

### **MODULE 3-EMOTIONS: How You Can Notice, Manage and Tolerate Difficult Emotions.**

It is likely that you are going to experience a range of emotions during this crisis. As I mentioned at the beginning a lot of us will have experienced change, loss and grief. When people are grieving emotions can change quite quickly and it is perfectly normal to feel angry, sad or anxious at times.

Sometimes when people feel painful or difficult emotions, they try to block them. People who were not encouraged by their parents to openly express and manage emotions effectively may be more likely to struggle with emotional regulation.

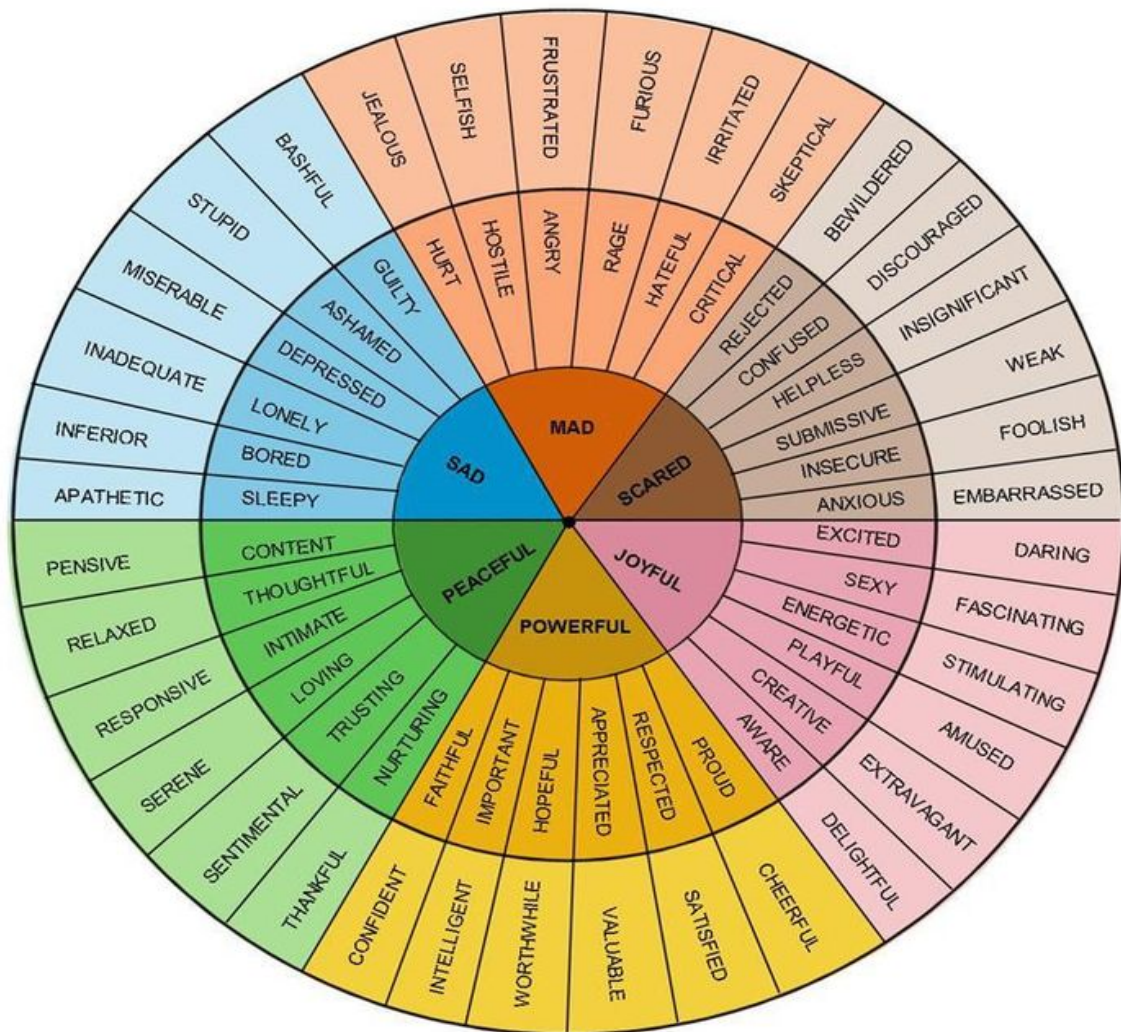
It is really important that we let ourselves feel these emotions, sit with them, find effective ways to move past them and accept them. All emotions have a shelf life and are short term. We do not need to be afraid of our feelings and we can learn to manage them.

If you have children and are aware that you yourself are emotionally avoidant. Try and encourage them to talk about how they feel so you can help them to develop these important skills.

Don't allow difficult feelings to bottle up. It can help to speak to a trusted friend or family member on the phone if you are having a difficult day. Having someone listen to and validate your feelings is extremely helpful at times of stress.

#### **a) Emotions Wheel:**

If you are unsure about what the different types of emotions are and which ones you experience most often it would be helpful to complete an emotions wheel for one week. Print this wheel and colour in the different emotions you experience.



## THE FEELING WHEEL

A Guide to Your Feelings

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\*SELF HELP TOOL\*: [https://images.mentalfloss.com/sites/default/files/styles/mf\\_image\\_16x9/public/emotion-wheel.png?itok=Tgl6FyHF&resize=1100x1100](https://images.mentalfloss.com/sites/default/files/styles/mf_image_16x9/public/emotion-wheel.png?itok=Tgl6FyHF&resize=1100x1100)

### b) Emotion Diary

If you would like to learn more about the different emotions you experience, how they make you think, feel and behave complete an emotion diary like the template below:

EMOTION	BODILY RESPONSES (i.e physical sensations, body language)	THOUGHTS (including memories, images and judgements)	URGES (What you feel like doing when you experience the emotion)	BEHAVIOURS (What you actually do when you feel the emotion)	CONSEQUENCES (Impact of effect of the behaviour, such as self judgements)
ANGER					
HAPPINESS					
SADNESS					
FEAR	Heart races, Butterflies, Sweaty palms	'This pandemic will never end'	I felt like hiding under the duvet covers and going back to sleep.	I got up and had a shower instead.	After the shower I felt calm and pleased I'd woken up. This distracted me from my thoughts.
LOVE					
SHAME or GUILT					
OTHER					

**\*SELF HELP TOOL\*** What emotions are you feeling at the moment and what helps you and what doesn't? Write the headings in a note book to help yourself learn about and manage any difficult emotions.

If you need alone time, if you need to hit a pillow, if you need to go for a run, do what you feel you need once you've stood back and thought about the consequences and see what works best for you.

It helps to share our feelings with others. *Who can you call if you need to let off some steam?*

**If you struggle to manage and tolerate your emotions this acronym WATCH may be helpful.**

c.) **The WATCH acronym:**

**W:** Watch your emotions. Mentally note your experience of an emotion, acknowledging how it feels physically, the thoughts, memories, or images that accompany it and so on.

**A:** Avoid acting. Do not act immediately. Remember that it is just an emotion, not a fact, and you do not necessarily need to do anything about it.

**T:** Think of your emotion as a wave. Remember that it will recede naturally if you do not try to push it away.

**C:** Choose to let yourself experience the emotion. Remind yourself that not avoiding the emotion is in your best interests and will help you move towards your long term goals.

**H:** Helpers. Remember that emotions are helpers. They all serve a purpose and arise to tell you something important. Let them do their job!

d) Keep your distance from negative or very anxious people.



This may feel difficult but ***panic is a very contagious emotion***. This is what happened with the toilet roll situation. One person buys several rolls, other people started to worry and then the panic spreads quickly. It is important right now if you are feeling vulnerable to surround yourself with calm and positive people. If you have an anxious friend who wants to talk to you frequently its ok to say no and put boundaries in. Make sure you look after yourself. If there are people who share negative political posts or unhelpful stories on social media its ok to unfollow those people for a while and distance yourself. Be aware of your triggers and know its ok to consider your own needs right now.

e.) Meditate and learn to recognise and sit with difficult thoughts, emotions and sensations.

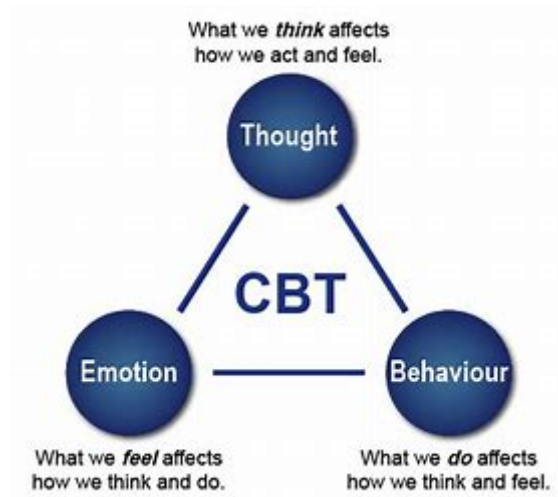
Headspace is a great app which helps users to train their minds and there are specific meditations which can help with stress and anxiety.

**\*SELF HELP TOOL\*** Download the Headspace app. 10 minutes every morning could make a big difference:

<https://www.headspace.com/>

f) The 5 Aspects CBT model- which thoughts cause you to feel the way you do?

Just in case you didn't use it before, do try and complete a CBT model to look at which thoughts come before your emotions and which behaviours follow it. I mentioned this model in the introduction this is as assessment tool we use to help all clients at the start of CBT sessions. Remember emotions are not random, we do not feel a certain way for no reason, there is always a thought involved and if we can identify it and challenge it, we can help ourselves *to feel better*.



\*SELF HELP TOOL\* <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/5aspects.pdf>