

"Hope is a waking dream."
~Aristotle



Topic: **Self-Regulation.**

Creating a Hopeful Mindset

In the last lesson, we learned that we need to stay in the Upstairs brain and that we need to nourish our brains to have hope. In this lesson, we will learn tools try to keep ourselves in the hopeful Upstairs brain.

The first activities are ones we can do almost anywhere and anytime. Incorporating them into our daily lives will make us more balanced and hopeful. Some of these tools you can use in the moment when your Downstairs brain is knocking or has already taken over. Some tools you can use daily to stay hopeful overtime.

Self-Regulation Techniques

We practiced a **Deep Breathing Exercise** to help calm our mind and body down. Let's look at some other self-regulation tools we may practice in our daily lives to keep us in a hopeful mindset.

Meditation

You can meditate in many ways. Meditation has been found to improve memory, increase creativity, reduce anxiety, help us relax, get better sleep, and is good for our emotional well-being.

Get as comfortable as possible. It is best to find as quiet of a location as possible. Close your eyes, keep your body still, and focus only on breathing. Practice this meditation for five minutes. If it is helpful when you are beginning, to count to five in your head as you inhale and count to five again as you exhale. The goal is to quiet your mind/thoughts, be still, and focus only on each breath.

Visualization

Close your eyes and focus on an image that makes you happy. Think about this image for 30 seconds (or for a few minutes), and you can calm down, improve your mood, and become more hopeful.

Gratitude

Another technique you may use to calm down if you're feeling stressed, angry, scared, or frustrated over days, weeks, or months; is to show gratitude. If you pay attention to three things a day toward which you are grateful, you are focusing on what is good in your life. This gratitude helps you stay hopeful even if there are events out of your control that challenge your hope.

Journaling

A similar activity is to journal about what positive things have happened in your day.

Get Creative

Finally, you can relax your emotions and prepare your brain for hope by doing activities that are creative. Writing, using your imagination to make up skits or stories, painting/coloring, drawing, or designing other art projects (or any other activity where you use your creativity), can help you release tension, anger, stress, and frustration to prepare your mind for hope.



How Joseph Calms Down

Joseph often got very frustrated with his roommate Tomas. Tomas did not keep up his end of cleaning their apartment. When Joseph got home, Tomas would be watching TV with a sink full of dishes just sitting there.

Often after work, Joseph would feel so frustrated, he would take out his anger on Tomas by ignoring him or making rude comments. This often made him feel badly later.

Joseph learned the hope tools about how to create a hopeful mind, and liked the idea of taking deep breaths and being grateful for three things a day. Joseph started to use these tools in order to relax his mind and body when Tomas irritated him.

First, Joseph would take a few deep breaths every day before walking inside his house after getting off work. This really helped him settle down before seeing his roommate.

Joseph also started to practice gratitude. In the morning, during lunch, and at dinner, Joseph would stop and write down one thing he was grateful for in the back of a notebook. Joseph tried to focus on reasons he was grateful for Tomas at least once a day.

Joseph found that after using these tools, he did a better job with talking to Tomas about his day and creating a plan together for what each of them could do to share the responsibility for cleaning. Joseph was nicer to Tomas too, which also helped their friendship and made him feel good.

By using the hope tools for calming your mind, you can work to reduce the frustration you have the same way that Joseph does.

Hope Exercise

- 1) Which tool is not used for creating a hopeful mind?
 - a. Meditation
 - b. Deep Breathing
 - c. Visualization
 - d. Practicing Gratitude
 - e. Ignoring Bad Feelings

- 2) Do you think one or a few of these tools can help you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 3) Self-Regulating Exercises should be practiced:
 - a. Once a month.
 - b. Every day.
 - c. Only when needed.
 - d. Twice a week.

- 4) What hope tools did Joseph practice to create a hopeful mind?
 - a. Meditation and Visualization
 - b. Deep Breathing and Practicing Gratitude
 - c. Journaling and Doing Something Creative
 - d. Practicing Gratitude and Meditation

Things to Think About

Take a moment and write down answers to the following questions to keep for yourself. Feel free to use the HOPE SUNFLOWER WORKSHEET as a reference for your hope tools.

A time when I can use hope as a tool:

What are three things you are grateful for?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three positive things that have happened in your day?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name one self-regulation technique that you feel will be helpful in keeping your mind full of hope.