# **Troubleshooting Emotion Regulation Skills: When What** You Are Doing Isn't Working

#### CHECK YOUR BIOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

ASK: Am I biologically more vulnerable?

Do I have untreated physical illness or distress?

Am I out of balance on eating, use of drugs, sleep, exercise?

Have I taken medications as prescribed?

- WORK on your PLEASE skills.
  - 1. Take care of physical illness and distress.
  - 2. Take medications as prescribed. Check if others are needed.
  - 3. Try again.

## **CHECK YOUR SKILLS**

REVIEW what you have tried.

Did you try a skill likely to be effective? Did you follow the skill instructions to the letter?

- WORK on your skills.
  - 1. Review and try other skills.
  - 2. Get coaching if you need it.
  - 3. Try again.

#### **CHECK FOR REINFORCERS**

ASK: Do my emotions . . .

COMMUNICATE an important message or influence people to do things? MOTIVATE me to do things I think are important?

VALIDATE my beliefs or my identity?

FEEL GOOD?

- IF YES:
  - 1. Practice interpersonal effectiveness skills to communicate.
  - 2. Work to find new reinforcers to motivate yourself.
  - **3.** Practice self-validation.
  - 4. Do PROS AND CONS for changing emotions. (See Emotion Regulation Worksheet 1.)

(continued on next page)

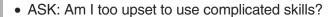
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### **CHECK YOUR MOOD**



- ASK: Am I putting in the time and effort that solving my problem will take?
- IF NO:
  - 1. Do PROS AND CONS for working hard on skills.
  - 2. Practice RADICAL ACCEPTANCE and WILLINGNESS skills.
  - **3.** Practice the mindfulness skills of PARTICIPATING and EFFECTIVENESS (See Mindfulness Handouts 4 and 5.)

#### **CHECK FOR EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD**





- IF YES, ask: Can the problems I am worrying about be easily solved now?
  - IF YES, do PROBLEM SOLVING. (See Emotion Regulation Handouts 9, 12.)
  - IF NO, practice mindfulness of CURRENT EMOTIONS. (See Emotion Regulation Handout 22.)
- IF your emotions are too high for you to think straight:
  - Go to TIP skills. (See Distress Tolerance Handout 5.)

#### CHECK FOR EMOTION MYTHS GETTING IN THE WAY



• CHECK FOR:

Judgmental myths about emotions (e.g., "Some emotions are stupid," "There is a right way to feel in every situation")?

Beliefs that emotions and identity are the same (e.g., "My emotions are who I am")?

- IF YES:
  - 1. Check the facts.
  - 2. Challenge myths.
  - 3. Practice thinking nonjudgmentally.