

# Emotional and Energy Regulation.



## Control Centre Skill No.6: Emotional & Energy Regulation



### What is Emotional & Energy Regulation?

Emotional and energy regulation is another one of the important Control Centre Skills.

When people are really good at this skill, they are able to stay in control of their feelings and energy.



We sometimes refer to people who are good at this skill as 'Steady Swans'.

**Having good emotional and energy regulation is a great skill. It helps us to stay in control when things go wrong and manage the pressures of life.**



## Having good emotional and energy regulation is a great skill

Good emotional and energy regulation helps us to:



1. Become calm quickly when switching from a fun activity to a more serious one
2. Manage disappointments and be able to become happy and calm again quite quickly and not let it ruin the day
3. Manage sadness, anger or fear well enough that other people nearby aren't affected badly by our mood
4. Manage positive emotions such as excitement at winning a game or being at a party so things don't get out of hand
5. Manage emotions at funny times so that others aren't disturbed



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The important thing about people who are good at energy and emotional regulation is that **they are in charge** of their emotions – their feelings are not in charge **of them**.



**Some people** haven't developed this skill so well **yet** – their feelings can take charge and change their mood quickly and easily.

We call them 'Changeable Chimps', **the next slides detail these characteristics further.**



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### Changeable Chimps

Changeable Chimps show their emotions more easily, quickly and in a bigger way than Steady Swans.

They are more impulsive and their feelings can take charge of what they say and do.

This is great when at a party, a disco or a fun fair. Changeable Chimps can be great fun to be around!



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It's fine to be a Changeable Chimp when:

1. You get everyone dancing and singing at a party which was getting a bit quiet and boring. There's nothing better than a Changeable Chimp at a party if you want some fun!
2. You are watching a sad film and start sobbing; within seconds your friends are all wailing with you and you all feel a sense of 'togetherness'.
3. You dance and sing loudly for hours at a house party – **and** there are lots of other people happily dancing at the same time **and** there aren't any neighbours nearby, so no-one is disturbed by your noise.
4. You haven't seen someone for ages and you run and jump into their arms; it doesn't hurt them as they are bigger than you and they love big hugs!
5. It's someone's birthday and you start a big birthday song with a "Whoop!" and it makes them smile.



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It's not so good to be a Changeable Chimp when:

1. You get angry and show it in a way that makes it a rotten atmosphere for everyone in the room.
2. You are singing and dancing loudly and everyone else is trying to sleep.
3. Something happens that upsets you and you stay upset for hours and don't get anything else done and get behind on work.



## Control Centre Skill No.6: Emotional & Energy Regulation

Which is best? Steady Swan or Changeable Chimp?



Neither. They are both great at different times.

Steady Swans are great when there is an emergency or problem which needs calm, focused, deliberate thought. At those times, emotional regulation is crucial and a Steady Swan is definitely best.

Sometimes, people are told they have 'anger management' problems when in fact they just find it difficult to regulate any kind of emotion or energy. **It is a skill you can get better at – it doesn't have to be a problem forever!**

Why do some people find it so easy to take charge of emotions and energy while other people find it so hard? It's partly related to how resilient or vulnerable we are – as we discussed in the previous chapter.

## How good is your Emotional & Energy Regulation?

It's really important to know your own Emotional and Energy Regulation skills at different times and in different situations. It means you can plan to stay in control of your energy and feelings rather than let them take control of you. We call this planning 'Prep4Best'.



If you leave it to the moment you are actually in a situation in which you get big feelings or too much or too little energy, it will be **much** more difficult to manage these emotions or change your energy levels. It's just harder to do that stuff suddenly if you haven't planned ahead.

If you have thought about it **ahead of time** and planned how you would like to react (Prepped4Best), it will be **much** easier to respond in the way you **want** to – in a way that will be good for



you and good for those around you - just like we mentioned in the section on Impulse Control.

# Tops tips for improving Task Tolerance Control:

## Prep4Best:

- 1
  - a) An amount of time to keep going on the task before you stop.
  - b) Parts of the task to finish before you stop.
2. Prepare for your 5C Needs to be met well before you start.



## 'Surf the Urge':

- 2
  - Practice resisting the impulse to move away from the unpleasant feeling of growth or challenge.
  - Practice staying with the feeling and saying to yourself: "I can tolerate this unpleasant feeling. I know it will not last forever."



## The Daily Stretch:

- 3
  - Try to extend the number of minutes you can tolerate being in the Growth Zone day-by-day – even just by 10 seconds a day.
  - Track your progress so you can see your progress and get those Dopamine Doses.



## Use Self-talk:

- 4
  - Work out messages you could give to yourself that will keep you motivated when things get tough .
  - You may find it helpful to write them down or place pictures near your workstation that will remind you.



## Helping **yourself** with Emotional & Energy Regulation Skills:

### What you can do to help yourself

- **Bright Spots:** notice times when you do stay in control of your feelings and energy – what did you do? What helped?

Just by noticing, you are likely to create neural firing – and the more this happens, the stronger the circuits for emotional and energy regulation will get.

Do your Bright Spots give you any clues you can use at times you find it harder to stay in control?



- **Build 'Feel Good Chemical' experiences:** as we explained on the previous pages, the more positive experiences you have, the stronger you will feel when you are faced with tough times.



- **Reduce your stress levels:** empty out your red stress balloon – find activities that help you to become calm. This may be running, swimming, listening to music, building stuff, drawing, laughing with friends. Build in some of these times your life at least 3 times a week so your stress balloon empties and has more room before popping when things go wrong.



## How **others** can help you with Energy & Emotional Regulation

### How others can help you

- **Stressor Spotting:** Just like with impulse control skills, ask an adult to help you work out what triggers big emotions in you and when you find it harder to manage big feelings.



What's different when it is easier to manage big feelings? What's different when it's harder?

Are there any **physical or sensory** needs not being met which make it harder to manage big feelings?

➤ Are you hungry?



➤ Not enough movement?



➤ Is it too busy or noisy?



Which are the **emotional needs** most often not being met well when you lose your cool?



## How **others** can help you with Energy & Emotional Regulation

### How others can help you

#### Other questions that are useful to think about:

- Is it times when you don't feel you can do what you are being asked?
- Is it when you don't feel so capable?
- Is it when you don't feel in control of what's happening or you feel uncertain about what people expect of you?
- Is it when you think things aren't fair and you aren't being supported properly?
- Is it when you don't feel people are on your side?
- Is it when you are with people you feel less important with or not part of the group?



#### Exploring and designing strategies:

Ask someone to help you work out the best ways to stay cool when you get big feelings. Get them to imagine you're in the situation so you can practice these strategies – do this LOADS until they become neural habits.

## Helping **yourself** with Emotional & Energy Regulation

### What you can do to help yourself

- **Pre-mortem:** before you go somewhere or do something, think through what might go wrong. Can you do anything to prevent that from happening? Is there anything that could help?
- **Prep4Best:** just like with improving Impulse Control, take a minute before you go somewhere or start something - take some breaths so you don't rush into a task. Get into a habit of Prep4Best (preparing before you start) so this becomes your 'neural habit'.
- Whilst you are taking some breaths, think through how you would like things to turn out. How would you like to react if you get big feelings? Practise this. It will be harder to start, but if you repeat, repeat, repeat, it will get easier. Do you need anything to help you do this?

