

Puberty & Emotional Regulation

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotion regulation is the ability to notice, understand, & respond to emotions.

- Emotional regulation allows us to respond to emotions in a safe and healthy way.
- Emotional dysregulation happens when emotions feel out of control or unmanageable.

MOOD SWINGS

Mood swings are sudden changes in your mood or feelings.

- Mood swings are caused by sudden changes in brain chemicals.
- A mood swing often feels like a quick shift from one big emotion to another without a specific reason.

PUBERTY + EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Hormonal changes during puberty cause challenging emotions to be more frequent and intense.

- The quick changes in hormones cause mood swings to be common during puberty.
- Besides hormone changes, these factors also affect emotional regulation during puberty:

Poor sleep

Anxiety

School demands

Physical changes

Peer pressure

Family conflict

Feeling lonely

Self-consciousness

Increased decision making

Stress

Busy schedules

HORMONES

Hormones are chemicals that carry messages in the body.

- These messages tell the body what to do and when to do it.
- Hormones also affect the brain which impacts mood and emotions.

HORMONES + PUBERTY

Puberty happens when the levels of certain hormones in the body increase.

- Lots of hormones are involved in puberty:

Kisspeptin

LH

FSH

GnRH

Testosterone

Estrogen

Progesterone

HORMONES + EMOTIONS

Big changes in hormones cause big changes in emotions.

- Some of the feelings and actions that puberty hormones can increase are:

Irritability

Fatigue

Impulsivity

Risk-taking

Mood swings

Sex-drive

Anxiety

Depression

Competitiveness

Aggression

PUBERTY + NEURODIVERSITY

Emotional regulation is hard for many neurodivergent people.

- ND people process information uniquely—that includes the way they process emotions.
- Moodswings make understanding and responding to emotions even harder.
- Difficulty with emotional regulation can lead to mis-understandings & unmet needs during puberty.

Tips to support emotional regulation during puberty



Puberty & Emotional Regulation

Give these activities a try when you're feeling emotionally overwhelmed. Keep in mind that everyone is different, and it might take some time to discover what works best for you.

HEAVY WORK

Do actions that make you use your muscles.

- Pushing (wall push-ups)
- Pulling (stretching putty)
- Jumping (trampoline)
- Chewing (gum)
- Sucking (using a straw)
- Climbing (playground)



DEEP PRESSURE

Do some actions that give your body a big squish.

- Bear hug
- Weighted blanket/plushie
- Ball massage
- Arm & leg squeezes



SPECIAL INTERESTS

Engage with your special interests.

- Research
- Play
- Watch
- Organize
- Practice



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Check in with your senses and your surroundings.

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



SOLO ACTIVITIES

Do activities by yourself.

- Reading
- Music
- Video games
- Art
- Building
- TV & Movies
- Writing



SAFE SPACE

Create a safe space in your home that is just for you.

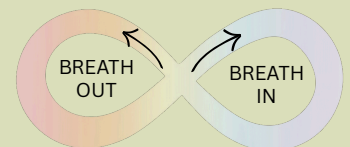
- Cozy corner
- Special interest zone
- Sensory space
- Movement room
- Bedroom



BREATHING

Try out specific breathing patterns.

- Infinity breathing
- Rainbow breathing
- Box breathing
- 5 Finger breathing



STIM

Do actions that soothe you.

- Repeated movements or sounds
- Watching video clips
- Using sensory toys



CO-REGULATE

Use another person to help you regulate.

- Bring you tools
- Talk or listen
- Change the environment
- Provide safe touch

