

EMOTIONAL HEALTH SKILLS

A. What do we do with emotions?

Feel—Deal—Heal

Feeling and dealing with your emotions now will help prepare you to heal later. You can work on growing your coping capacity while we continue waiting for safety and clarity.

How to feel emotions?

1. *If an uncomfortable or unpleasant emotion arises, let it.*
2. *If an inner record accompanies the feeling in your mind (ex: “I’m unloveable; I can’t handle this; I am alone”) STOP! You are thinking your feelings.*
3. *Redirect your mind back to the physical and emotional sensations in the body and heart.*
4. *Name the sensations mentally (ex: “My chest is tight; my heart is pounding; I feel sad”)*
5. *Breathe into the feeling/sensation and allow it. Cry, shake, stomp...in the appropriate setting...in order for it to be expressed and pass. Emotions come and go. Don’t spend your energy trying to stop them, but feel them.*
6. *If your mind wants to go back to thought-story mode of that inner record that is playing, make a note to journal it later and ask Jesus for the truth. Break agreement with the lie and confess the truth.*
7. *Redirect awareness back into your body in the present.*
8. *Use a coping or self-regulation skill to calm yourself by communicating to your body somatically instead of mentally.*

Understanding Triggers

In crisis moments, the pain may be a combination of present and past pain. Depending on your history, stored pain may be activated, increasing the intensity of the present even more. Being triggered means you are experiencing past pain in the present moment. That’s OK. Triggers are an opportunity to find unhealed wounds where the Shepherd can heal. If the thought or feeling is also connected and charged by a past traumatic experience, it is recommended seeking trauma informed care to help you process.

Healing Emotional Wounds

*“Healing doesn’t mean the suffering never existed, but that it no longer controls our lives,”
Confident Woman Co.*

We recommend working with a professional counselor or trained lay counselor to discern your healing route. Please visit Forerunnerchurch.com/pastoralsupport for a list of internal and external resources that will be regularly updated. Under Lay Counseling, there is a link to view professional counselors and agencies in the Kansas City area.

B. How to rest while healing?

Self-care and rest is central to emotional health.

“If you don’t schedule a break, your body will take one for you, and it probably won’t be at a convenient time.” Self care is more than napping on the sofa, but learning your needs and caring for your whole self. “Rest is anything that makes our nervous systems feel safe enough for our stress responses to switch off so our minds and bodies can recover and restore,” by Nicola Jane Hobbs:

- **Physical rest**—sleep, stretching, nourishing food, mindful movement, walks, strolls
- **Mental rest**—non thinking activities, baking, painting, gardening, single-tasking (ie: when eating, *only* eat...)
- **Emotional rest**—crying, journaling, therapy, healthy emotional expression, sharing not suppressing
- **Social rest**—hugs, solitude, intimacy, safe community, activism, resource groups
- **Sensory rest**—silence, relaxing music, soothing scents, loose clothing, cozy blankets, healthy and safe touch
- **Spiritual rest**—entering Christ’s peace, meditation, truth, prayer, weekly Sabbath, delight in God and nature
- **Creative rest**—drawing, projects, decorating, cooking a new recipe, novels and fiction reading
- **Playful rest**—fun and unproductive, watch a movie, play a board game, do a puzzle, build a fort
- **Ecological rest**—houseplants, car-free days, growing your own, hiking, bird watching, wild swimming, turning off phone/social media
- **Altruistic rest**—giving without expecting anything in return, deep listening, volunteering, random acts of kindness, contributing, holding space for others and letting ourselves be held