

# Emotion Regulation Skills Activity Guide Grade 6-12



# Know Your Neuro

## Quiz Questions

1. What are emotions? **Answer:** Emotions are energy that give us information. They are neurophysiological responses to our thoughts and experiences.
2. Can emotions be controlled? **Answer:** Yes! Even though many emotional responses occur outside of conscious awareness, they can be brought into conscious awareness, reflected upon, and altered or regulated.
3. How can emotions affect the body? **Answer:** Emotions can cause increased heart rate, sweating, shortness of breath, butterfly or sick sensations in the stomach, and tightness in different parts of the body.
4. What is emotional literacy? **Answer:** The ability to consciously identify and label an emotion and it's corresponding physiological need. Simply put, emotional literacy means that someone can name their emotion and understand what their body needs in response to it.
5. How are emotions related to the frontal lobe? **Answer:** Emotion regulation is an executive function skill of the frontal lobe. It improves as the frontal lobe develops and increases it's ability to consciously reflect on emotional responses.
6. What is emotion regulation? **Answer:** The ability to reflect on experiences before reacting out of emotion, and then using good judgment to respond in a mature manner.
7. What is Alexithymia? **Answer:** Problems identifying, describing, and processing one's emotions.



## Activities

### Brainstorm Situations

Ask students to divide into pairs or small groups. Ask them to identify situations that are the most difficult to regulate emotions in. Challenge them to discuss why and what the emotion regulation obstacles are.

### Brainstorm Tools

Keep students in the same pairs or groups as above, or do this activity as a whole class. Give students two minutes to think of as many tools to regulate emotions as they can. Discuss the pros and cons of each.

### Brainstorm Benefits

Keep students in the same pairs or groups as above, or do this activity as a whole class. Ask students to think of as many benefits that result from good emotion regulation skills.

### Reframe Game

When we change the way we look at a situation, it not only changes the situation, it also changes the way we feel about that situation. Reframing, otherwise known as cognitive reappraisal, is reinterpreting a potentially emotion-eliciting situation in a way that alters its meaning and changes its emotional impact.

In a group, discuss how students could reframe or see the following situations differently in order to change or reduce emotional responses:

- A family member is grumpy and yells at you to get your chores done.
- Someone you like does not like you back.
- A friend says something rude or mean.
- A teacher gives you a bad grade.
- You find out that you did not make a team that you really wanted to be on.
- A checkout line is taking forever.

### Discussion Questions

- On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best, rate your emotion regulation skills.
- How well do you reflect on your emotional reactions?
- Does being around certain people affect your emotion regulation? Why?
- How does lack of sleep or food affect your emotion regulation skills?
- When have you reacted out of negative emotions and what were the consequences?
- How well do you reframe or cognitively reappraise situations to change how you think and feel about them?
- What is your favorite technique for regulating emotions?
- What are healthy ways to regulate emotions? What are unhealthy ways to regulate emotions?