



FACE

Focus and Calm Emotion

The following technique helps you to recognize when an emotion that you are having difficulty controlling is being triggered and how to calm your emotion before it is too late. You will learn how to use your body to relax your mind. And, you will learn how to use the Emotional Control Scale.

It is recommended that once you learn this technique, code some alarms in your smartphone (e.g., 2 in the morning, two in the afternoon, and two in the evening) and check in with your Emotional Control Scale. If outside the green (Go) zone, use this technique to return yourself to the green zone. What you practice, becomes habit. This will help you develop body and emotion awareness.

Why do emotions get out of control?

Emotional reactivity or overwhelm occurs when something occurs in your life that makes you feel that you are not safe. When you do not feel safe you can react with anxiety or fear, anger, jealousy, and other emotions. With all of that emotional stress, your body reacts by tightening up (getting ready for action).

This tightening up is your emotional brain reacting with the fight/flight/freeze response. When your brain reacts with this survival response, your thinking brain goes off line and your emotional brain prepares your body to run or fight. In other words, you respond without thinking; i.e., reacting in old, familiar behaviors that may not be the most beneficial to you.

Important points to be aware of for FACE

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| 1) Name the emotion you are experiencing | 4) Focus on centering/grounding your body. |
| 2) Be aware of and accept feedback from your body | 5) Use calming visualization |
| 3) Focus on breath | 6) Check your Emotional Control Scale |

What are the steps?

- 1) Identify the emotion you want to learn to calm (circle or write down the emotion)

Anger Sadness Anxiety Lonely Shame Jealousy Other _____

- 2) Think back to a time when you when you were overwhelmed by the emotion identified and visually go back frame by frame to the how your body reacted before you became aware of your emotionally reaction; e.g., did you clench your fists, did your face become flushed, did you heart start beating faster.

Where in your body did you react? _____

How did your body react? _____

- 3) What color do you most associate with calmness? _____

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- 4) Now that you know how your body reacts before you become aware of the emotion you want to manage better, learn to become very body aware and alert for this body response.

In Action:

- 5) When you feel your body responding in the way you have identified, take three deep belly breaths (breathing in your stomach pushes outward; breathing out your stomach drops downward). To stay focused on your breath and your body. You may want to say silently to yourself “IN” when you breathe in and “OUT” when you breathe out.

When your fight/flight/freeze response is triggered, your body releases stress chemicals which help to prepare your body to run or fight. The deep breathing tells your body to release calming chemicals that help to relieve your survival response.

- 6) Between breaths, consciously relax your body. Do not tell your mind to relax. Physically let your muscles loosen in your body; particularly your face, shoulders, chest, back, and arms (your upper body). You cannot be relaxed and tensed at the same time.
- 7) As you relax your body, distribute your weight evenly as you feel your body becoming solid and centered with the ground. Centering helps you to focus on your body rather than the thoughts that may be racing through your mind.
- 8) As you become centered and grounded and continue with your three deep breaths, imagine the calming color you named fully surrounding your body.
- 9) When you complete your three deep breaths and remaining centered and grounded, check in with yourself and your emotion using the following scale.
- 10) If you are not in the green go zone (1-4), repeat steps 5-9 until you are within the go zone.

EMOTIONAL CONTROL SCALE

Emotional Level									
Go Zone				Caution Zone			Danger Zone		
Calm Emotions				Elevated Emotion but Somewhat Manageable			Worst Emotion, Rational Thinking Offline		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thinking Clearly				Thinking becomes Clouded			Reacting without Thinking		
Go Zone				Caution Zone			Danger Zone		
Personal Control Level									