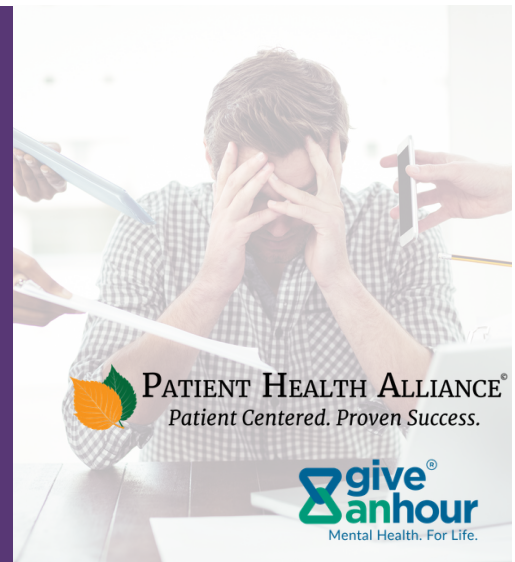


# Self-Regulation: Strategies for Emotional Balance and Resilience

Emotional self-regulation is about managing your emotions and reactions in different situations. It starts with self-awareness— noticing and understanding your feelings and what activates them. Once you're aware, self-regulation helps you handle tough emotions and express them in a healthy way.

Self-regulation is important for managing stress, communicating well, and staying productive, even when things get difficult. It's not always easy, especially when dealing with competing priorities, unexpected problems, or personal challenges.



**Challenge:** For the next 6 weeks, practice one of these self-regulation techniques per week.

## Self-Awareness: Understand and Recognize Emotions

- ☐ **Check-In Regularly:** Take short breaks to notice how you're feeling. Are you stressed, calm, frustrated, or content?
- ☐ **Recognize Activators:** Notice what sparks your emotions, whether it's a specific event, interaction, or thought. Understanding these activators helps you prepare for and manage your emotional responses more effectively.
- ☐ **Label Feelings:** When you feel a surge of emotion, identify it. Simply naming feelings (like anger, anxiety, or joy) can lessen their intensity and help you think more clearly.

## Use Positive Self-Talk

- ☐ **Reframe Negative Thoughts:** If you're feeling overwhelmed, change your inner dialogue. For example, replace "I can't do this" with "I'm finding this hard, but I can take it one step at a time."
- ☐ **Affirmations and Encouragement:** Remind yourself of past successes, and use affirmations to build confidence, like "I am capable" or "I have managed challenges before."

## Practice Gratitude and Self-Compassion

- ☐ **Focus on Positives:** Spend a few minutes each day reflecting on things you're grateful for, as this can shift your mindset toward positivity.
- ☐ **Forgive Mistakes:** Be kind to yourself when you fall short. Accept that setbacks happen, and focus on learning from each experience.

## Develop a Healthy Routine

- ☐ **Establish Regular Sleep and Nutrition Habits:** Adequate rest and a balanced diet play a big role in mood and resilience, helping you stay in control when faced with challenges.
- ☐ **Set Time for Reflection:** Daily or weekly, take time to reflect on what went well and where you could improve, allowing you to make adjustments with intention.

## Pause Before Responding

- ☐ **Use a Cushion Before Responding:** When emotions are activated, your rational brain needs time to catch up. Responding in the heat of the moment can escalate conflicts. Instead, create a "cushion" by pausing—take a brief walk, sip some water, or give yourself a moment to cool down—before you react.
- ☐ **Don't Feel Pressured to Respond:** When our buttons are pushed, we might need some time to percolate before we respond. Sleep on it (if you can), what seems critical in the moment can seem like no big deal after a good night's sleep.

## Build a Support Network

- ☐ **Talk It Out:** Find a trusted friend or mentor you can turn to for advice or a listening ear. Sharing challenges helps you find solutions or see.
- ☐ **Encourage Accountability:** Having someone who knows your goals can help you stay on track and offer encouragement. Find an accountability partner!

**Reflect:** Which one(s) worked the best for you?

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This toolkit was co-developed by Patient Health Alliance in collaboration with Give an Hour, a national nonprofit whose trauma-informed mental health frameworks informed the structure and tools included.

For more information visit [GiveAnHour.org/ContactUs](https://GiveAnHour.org/ContactUs)

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