THE KEY TO
EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Cecile Naudé
Social Worker, CLW
MW (SW), UP

3. Decide to control your feelings. You may show a certain amount of emotional reaction.
4. Accept your feelings. Understand *why* you experience those feelings. To accept your feelings takes less energy than trying to deny them. It also helps us to shift our energy to productive thoughts or actions.
5. Ask yourself *what would be the best way to cope.* If you overreact, it will not help to change the situation, so why pay such a high emotional price?
6. Remember that your reaction *should always be in line with* the stimulus situation. Plan for positive results! If you are angry, it does not mean that you have to slam the door. Try to express your feelings at the appropriate time with the acceptable words.
7. If we are more aware of our feelings, we have a better chance to anticipate how we will feel in the future.

There are different useful techniques whereby emotions can be controlled:
- **Become emotionally aware** - Know when feelings are present in ourselves and others.
- **Physical exercise** helps controlling and relieving emotions.
- **Think logically** - be aware of your feelings, but try to focus on solutions.
- **Robot techniques** - Focus on STOP, THINK, DO in order to control your feelings.
- **Rubber band around the wrist** - Shoot yourself with the rubber band as soon as you feel that you are losing control.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation** - Contract your muscles beyond their normal tension and release them; repeat the process (alternate this with different muscle groups).
- **Empty chair technique** - Sit next to an empty chair, imagine the person or the problem involved is sitting in the empty chair. Verbalise your feelings.
- **Keep a journal of your feelings** - Write down your feelings in detail. This gives you a better perspective on your experiences.
- **Paint your feelings** - Release excessive energy artistically in doing so.
- **Try to see the humour in the feeling and the situation.** This will increase energy!
- **Think of an animal or event in nature that describes your feelings best.** Your feelings may be like a tsunami that swamps everything around it.
- **Make animal sounds** - this will relieve the tension.
- **Deep breathing** - Relieves tension and gives you a few moments to think clearly.

Remember that the control of our emotions does not mean suppressing them, it means that we become aware of them and then decide to act in an appropriate way. Emotional control is essential to improve the quality of your life and maintain healthy relationships.

Resources available:
- **CLW (Centurion Life Skills Workshop):** 
  (012) 664 1951 / (012) 664 7415
- **Family Life Centre:** (011) 788 4784/5


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