

# Developing Your Emotional Intelligence: Recognition and Regulation Strategies

During a recent virtual session, Emotional Intelligence expert Andrea Hoban shared some insights on developing both emotion recognition and regulation strategies. Here are some examples you can embed into your day – whether it is at home or at work.

COVID-19 has changed the landscape of emotions we experience every day. The frequency in which we experience stress, fear, anger, fatigue and grief has increased. Building the skills to recognize and regulate your emotions is a requisite competency for the times.

## Getting Started

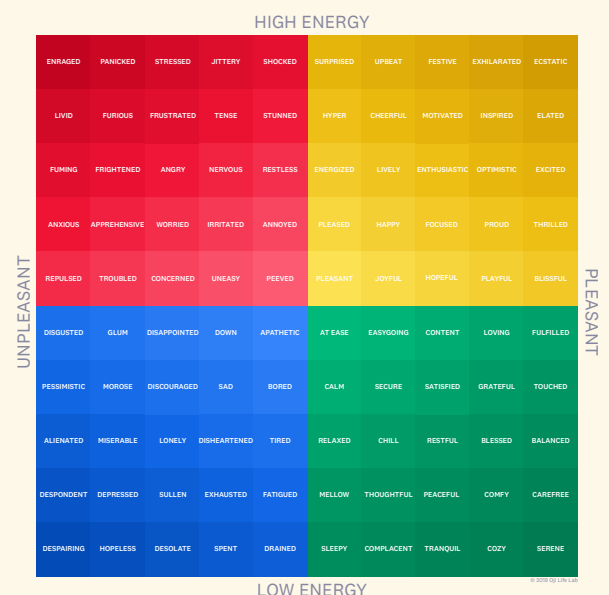
Experts suggest an exercise of completing four straightforward statements to recognize and regulate emotions:

1. Right now, I feel: \_\_\_\_\_ (use the Mood Meter to help)
2. Feeling this way is helpful to what I'm doing: YES / NO
3. If the answer is no, answer this: I would like to feel \_\_\_\_\_ instead.
4. To get to the desired emotion, I can insert strategy here (use the regulation strategies below to help)

## Recognition

Research has shown that we can make sense of our emotions by mapping them on two dimensions: energy and pleasantness. We use the **Mood Meter** to talk about emotions and these dimensions. The four quadrants break down emotions based on energy and pleasantness. While emotions in every quadrant are useful in some situations, in challenging times like we are in now, people can find themselves stuck in the unpleasant red and blue quadrants.

*Try using the Mood Meter to determine where you fall based on how you feel today.*



# Mood Meter

HIGH ENERGY

UNPLEASANT	ENRAGED	PANICKED	STRESSED	JITTERY	SHOCKED	SURPRISED	UPBEAT	FESTIVE	EXHILARATED	ECSTATIC	PLEASANT
	LIVID	FURIOUS	FRUSTRATED	TENSE	STUNNED	HYPER	CHEERFUL	MOTIVATED	INSPIRED	ELATED	
	FUMING	FRIGHTENED	ANGRY	NERVOUS	RESTLESS	ENERGIZED	LIVELY	ENTHUSIASTIC	OPTIMISTIC	EXCITED	
	ANXIOUS	APPREHENSIVE	WORRIED	IRRITATED	ANNOYED	PLEASED	HAPPY	FOCUSED	PROUD	THRILLED	
	REPULSED	TROUBLED	CONCERNED	UNEASY	PEEVED	PLEASANT	JOYFUL	HOPEFUL	PLAYFUL	BLISSFUL	
	DISGUSTED	GLUM	DISAPPOINTED	DOWN	APATHETIC	AT EASE	EASYGOING	CONTENT	LOVING	FULFILLED	
	PESSIMISTIC	MOROSE	DISCOURAGED	SAD	BORED	CALM	SECURE	SATISFIED	GRATEFUL	TOUCHED	
	ALIENATED	MISERABLE	LONELY	DISHEARTENED	TIRED	RELAXED	CHILL	RESTFUL	BLESSED	BALANCED	
	DESPONDENT	DEPRESSED	SULLEN	EXHAUSTED	FATIGUED	MELLOW	THOUGHTFUL	PEACEFUL	COMFY	CAREFREE	
	DESPAIRING	HOPELESS	DESOLATE	SPENT	DRAINED	SLEEPY	COMPLACENT	TRANQUIL	COZY	SERENE	

LOW ENERGY

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## Recognize & Regulate



This poster is part of the **Emotion Life Lab**, a digital emotional intelligence learning program that helps teams and individuals upgrade work and life performance. [More info at www.ojilifelab.com](http://www.ojilifelab.com).



## Regulation

There's a rich toolbox of emotional intelligence skills that can help you shape or regulate your emotions. You can divide regulation skills into two categories, ACTION strategies that involve changing your behaviour, and THINKING strategies that rely on adjusting your thoughts.

As you consider your regulation strategies, try to find the root cause for the emotions you were feeling based on the Mood Meter. After you name your emotion, ask yourself "What might be causing this feeling?" Getting to the root of an emotion is an important step in the process of regulating emotions to improve outcomes. For example, if you feel frustrated, it's helpful to identify what goal has been blocked. That way, you'll be able to act or communicate in a way that restores your ability to progress towards the goal.

### Action strategies

You can try one or several of these action strategies to help address the emotions that are working against your goals right now.

Strategy	Builds Positive Energy	Reduces Unpleasant Emotions	Calming & Restorative
Take a conscious breath		●	●
Stretch in your chair			●
Listen to music	●	●	●
Make yourself a hot cup of tea			●
Sit with your pet	●	●	●
Go for a walk	●	●	●
Exercise	●	●	
Call a friend	●	●	●
Engage in a hobby	●	●	●
Take a nap			●
Keep a journal		●	●
Help a person in need	●	●	●
Dance in your living room	●	●	
Watch something that makes you laugh	●	●	
Stand outside for 2 minutes			●

## Thinking strategies

You can also consider these strategies as you navigate the difficult emotional terrain we're all experiencing now.

Strategy	How It Works	Example
<b>Self-talk</b>	When you notice negative or catastrophic thoughts, change the narrative by giving yourself a pep-talk.	Instead of thinking "I'm so worried that I'm going to get sick and get my family sick" try "I'm healthy now and I've taken all the precautions I can to keep my family healthy too. I can take some comfort in that all of our self-quarantining, hand-washing and cleaning is working to keep us safe." We know – it's not always easy to use positive self-talk, and it doesn't always work. But remember: fake it till you make it!
<b>Distancing</b>	See yourself as an observer in an intense situation that you are a part of.	When your 3rd grader has a meltdown, imagine a frame around them, like you're watching their angry words and tears on a tv show. This will allow you to stay present and supportive, and be less likely to take on their emotions or react in an unhelpful way.
<b>Reframing</b>	Look to see different perspectives other than your own.	If someone is rude and selfish, try reframing with questions like: Why might he be behaving that way? Was he scared? What's going on in his work and home life? How might the situation have triggered the strong response? Are there other perspectives you can take to see the situation differently?
<b>Distraction</b>	When you find yourself ruminating, disrupt the signal by doing something different for a short period of time.	When you find yourself in a spiral of "I'm so worried about what's going to happen next," temporarily distract yourself with a different activity: watch a funny clip on YouTube, text a friend, or eat a healthy snack. The goal is to do something that shifts your thinking to be more pleasant so you can get back on track with what matters.
<b>Labeling</b>	Keep a log of the emotions you experience. Naming what you feel is the gateway to reducing the intensity of high energy, unpleasant emotions.	Track your emotional roller coaster in real-time by writing down what you feel as you feel it, or use the Mood Meter app (on your app store). You'll be able to identify patterns where a little regulation could transform the unpleasant to pleasant and support better outcomes.

Developed in collaboration with Andrea Hoban, Co-Founder and Head of Learning at Oji Life Lab  
[ojilifelab.com](https://ojilifelab.com)

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