

SELAH - PAUSE AND REFLECT

Emotional Regulation

Have you ever experienced unexplained anger outbursts, passive-aggressive patterns of behaviour, experienced chronic pain or illness with no medical backing, or difficulty focusing on tasks at hand because the mind is too occupied with your thoughts? It might be a good time to assess your emotional regulation strategies.



Emotional regulation is the ability to influence what emotions we experience when we experience them, and how we express them. Strong emotional regulation skills enhance long-term wellbeing, and work performance helps enrich personal relationships and leads to better overall health. In more immediate terms, it helps us feel better momentarily. Dysregulation can lead to regrettable actions and impact our well-being and relationships.

What can make controlling our emotions difficult are our beliefs regarding unpleasant emotions, lack of emotional regulation skills, or situations that evoke powerful emotions. Recognizing the factors that might be affecting our ability to regulate emotions helps us be more aware of our mental state.

Gross (2003) has identified two main ways in which we regulate our emotions - reappraisal or suppression. Suppression is when we try to inhibit emotional expression, whereas reappraisal involves modifying the emotional meaning and therefore, the impact of the event which evokes the emotional response.



Identify your go-to strategy of emotional regulation and (worksheet) :

Emotion Regulation Worksheet:

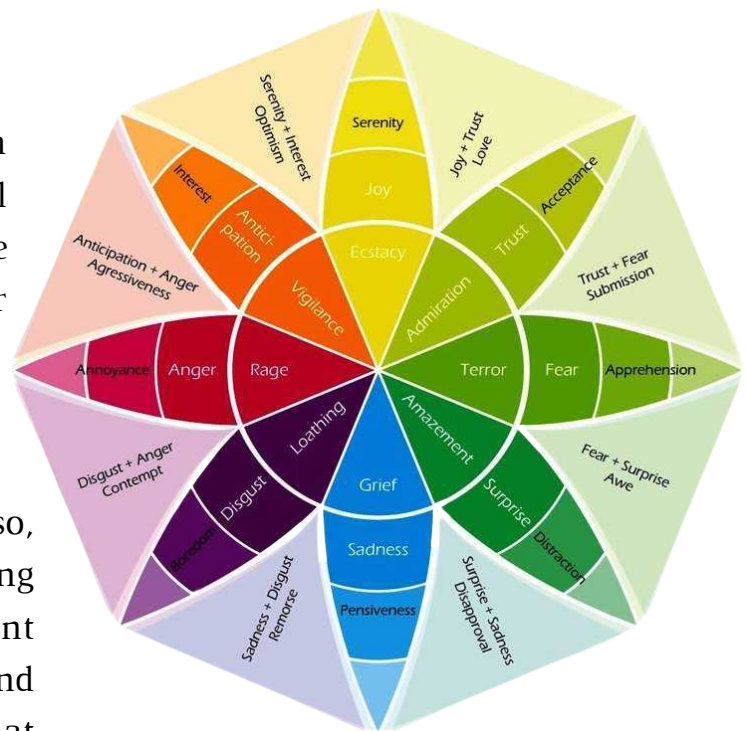
STEP 1: LABEL THEM

To clear the confused distress when sitting with emotions, using the wheel given here, try identifying all the emotions you feel and the sensations your body may experience:



STEP 2: FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

Sometimes it can be too difficult to do so, and we can use some healthy 'Soothing techniques'. Each person has a different technique that may appeal to them, find one that might suit you! Here are some that might help: IMPROVE!



Imagery : Close your eyes and picture yourself accomplishing the difficult task or maybe a peaceful scenery

Meaning : Try to find meaning in painful situations. What can you learn from this experience?

Physical Exercise : Do some physical exercise that matches your pumped-up body. Just until you've tired yourself out. Increasing oxygen flow helps decrease stress levels.

Relaxation : We tense up during stressful situations and engage in relaxing activities to calm the body experience. These activities can include deep breathing, yoga, a hot bath, and a relaxing walk.

One thing in the moment : To avoid overwhelm, focus on one step at a time or one situation to handle at a time.



Varied Senses : Use your five senses to self-soothe during times of distress- taking a warm bath with a lavender bath bomb and relaxing music, eating a comforting snack, or looking at something soothing like a picture or painting.

Encouragement : Encouragement doesn't have to come from an external source to be effective. Encourage yourself by repeating phrases that are meaningful to you.

Worksheet: Awareness and Feeling of Emotions

Filling this out will help to understand how each emotion you may experience is manifested in your body and behaviour. It will help us be more alert and attuned to our psychological needs. Once you have completed the labelling, you will need to make a plan for how to handle when such emotions strike you, with that in mind, write down the most practical and realistic strategies you are going to use

When I feel (Emotion):	I will know because my body will show/do (Body and Behaviour):	I will Alter it by (Soothing Technique) :
		1. 2. 3.

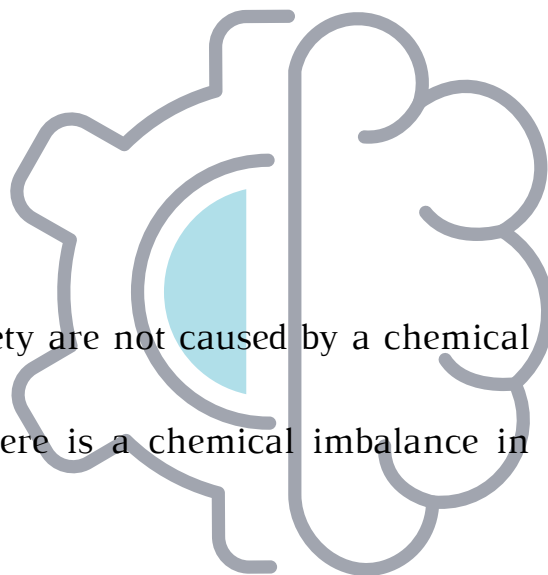
Monthly Takeaway

“I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them.”

-Oscar Wilde



What's going on in the Mental Health Sphere?



An uproar of reminders that depression and anxiety are not caused by a chemical imbalance in your brain!

There is no reliable proof that can explain if there is a chemical imbalance in someone's brain who is suffering from depression.

Shocker! Isn't it? But in reality, this has always been known by pharmaceutical companies and medical practitioners. The people on the front, social workers, therapists, and many renowned psychiatrists have consistently argued against the use of antidepressants and beta-blockers that are said to "treat the chemical imbalance" and cure depression. Because what is happening is nothing more than the effects of a placebo.

Let's think about it for a minute. If certain medications could help treat the imbalance, why are there so many cases of dissatisfaction and people being prescribed the same or different kinds with no healthy or consistent results? More patients end up with chronic dependence on said medication due to its impact on the body.

So, why is this happening and what exactly do we need to be aware of?

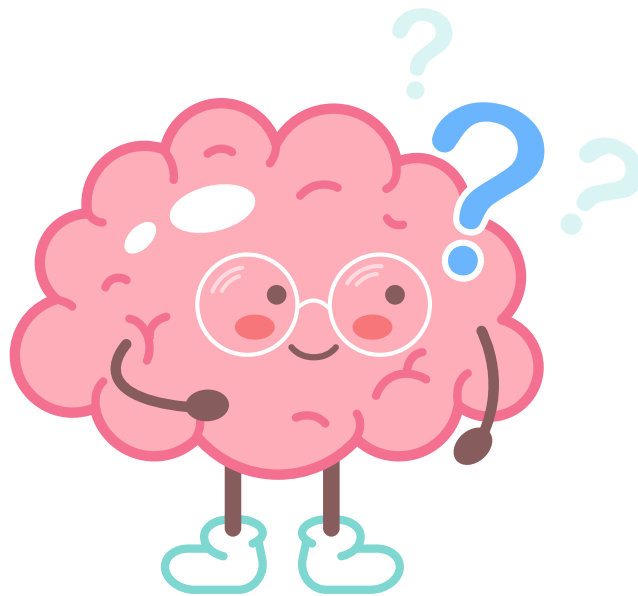
Most pharmaceutical companies which manufacture medications for mental ailments will quote the "Chemical Imbalance Theory of Depression" in the pitch to sell their products. For example:

"Scientific evidence suggests that depression and certain anxiety disorders may be caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Paxil CR helps balance your brain's chemistry. (See Important Safety Information about Paxil CR.)

Just as a cake recipe requires you to use flour, sugar, and baking powder in the right amounts, your brain needs a fine chemical balance to perform at its best. Paxil CR helps maintain a balance of serotonin levels, which may help cell-to-cell communication return to normal. Paxil CR is with you throughout the day to help you manage and treat your condition."

[Taken from paxilcr.com's website, May 1, 2009]





This explanation, widely cited as empirical truth, is false. One needs to then ask, what is the scientific evidence being referenced here. What kind of chemical imbalance? How can we measure it accurately?

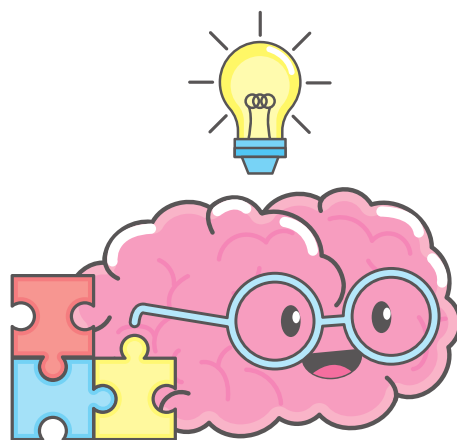
Is it something that can be generalized to all populations, across gender, age, comorbidities, geographical influences, etc? Also, why have we only heard about said studies that may prove the theory, what about the ones where the hypothesis was proven incorrect?

Simple, there isn't enough data to prove it. The information shared is either skewed or presented in a manner that favors the use of such medications. Companies would hire ghostwriters to write favorable reviews which pushed the narrative further and eventually people started taking their word for it. It was a tentatively-posed hypothesis in the sciences, but no evidence for it has been found, and so it has been discarded by physicians and researchers. Yet the idea of chemical imbalances has remained stubbornly embedded in the public understanding of depression.

All this boils down to marketing. Just like Kelloggs pushed the narrative that breakfast is the absolute necessity in your routine (which stands untrue to date) to sell their product - "Breakfast cereals", western dietitians promote BMI as the ideal system of body health assessment (which is not a reliable practice, especially in the current time) to prescribe a low-fat diet, pharmaceuticals have been pushing this actively to keep their sales going. And it's easier for people to look at any illness as an individual problem like the flu or bone fracture which the person has to deal with by themselves as it's their body that needs to heal.



This also speaks to how we look at mental illness. The view that mental illness is a disease of the brain takes away the importance of how it could be an ailment of the mind and body. It also de-signifies the huge role that a person's social and economical condition, upbringing, health factors, and family system plays in impacting one's mental health. Nobody wants to take responsibility for the greater good, it's labor-saving to point fingers and label them as "not normal" or "unhealthy". Neither does anybody want to talk about unemployment, poverty, discrimination, or past trauma as aspects that need to be looked into and holistic upliftment to take place. That is not politically plausible anymore. We conveniently have forgotten that normal is nothing, but what caters to the majority. It doesn't necessarily have to be the right thing.



As a therapist, it's even more important for us to keep the dialogue active and since this conversation is picking up momentum, have an open discussion with the clients and laymen to help them ask the right questions. It is essential that in the current times, where everyone is phasing through grief, burnout, compassion fatigue, isolation, the ongoing pandemic, the stress and fear of socio-political climate and many other factors, mental health should be included in active healthcare.

And with the rise of mental health issues, we can't be lazy anymore by asking individuals to deal with their well being/illness on their own. It is and has always been a collective effort, we all need to help create an environment that is conducive to the growth of everyone. You cannot be selfish and cater to yourself because sooner or later, when you will need that support you will be left to your own devices and that's not the way forward. This is a great time to reflect on your actions because they do have an impact on you and your surroundings and help people reflect on their own as well.



Thing's Happening at Room:



- **#sponsortherapy** - We aim to create a mental health community that is accessible to all. To be in line with that goal, and continue on that vision, Room provides pro bono and sliding scale options to clients who are not able to afford the full fee of the session. To achieve that, Room is accepting sponsorships where you can sponsor therapy for someone in need.
- **Evening brew** - We are back with a new book for this month's read 'The Argumentative Indian'. This book was picked up as it would be a good time to read something that brings in reflection and clarity about how we as a society and a collective have progressed. What has it done to our systems and open up our minds to what has been influencing us and how it may be impacting our mental health. To switch things up and make the book club more accessible, we are starting with an evening brew where we will virtually meet at 8 pm in the evenings to engage in silent reading followed by discussion. Participants are encouraged to show up for day one of the reading and can then continue on their own if they like. This is also a great opportunity to get back to reading and find a safe space to do so. Registrations are available on the website!
- **MSE workshop** - Starting with a fresh new batch for our Case history and MSE workshop this month, on the 29 and 30 of April. Interested participants can register on our website!
- **Mindfulness Workshop** - We are enthused to announce a holistic workshop for all to indulge in their here and now, get in touch with their body and mind together in the Mindfulness Workshop, being conducted by our in-house clinician! A 4 part workshop spread out through the month of May for all to understand, learn and reflect at their own pace. More information will be available on the official website!
- **30 - Day Self Care** - We invite you to a 30 Days Self Care Challenge, Where we will post simple task for 30 days on our Instagram, And You have to do is follow along.

