Emotion Regulation
Handout: Brief/In-the-Moment Exercises

Notice Your Senses

- Find a comfortable position.
- Notice:
    - 5 things you can see
    - 4 things you can feel/touch
    - 3 things you can hear
    - 2 things you can smell, and
    - 1 thing you can taste.

Do an Activity Mindfully

- Notice the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations while completing activities like eating/drinking, showering, washing hands, brushing teeth, walking/stretching/yoga, being in nature, listening to music, or preparing coffee.

3 Mindful Breaths

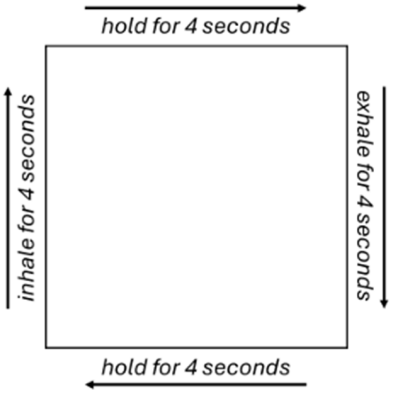
- First breath: Notice the sounds around you. What can you hear?
- Second breath: Notice your breath. Feel the air moving in and out of your lungs.
- Third breath: Check in with your body. How is it feeling? Notice your body's sensations.

STOP

- Stop: Pause what you are doing.
- Take a breath: Breathe in deeply; imagine filling up your belly like a balloon. Now breathe out. Imagine blowing bubbles through a straw.
- Observe: Notice your thoughts and feelings.
- Proceed with awareness

Box Breathing

- To take a box breath:
    - Take a deep breath in, counting 4 seconds.
    - Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
    - Breathe out fully for 4 seconds.
    - Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Repeat this process 3-5 times.
- If 4 seconds is too long, start with 2 or 3. Once you practice, if you feel comfortable with 4 seconds, you can increase to 5 seconds or lengthen your exhales.



Emotion Regulation
Handout: Structured/Planned Exercises

Before you begin:

- Set aside 5-10 minutes for your practice.
- Get into a comfortable position and find a quiet, calm environment without distractions.
- You may find it helpful to gently close your eyes and take deep breaths during your practice.
- For guided practice, scan the QR code or visit yfrp.pitt.edu/MomMA/mindfulness.
- Rate your body's tension on a scale from 1-10 (1 = completely tense, 10 = completely relaxed).

Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- You will be tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups in your body.
- First, choose the muscle group. Tense it and squeeze the muscles in that part of the body for 5 seconds. Notice how the tension feels in your body.
- Then, let go of the tension and relax the muscles in that part of your body. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.
- Muscle groups:
    - Face (scrunch up forehead, nose, and mouth, clench jaw)
    - Neck and shoulders (raise shoulders up to ears)
    - Biceps (bend elbow and tense upper arm)
    - Hands (clench your fist; one hand at a time and then both together)
    - Chest (tighten by taking a deep breath and holding it)
    - Stomach (deep breath and tense muscles)
    - Back (arch but do not strain)
    - Buttocks and thighs (pull buttocks together while pressing heels down)
    - Calves and foot (curl toes inward)

RAIN

- *Recognize*: name and acknowledge the emotion without judgment while it is happening.
- *Accept*: accept the emotion; allow and welcome it. Remember that emotions are a normal part of being human. You don't have to like or want the emotion, but you can accept that it is what you are feeling right now.
- *Investigate*: investigate the emotion with curiosity, openness, and interest. Notice how the emotion feels in your body. What kinds of thoughts or beliefs are you having?
- *Nurture*: think of yourself as an "outside observer" of your emotion. Emotions are temporary; you don't have to take them personally and can just notice your experience and learn from it. Ask yourself "What would I tell a friend who was feeling this way?".

After your practice:

- Gently allow your awareness to come back to the present moment.
- Don't judge if you were "successful" in your relaxation.
- Rate your body's tension on a scale from 1-10 (1 = completely tense, 10 = completely relaxed). Notice any changes in your body's tension before and after the practice.