on Top of Emotions

my
TAKING
CARE
worksheet

aka: "Feelings are like waves. We can't stop them from coming, but we can choose which ones to surf."

Think about your upcoming week.
PLANNING
is an antidote to
OVERWHELM.

 Weekly Goal	 Possibilities + Problems	 Fun Stuff



Key Messages

Strategies for Regulating Emotions

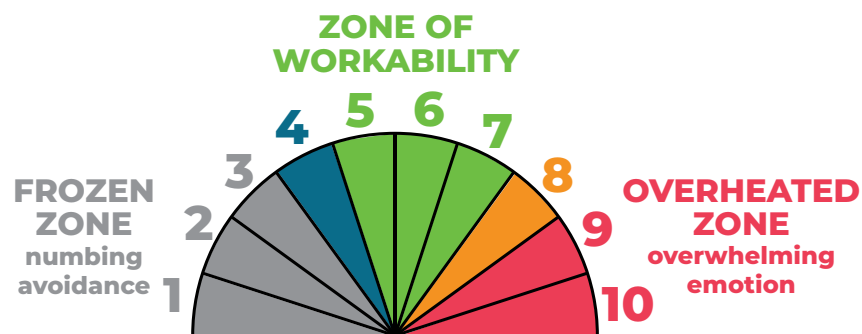
- ✓ The idea behind regulating emotions is not to suppress or to deny our emotions, but to turn *toward them*. We want to face our feelings with courtesy, self-respect, and kindness.
- ✓ When we begin to explore our feelings on a regular basis, we often find that they are less intense than we had imagined.
- ✓ We can identify scenarios where we are likely to experience intense emotions.
- ✓ By preparing in advance, we can use healthier approaches to expand our toolbox.
- ✓ It's not how we feel that causes problems, it's what we *DO* that matters.



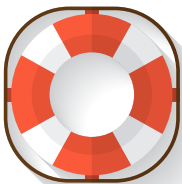
Managing Strong Emotions

1 Awareness

- ✓ Identify what zone you are in by noticing your thoughts, actions, body sensations, and feelings.



- ✓ What is your usual range of zones?
- ✓ When irritated or angry, where do you go on the dial? Do you jump immediately to the **OVERHEATED ZONE**? Or do you go in the opposite direction, to the **FROZEN ZONE**, and avoid expressing strong emotions altogether?
- ✓ What are you feeling? What is the sensation in your body? Refer to Page 4 of this session for a list of emotions you might be feeling.
- ✓ Identify **SET OFF SCENARIOS (SOS)**. Notice when you feel particularly upset, when you react at lightening speed, and when you shift out of your **ZONE OF WORKABILITY**. This situation is an **SOS!**



2 Look in Your Toolbox

- ✓ Reflect on what thoughts and behaviours you already use that could bring you back to your **ZONE OF WORKABILITY**.





Managing Strong Emotions

3 Practice Strategies

- ✓ Challenge yourself to try out a new approach to dealing with intense emotions.
- ✓ Practice the strategies on Pages 6–11 of this session to develop emotional flexibility and to expand your reaction toolkit.

4 Practice Self Compassion

- ✓ Learning to manage intense emotions is a **PROCESS**. Time and practice are required.
- ✓ There will always be challenges, opportunities, and room for improvement.





Labelling Emotions

JOY

amused
blissful
cheerful
connected
delighted
eager
ecstatic
elated
energized
enthused
euphoric
excited
exhilarated
friendly
gay
glad
gleeful
happy
hopeful
jolly
joyful
jubilant
optimistic
proud
rapturous
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
thankful
zany
zestful

ANGER

aggravated
aggressive
bitter
defensive
disrespected
enraged
exasperated
frustrated
furious
grouchy
hateful
hostile
irritated
jealous
mad
outraged
resentful
scornful
vengeful
wrathful

FEAR

afraid
anxious
apprehensive
dreading
edgy
frightened
horrified
insecure
jumpy
nervous
overwhelmed
panicky
scared
shocked
terrified
uneasy
worried

SADNESS

agonized
apathetic
blue
crushed
defeated
dejected
depressed
despairing
disappointed
discontented
disheartened
disillusioned
dismayed
displeased
gloomy
glum
grief-stricken
hopeless
hurt
melancholic
miserable
sorrowful
unhappy
woeful

SHAME

abashed
ashamed
bad
chagrined
discomposd
disgraceful
dishonourable
embarrassed
horrible
humiliated
ignominious
mortified
sheepish

GUILT

blameworthy
censurable
contrite
culpable
delinquent
liable
penitent
regretful
remorseful
reprehensible
rueful
sinful
sorry
treacherous
wrong

If you can name it, you can tame it!
~ Dr. Daniel Siegel, Psychiatrist/Author



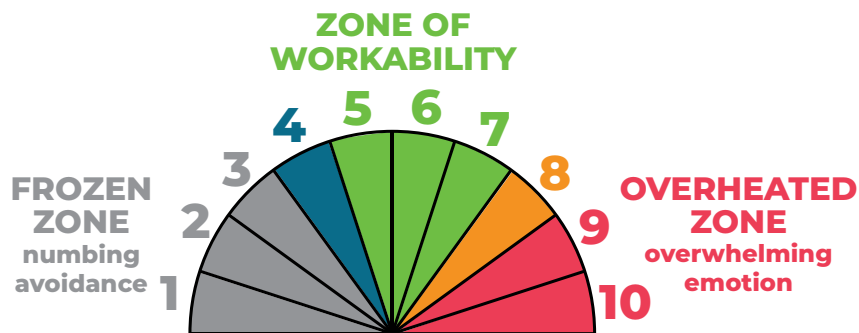
Set Off Scenarios (SOS)



Strategies to regulate emotions can be broken down into tools you can use **before**, **during**, and **after** an **SOS**.

The charts on the next few pages will help you to figure out which strategies you can use before, during, and after an **SOS** occurs. The charts also break down the strategies within each timeframe into things you can do to **Change Yourself** and things you can do to **Change Your Situation**. These strategies will help you to expand your toolkit of responses in difficult situations.

Refer to the table on Page 6 of this session for a summary of the strategies before, during and after an **SOS**.





Summary of SOS Strategies

	BEFORE SOS Look/Think Ahead	DURING SOS Notice/Be Present	AFTER SOS Reflect/Revise	
CHANGE YOURSELF		STOP	p62	
		CALM BODY (i.e. BOX BREATHING)	p51	
		COGNITIVE REFRAME (TAKE PERSPECTIVE, THEN REFRAME)	p63	
		COPING THOUGHTS	p63	
		DISTRACT/ CHANGE FOCUS	p66	
		DISTRACT/ SENSORY AWARENESS	p66	
		BE ASSERTIVE (DESC)	p63	
			ROLL WITH IT	p69
			PRACTICE SELF- COMPASSION	p57
			REPAIR (HEART)	p69
CHANGE YOUR SITUATION	AVOID	ESCAPE/ TAKE A BREAK	AVOID	
	CHANGE		CHANGE	



BEFORE SOS

LOOK/THINK AHEAD

What could set you off? Close your eyes and visualize the situation:

- ✓ Who is there?
- ✓ What are they doing?
- ✓ What are they saying?
- ✓ What emotions are they showing?

What difficult feelings are showing up for you? What feelings might show up? See Week 7 Page 4.

CONSIDER STRATEGIES

Look at the following strategies and consider which ones you could use before you get into a difficult situation. You'll need to anticipate problems and remain aware, which will take some practice. For example, you may need to:

- ✓ **Notice** to develop more awareness
- ✓ Use **Calm Body** to help you stay calm and focused
- ✓ Come up with **Coping Thoughts** ahead of time
- ✓ Prepare to **Be Assertive**



BEFORE SOS STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOURSELF

NOTICE (STOP)

Notice your thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and behaviour without trying to change anything. You may find the STOP technique helpful to use.



thoughts

What thoughts/
images
are going through
my mind?

emotions

How am I feeling
right now?

body

What physical
sensations do I
feel in my body?

I will do a quick
body scan
and notice my
heart rate, any
muscle tension,
or other physical
reactions.

behaviour

What am I doing?



BEFORE SOS STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOURSELF

CALM BODY (4-7-8 BREATHING)

- ✓ Notice and then slow down your breathing. Breathe out for longer than you breathe in. Repeat a few times.
- ✓ With your mouth closed, inhale through your nose while counting to four in your head.
- ✓ Hold your breath for a count of seven.



- ✓ Exhale through your mouth, making a whoosh sound for a count of eight.
- ✓ Repeat this process three or four times. If you find this exercise difficult, count faster, but keep the speed of counting the same for each of the three parts.



COGNITIVE REFRAME (TAKE PERSPECTIVE, THEN REFRAME)

- ✓ **Take Perspective:** How would someone I look up to handle this situation? What would I want to be treated if I made a mistake?
- ✓ **Reframe:** People are not necessarily trying to annoy me.

COPING THOUGHTS (POSITIVE SELF-TALK)

- ✓ Remind yourself of a strength or tool you have:
 - ✓ "I have a few different tools I can use to get myself through this situation."
 - ✓ "I am respected by many people."



BE ASSERTIVE (DESC)

Express yourself in a way that doesn't attack others or minimize your needs.

Practice the DESC Script in Week 5 Page 4, to talk about a problem with someone. Aim for one sentence for each step:

DESC = Describe. Explain. Specify. Consequence.



BEFORE SOS STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION

AVOID SITUATION

- ✓ Some situations may be so difficult that you may need to avoid them. If you identify a recurring pattern that leads to an **SOS**, consider not putting yourself in that position anymore.
- ✓ Ask yourself:
 - ✓ “Do I really need to do this thing?”
 - ✓ “Is this thing essential?”
 - ✓ “What will be the consequences if I don’t do this thing?”
- ✓ On the other hand, if you are avoiding certain situations repeatedly, it could be time to learn or use other strategies.



CHANGE SITUATION

- ✓ Sometimes changing things about the situation can reduce an SOS. Ask yourself:
 - ✓ “Can I change the time of the meeting?”
 - ✓ “Can I shorten the length of the meeting?”
 - ✓ “Can I bring someone with me?”
 - ✓ “Can I avoid certain people at the meeting by sitting away from them?”
 - ✓ “Can I bring a distraction or soothing tool to the meeting?”



DURING SOS STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION



NOTICE (STOP)/BE PRESENT

- ✓ Use the STOP Technique in the moment (Week 7 Page 8) to be aware of difficult thoughts, feelings, or body sensations that are showing up during the situation.
- ✓ It will take considerable practice to remember to use this technique. Try using a visual cue as a reminder: write STOP on a sticky note for your fridge or computer, wear a red ribbon around your wrist, write STOP in a reminder app, or put a red dot on your hand.

CONSIDER STRATEGIES

If you're having trouble thinking in the moment, ask yourself:

- ✓ Can I change myself, i.e. my thoughts, body sensations, and/or behaviour?
- ✓ Can I leave the situation?



DURING SOS STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOURSELF

NOTICE (STOP)

Week 7 Page 8

CALM BODY (4-7-8 BREATHING)

Week 7 Page 9

COGNITIVE REFRAME (TAKE PERSPECTIVE, THEN REFRAME)

Week 7 Page 9

COPING THOUGHTS (POSITIVE SELF-TALK)

Week 7 Page 9

BE ASSERTIVE (DESC)

Week 7 Page 9



DISTRACT/CHANGE FOCUS

- ✓ Explore something in the environment using all five of your senses.
- ✓ Play a distracting game on your phone.
- ✓ Listen to music with lyrics on headphones.
- ✓ Check your social media feed.
- ✓ Watch people walking by and try and guess their names or where they are going.

DISTRACT/SENSORY AWARENESS

- ✓ Look at anything close by—a tree, a traffic light, or a wrapper on the ground—and absorb it using all of your senses. What would it feel, smell, taste, or sound like?





DURING SOS **STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION**

ESCAPE/TAKE A BREAK

- ✓ It is reasonable to leave a situation and give yourself a break when you feel you are in an **SOS** and are too upset to use other tools.
- ✓ If the **SOS** is recurring and involves a close personal relationship, talk about having a **take a break cue** (a word or hand signal) to use in these situations.





AFTER SOS

REFLECT/REVISE

- ✓ Notice (i.e. STOP Technique: Week 7 Page 8) after the moment to become aware of the difficult thoughts, feelings, and body sensations that are showing up. Ask yourself:
 - ✓ Am I being too hard on myself? (check for Catastrophizing, Magnification, or Labelling)
 - ✓ Am I minimizing inappropriate or unfair behaviour toward others?
- ✓ If you lost control of your feelings and behaved in a way that hurt someone, review the strategies that you can use.

CONSIDER STRATEGIES

- ✓ What can I change about myself right now? (thoughts, body sensations, behaviour)
- ✓ How can I avoid or change the situation in the future?



AFTER SOS STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOURSELF

NOTICE (STOP)

Week 7 Page 8

CALM BODY (4-7-8 BREATHING)

Week 7 Page 9

COGNITIVE REFRAME (TAKE PERSPECTIVE, THEN REFRAME)

Week 7 Page 9

COPING THOUGHTS (POSITIVE SELF-TALK)

Week 7 Page 9

BE ASSERTIVE (DESC)

Week 7 Page 9

DISTRACT/CHANGE FOCUS

Week 7 Page 12

DISTRACT/SENSORY AWARENESS

Week 7 Page 12

ROLL WITH IT

- ✓ Accept that everybody has flaws. Decide to let it go, even just this once
- ✓ Think of this problem as one grain of sand in a very large ocean.

PRACTICE SELF COMPASSION

Week 7 Page 3



REPAIR (HEART ACRONYM)

Sometimes, things don't go the way you wanted them to. You lose your cool and regret how you acted. You may feel shame. Being hard on yourself won't change anything, it will only make things worse. Follow these steps to make a reparation.

HEART =

H – HEAR the person out if they want to vent when you contact them. It may not be easy to do. Use other strategies in this section to cope, such as Calm Body.

E – EMPATHIZE. Put yourself in the person's shoes and name their feelings.
"I understand that you are really upset."

A – APOLOGIZE. Using an 'I' statement, be brief and sincere. "I realize that I hurt your feelings and I am sorry."

R – RESOLVE. If relevant, try to fix the problem. Ask, "What can I do to make this situation right?"

T – THANK them for giving you the chance to talk.



AFTER SOS **STRATEGIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION**

REMEDIATE SITUATION

Week 7 Page 10

CHANGE SITUATION

Week 7 Page 10

PLAN TO CHANGE SITUATION NEXT TIME

Week 7 Page 10



Key Points

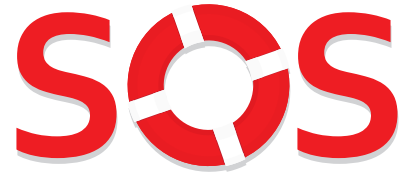
REGULATING EMOTIONS

KEY POINTS

- 1** Feelings are not facts.
- 2** Feelings get less intense over time.
- 3** Ignoring your feelings and negative thoughts over time can make them worse.
- 4** Combine the tools if you find that helpful.
- 5** Practice, practice, practice!
- 6** Remind yourself that it is good to face these tricky situations. Stay present and calm. Use the Mona Lisa smile!



DEEPER DIVE!
Regulating Emotions



2 SET OFF SCENARIOS (SOS)

- ✓ Complete your own **Staying on Top of Emotions Strategies Chart** for an **SOS** that happen this week. It could be a situation you handled to your satisfaction, or an incident where you would like to add some new tools. Refer to the Summary of **SOS** Strategies Chart on Pages 6 for guidance.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION STRATEGIES CHART

SOS	THOUGHTS	FEELINGS	BEHAVIOURS	BODY SENSATIONS	STRATEGY THAT I WILL APPLY

