



# Tools to Develop Self-Awareness

*Cultivate a habit of introspection*

## Journaling

- Create a regular journaling routine
- Write freely and honestly
- Reflect on your emotions
- Look for patterns

## Mindfulness

*Focusing on the present moment without judgment*

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit
- Focus on your breath
- Observe your emotions and name them
- Practice regularly

## Emotional Check-Ins

- Set reminders
- Pause and reflect
- Record your emotions

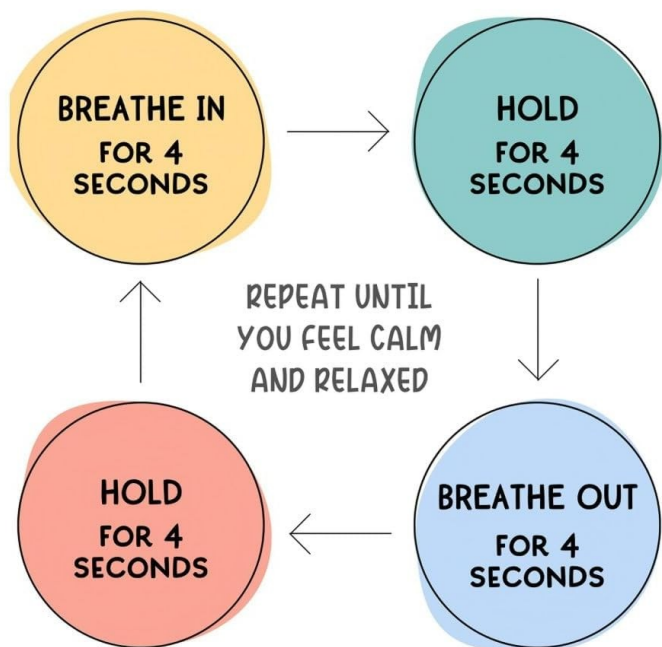
## Additional Items

- Ask friends/colleagues to tell you what they really think about you in an honest, non-hurtful way
- Shift your mindset - Train yourself to live out your values in better ways
- Forgive yourself
- Start anew

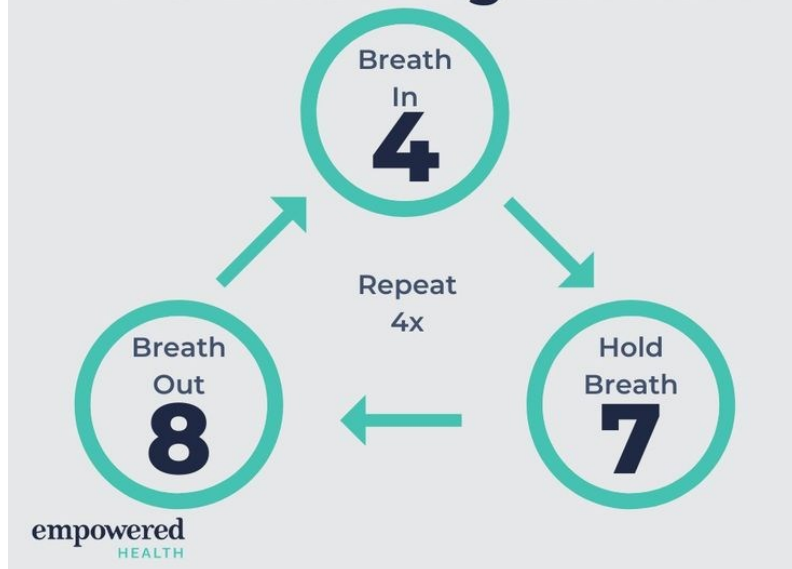
# Tools for Emotional Regulation

## Breathing Techniques

### BOX BREATHING



### 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise



## Mindful Breathing

- 1 Set a timer for 3 minutes.**  
Make sure you're in a space free from distractions and that the temperature of the room is comfortable for you. Choose a comfortable place to sit.
- 2 Sit comfortably with your eyes closed.**  
Focus your attention on the present moment ... on sights, sounds and sensations. Thoughts will come up; simply ask these thoughts to slow down.
- 3 Focus your attention on your breath.**  
Observe your breath moving smoothly in and out of your body. Just simply observe it, like sitting on the shore of the ocean watching the waves coming and going.
- 4 Bring your mind back to the breath.**  
When your mind wanders, you may momentarily forget to focus on your breath. Simply bring your mind back to the present moment and back to your breath. Always return to the breath.
- 5 Let go of thoughts and feelings.**  
When thoughts and feelings come up, observe them, but do not attach to them. Non-attachment is observing from a distance. Just let the thoughts and feelings go. It's just a thought; nothing more.
- 6 Continue the meditation.**  
For 3 minutes, continue in this manner. Simply relax, breathe, focus, and let go, repeating the steps as necessary. Relax. Breathe. Focus. Let go.

# Challenging Irrational Thoughts or Beliefs

*Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)*

**A**

## **Activating Event**

Identify the situation or event that triggers a reaction

**B**

## **Belief**

What is your irrational interpretation of the event?

**C**

## **Consequence**

Negative emotional or behavior outcomes resulting from the belief

**D**

## **Dispute**

Challenge the irrational belief

**E**

## **Effective New Belief**

Replace the irrational belief with rational ones

**F**

## **New Feelings**

Experience higher emotional responses

# How to do Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

- Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down. (If you can't, standing is fine!)
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax
- Focus on your feet. Curl your toes tightly for a few seconds, then release and let the tension go
- Move on to your calves, thighs, buttocks, abdomen, chest, arms, hands, neck, and face, repeating the process of tensing and relaxing each muscle group
- Hold the tension in each muscle group for about 5-10 seconds, then release and let go completely

## Body Scan Meditation



**Purpose:** To reconnect to your physical self and become more aware of sensory experiences.



1

Find a relaxing position, close your eyes and bring awareness to your body.

2

Move attention towards your breath and feel where your body makes contact with the floor/chair.

3

Take a breath in and shift your awareness to a part of your body you want to investigate. You can systematically scan head to toe or move to any part that draws your attention.

4

Notice the sensations you feel such as buzzing, tingling, or pressure. Release your attention from this body part and move your focus onto the next.


5


If you feel your attention wandering, notice this is happening and gently shift it back without judgment.

# GROUNDING TECHNIQUES FOR THE SENSES

**5** THINGS YOU CAN SEE 

**4** THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH 

**3** THINGS YOU CAN HEAR 

**2** THINGS YOU CAN SMELL 

**1** THINGS YOU CAN TASTE 

# Strategies to Enhance Empathy

## Active Listening Skills

*Focusing on the speaker, reflecting on their feelings, responding with empathy*

- Maintain eye contact
- Avoid distractions
- Reflect on their feelings - Ask insightful questions
- Provide non-verbal feedback

## Imaginative Empathy Exercises

Visualizing yourself in another's situation and imagining their feelings, thoughts, and experiences

## Reading Fiction for Perspective-Taking

Pay attention to characters' emotions, thoughts, and experiences

# Building Resilience

## Techniques to Foster Resilience

- Positive affirmations
- Cognitive reframing
- Build a support network

## How to Bounce Back

- Recognize and accept emotions
  - Learn from mistakes
  - Develop a growth mindset
- Recognize growth potential (opportunities to grow), embrace challenges, persist, view effort as a path to mastery, learn from criticism*

# Emotional Agility

## Strategies for Developing Emotional Agility

- Accepting and labeling emotions - Acknowledging without judgment
- Detaching from unhelpful thoughts - Observe them as an impartial witness
- Taking values-based actions

## **Tools for Overcoming Overwhelm**

- Prioritize self-care activities - The key is regularity & consistency!
- Seek professional help
- Build a support network - Family, friends, colleagues or mentors

# What to do as Leaders

## Build Positive Relationships

- Exercise empathy
- Work toward effective communication
- Foster a positive environment
  - Acknowledge others' efforts, celebrate team successes, maintain a positive attitude

## Manage Workplace Stress

- Recognize the signs of stress
- Implement stress management techniques
  - Deep breathing exercises, take regular breaks, engage in physical activity
- Maintain perspective
  - View challenges as opportunities for growth, maintain a health work-life balance (Set boundaries, delegate, say no when needed, carve out time for relaxation, hobbies, social activities)

## Lead with Empathy

- Understand the feelings and perspectives of your team members
- Demonstrate emotional transparency
- Make decisions that consider the team's emotional wellbeing

# What to do as People

## Effective Coping Strategies

- Physical activity
- Maintain a balanced diet
- Get adequate sleep
- Seek social support
- Seek professional help

## Cultivate Positive Emotions

They need nurturing!

- Joy
- Gratitude
- Contentment
- Inspiration
- Pride
  
- Rejoice in small victories
- Express gratitude for blessings
- Derive joy from simple pleasures

## Emotional Intelligence Quiz

- True False 1. You are able to identify what you are feeling most of the time and use extensive vocabulary to label it. You do not just say you are fine or not fine. Rather, you can clearly tell when you are feeling frustrated, disappointed, angry, overwhelmed, sad, and so on.
- True False 2. You have never thought of yourself as self-absorbed, selfish, or self-serving to the point where you do not care about what is going on around you. You are naturally curious to find out more about the people around you. Even if you are on the introverted side, you are happy to just observe to learn more about the people you meet in your everyday life.
- True False 3. You adapt easily to change. You are flexible in your thinking, and you believe that change is as good as rest. You consider a change to be one of the more exciting things about life.
- True False 4. You are well aware of what your strengths are and can also clearly articulate your weakness. You know the people you get along with and the people who tend to grate on your nerves.
- True False 5. You are not easily fooled by people. You can easily judge a person's character even when they are trying to pass themselves off as something else. When it comes to people, very few things catch you by surprise.
- True False 6. You consider yourself to have a pretty thick skin. You do not walk around looking for things to be offended about. You are able to appreciate self-deprecating humor and do not mind being the butt of a joke unless it crosses respectable boundaries.
- True False 7. You learn from your mistakes without wallowing in them. You know that it is human to make mistakes from time to time. You see failure as an opportunity to learn and not as an indication of your self-worth.
- True False 8. You forgive those who have wronged you because you understand that it is the right thing to do for yourself. Grudges have no place in your life, and you move on easily from other people's transgressions against you.
- True False 9. Whenever you have to interact with a toxic person, you know how to handle them in a way that doesn't drain you emotionally. You try as much as possible to see things from the toxic person's perspective, however difficult this might be. You know how to protect your energy while handling toxic persons.
- True False 10. You do not pursue perfection because you understand that it is just a concept that exists in people's minds and not in reality. You do not demand perfection from yourself or your loved ones or even the people you work with. You simply want to be able to say that you did your best under the circumstances that you were in.
- True False 11. You know when you need to take a break from the stresses of everyday life, and you do so unapologetically. You have never felt obliged to be available to everyone and everything 24/7. You can switch off and unwind easily because you know it is important for your overall health as a physical, mental, and emotional being.

- True False 12. You are cautious about what you allow inside your body. You know that what you eat has a significant role in how you feel and know better than to allow toxic stuff into your system. You watch what you eat without being obsessive about it.
- True False 13. You consider sleep to be a priority. You do not stay up all night doing things that can be postponed to tomorrow. You know that sleep is an important part of your life because it allows your brain to rest and recharge. You tend to sleep at the same time every night.
- True False 14. You speak kindly to yourself. Negative self-talk has no place in your life. You do not allow yourself to be harsh or judgmental toward yourself. You forgive yourself for your mistakes and look for ways to improve yourself instead of beating yourself up for every flaw that you might have.
- True False 15. You are confident in who you are and do not look to others for validation. You are proud of your accomplishments and know-how to celebrate your wins, big and small. You do not lose your sleep over other people's opinions because you know the opinion that truly matters is what you think about yourself. You do not allow anyone to come into your life to steal away your joy.

## Results

Questions that you answered TRUE to	EI/EQ Rating	What this means
<b>15</b>	Very High EI/EQ	<p>You are in tune with your emotions, are grounded in your identity as an individual, and highly motivated to be true to yourself. You respect other people and their emotions without allowing them to take over your life. You are probably fun to be around because you are emotionally mature and can handle a joke or two. Your friends and colleagues actually do like you more than you think. Not that this matters to you anyway. Popular or not, you're content in who you are and would not change, only improve.</p>
<b>10-14</b>	High EI/EQ	<p>You know who you are and you know how to read others. You are empathetic toward other people, but you also do not allow them to steal your energy. You appreciate the importance of being emotionally intelligent and will always bite your tongue before you can lash out at anyone. You like yourself and can clearly articulate what your goals, dreams, and achievements are. You have opinions about things, but you also accommodate differing opinions without getting worked up.</p>
<b>5-9</b>	Average EI/EQ	<p>You get along with most people, and you like yourself on most days. However, you still struggle with a lot of things regarding yourself and your emotions and other people. You have good days when you seem to do and say the right things and bad days when your foot is constantly in your mouth. Sometimes you are too hard on yourself, and you have moments when you wish you could go back in time and fix the mistakes you have made. You take too long to forgive yourself and others, and you have some bad blood that you are still holding onto. You wish you could be a better person; you just do not know how.</p>
<b>0-4</b>	Low EI/EQ	<p>If your life was made into a television show, it would be a bad sitcom that would get canceled after one season. You do not have a clear view of who you are. You seem to offend everyone everywhere you go. You feel lousy about yourself and your life constantly. You struggle to get up for work every morning. Your colleagues do not seem to like you very much, and your boss is probably considering firing you. You struggle with dating, and if you are in a relationship or married, then you cannot seem to stop your partner from arguing with you. You yell when you get angry, and you've even thrown a few items in the heat of the moment. The emotions in your life show up in their extreme forms. You are never just happy or relaxed. You are more likely to be extremely angry/ agitated/frustrated than just moderately feeling those emotions. There are opportunities and hope for you to become more emotionally intelligent, but it calls for you to work really hard at resolving all the issues that you currently have.</p>

# POSITIVE COPING SKILLS FOR STRESS AND ANXIETY

1. Write your thoughts/feelings in a **journal** 
2. **Play an instrument** 
3. **Listen to music**- lay back or sit down and focus on the music
4. **Write a story** 
5. **Write a letter** to the person you are stressing over (you don't have to actually send it) 
6. Eat a **healthy and nutritious** meal or snack 
7. Go for a **walk**
8. Go to the **gym** 
9. **Exercise** at home 
10. Do **yoga** 
11. **Meditate** 
12. Take some **deep breaths**
13. **Stretch** 
14. Watch a **feel-good movie or TV show**
15. **Read** 
16. Take a **social media detox**
17. **Paint/draw/color** 
18. **Crochet/knit/sew** 
19. **De-clutter or clean** your living space 
20. Go for a **bike ride** 
21. Go to the **park**
22. Have a **picnic** 
23. Listen to a **podcast** 
24. Spend time **playing with a pet** 
25. Spend **time with family** 
26. Spend time with a **friend/significant other**
27. **Vent** to a close friend or family member 
28. Schedule an appointment for **therapy** 
29. **Practice mindfulness**- being fully aware in the present moment
30. **Slow down**- approach the tasks you normally have to do with a calm and slow attitude 
31. Go for a **relaxing drive**
32. **Sit outside** and take in the sunlight 
33. Do your **nails/hair/makeup** 
34. Take a **day for self-care** 
35. Do anything **creative**
36. **Take photos** and/or edit them 
37. Shoot and edit a **video**
38. **Make a vision board** of things you love 
39. Put your to-do list on **pause**
40. Take a **mental health day** off from work
41. **Reorganize** your belongings 
42. **Redecorate/rearrange** your room
43. Do a **face mask** 
44. Take a **relaxing bath**
45. Write down the things that are stressing you out that you have no control over and rip them up and throw them in the garbage- **practice letting go** 
46. Create a list of **positive affirmations** for yourself
47. **Garden**- tend to your plants inside and/or outside
48. **Practice gratitude**- make a list of the things you are grateful for
49. **Practice compassion**- be kind to yourself when you are struggling, notice and change critical or judgmental thoughts
50. **Practice acceptance**- accept the emotions you are experiencing not as good or bad, but just as part of your experience- they will eventually pass

## 30-Day Leadership Challenge

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 1</b></p> <p>Pause three times during the day and identify the emotion you are feeling in the moment.</p> <p>What patterns did you notice?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 2</b></p> <p>Ask one trusted colleague: “What is one thing I do that positively impacts the team?”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 3</b></p> <p>Notice one situation that triggered frustration or stress.</p> <p>Before responding, Pause, Breathe and Reflect on your reaction.</p> <p>How did pausing change your response?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 4</b></p> <p>Write down your top 3 leadership values.</p> <p>Did your behaviors align with these values today?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 5</b></p> <p>Observe your communication style in meetings or with your staff.</p> <p>Pay attention to: Tone, Body Language, Interrupting, Listening Habits</p> <p>What would you improve?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 6</b></p> <p>Practice box breathing before a stressful conversation.</p> <p>4 seconds inhale, 4 seconds hold, 4 seconds exhale, 4 seconds hold</p> <p>How did it impact your mindset?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 7</b></p> <p>Choose one stressful moment today and intentionally respond calmly instead of reacting emotionally.</p> <p>How did others respond to your calmness?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 8</b></p> <p>Notice any negative self-talk.</p> <p>Reframe it into a constructive statement.</p> <p>How did reframing change your emotional state?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 9</b></p> <p>Take a 5-minute mindful break during the workday.</p> <p>Focus only on breathing and being present</p> <p>Did you notice any reduction in stress?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 10</b></p> <p>Identify one situation where you felt defensive.</p> <p>Ask yourself: What was I protecting? What emotion was underneath my reaction?</p> <p>What did you learn about yourself?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 11</b></p> <p>During a conversation, focus fully on listening without interrupting.</p> <p>Did the other person respond differently?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 12</b></p> <p>As a team member: “How are things going for you lately?”</p> <p>Listen without immediately solving.</p> <p>What did you learn?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 13</b></p> <p>Recognize and acknowledge someone’s effort publicly.</p> <p>How did recognition impact morale?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 14</b></p> <p>Practice reflective listening. (Ex: “It sounds like you’re frustrated.” “I hear that this has been stressful.”)</p> <p>How did empathy affect the conversation?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 15</b></p> <p>Reach out to someone you may have unintentionally disconnected from.</p> <p>What happened when you re-engaged?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 16</b></p> <p>Reflect on a recent leadership setback.</p> <p>What did you learn? How did you grow?</p> <p>How can this challenge strengthen you moving forward?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 17</b></p> <p>When faced with stress today, focus on facts rather than assumptions.</p> <p>Did this reduce emotional escalation?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 18</b></p> <p>Do one activity that supports your wellbeing. (Exercise, walking, reading, time with family, quiet reflection, etc.)</p> <p>How did self-care impact your energy?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 19</b></p> <p>Identify one area where you need stronger boundaries. (Saying no, delegating, disconnecting after work)</p> <p>What boundary would improve your wellbeing?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 20</b></p> <p>Practice accepting emotions without judging yourself.</p> <p>What changed when you stopped resisting emotions?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 21</b></p> <p>Start a meeting or the day with a genuine check-in question.</p> <p>(“What’s one win from this week?” “What’s been the most challenging lately?”)</p> <p>How did this affect engagement?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 22</b></p> <p>Identify one person on your team who may need encouragement. Offer support intentionally.</p> <p>How did they respond?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 23</b></p> <p>During conflict or a disagreement, Pause, Stay curious, Seek understanding first.</p> <p>Did curiosity change the outcome?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 24</b></p> <p>Notice how your emotional state influences your team.</p> <p>What emotional tone are you setting as a leader?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 25</b></p> <p>Share appreciation with someone who consistently contributes behind the scenes.</p> <p>How did acknowledgment affect the relationship?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 26</b></p> <p>Identify one emotional intelligence strength you have developed.</p> <p>How has it improved your leadership?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 27</b></p> <p>Identify one emotional intelligence habit you still want to improve?</p> <p>What small step can help you grow?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 28</b></p> <p>Ask your team: “What can I do as a leader that would better support you?”</p> <p>What feedback stood out?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 29</b></p> <p>Reflect on your emotional triggers.</p> <p>What patterns do you notice now that you did not notice before?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 30</b></p> <p>Write a personal leadership commitment statement.</p> <p>What leadership behaviors will you continue practicing?</p>

# Mental Health is Health



1 in 5 US adults experiences a mental health condition.



Hope and help are available.

## The Signs



Changes in mood or energy level



Avoiding social engagements



Changes in sleeping patterns



Problems concentrating



Changes in eating habits



Change in appearance



Increase in substance use

### What to do

### What to say

Notice the signs and reach out



"I've noticed some changes in you lately. Do you want to grab coffee and talk?"

Listen nonjudgmentally



"How long have you been feeling this way?"

Offer reassurance and information



"That sounds really tough. I'm here to listen."

Encourage appropriate professional help



"Have any self-care strategies or professional support worked well for you in the past?"

Promote self-care and other available resources



"I'm happy to help you look into benefits or resource options anytime."

### Where to find more help:



Call the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (6264) or text 'NAMI' to 62640



In a crisis, call or text 988



Receive 10% off all happy products by using code Poster-happy10-SBNY at checkout



Together, we can make things better

