

We all experience many challenging feelings and emotions, such as stress, anger, anxiety, fear, sadness, depression, shame, guilt, and loneliness. At times these emotions can be intense, uncomfortable, and overwhelming. We cannot always control our emotions and they can just pop up. Remember though, we are in control of how we respond to emotions and how we cope. We can learn and practice how to cope and work with them in healthy ways.

Learning Point # 1 → *Pressing the pause button*

Pressing the pause button prevents us from reacting automatically. When we stressed or upset, the key is to “press the pause button” as soon as we can. By pausing, we can respond to our emotions, instead of reacting automatically. A good way to pause is to take a few mindful breaths or focus on the sights and sounds in our immediate environment. Sometimes when emotions are extremely intense, it helps to pause and slow down by using other strategies, such as walking away from the situation, spending a few minutes alone, talking to someone, listening to music, or taking a hot or cold shower.

- From your perspective, what is the difference between “responding to our emotions” versus “reacting automatically to our emotions”?

Learning Point # 2 → *Acknowledging our feelings without judgment*

Acknowledging our feelings helps us cope more effectively. Taking the time to acknowledge our feelings can help us cope more effectively. Rather than avoiding our feelings, we can learn and practice how to acknowledge our feelings and cope with our feelings as they are. In other words, rather than pretending our feelings are not there, we can see our emotions for what they are, acknowledge that they are there, and then think about how we can best take care of ourselves.

- For you personally, what could be the benefits of acknowledging uncomfortable emotions, rather than fighting or avoiding them?

Learning Point # 3 → *Emotions are not dangerous*

While emotions can be intense and uncomfortable, they will not harm us. Emotions like anxiety, panic, anger, and sadness can certainly be very uncomfortable and overwhelming. Remember though, these emotions in themselves are not dangerous and will not cause physical harm. It can help to pause and say to ourselves things like: *“Remember, these feelings will not harm me and they will pass. I can get through this.”*

- What is a personal message you can say to yourself to remind yourself that emotions are not dangerous?

Daily Practice

Your brain is like a muscle. DAILY PRACTICE makes it strong.

Research studies show that daily practice...

- Makes your brain healthier and stronger
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Increases positive emotions

Recommendations for Daily Practice

- Set aside a little time every day to do ONE lesson or exercise. The lessons focus on *learning* key concepts. Exercises focus on *strengthening* your skills.
- The key is to CHOOSE what works for you. Develop a personalized practice of your own. If you miss a day, no worries. You can always get back on track the next day
- An exercise that goes well with this lesson is the **BOAT Exercise**, available in the *Classic Mindfulness Exercise Category* at MindfulCoping.com

Plan for Your Daily Practice

	What date/day of week will this be for me?	What Lesson or Exercise will I plan to do on this day? <i>(Tips: Consider repeating the “Coping with stress and emotions” lesson or trying the BOAT Exercise)</i>	When and where will I practice?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

Keep in mind, the Mindful Coping Program is designed to be FLEXIBLE. Don't worry about doing the lessons or exercises in a particular order. You can go through the lessons and exercises in any order you prefer.
