



BONA FIDE

PSYCHOTHERAPY & COUNSELLING

EMOTIONAL REGULATION TOOLKIT FOR TEENS (and Parents!)

A FREE GUIDE FROM BONA FIDE
PSYCHOTHERAPY & COUNSELLING



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What Is Emotional Regulation?

Emotional regulation is your ability to notice, understand, and manage your emotions in healthy ways. It doesn't mean stopping big feelings—it means learning how to ride the waves instead of getting pulled under.

For parents, emotional regulation means being a safe co-regulator—someone who helps their teen calm down, not escalate.

Common Triggers for Teens (and What Helps)

Trigger	What It Might Feel Like	Try This Instead
Rejection (friends, dating, school)	Sadness, anger, shutdown	Deep breaths, journal it out, or a walk
Academic stress	Sadness, anger, shutdown	Break tasks into chunks + short movement breaks
Family conflict	Rage, helplessness	Take space, use "I" statements later
Social media comparison	Low self-esteem, pressure	Log off + list 3 things you like about yourself
Exhaustion/hunger	Irritability, crying spells	Eat, hydrate, nap—then talk



5 Regulation Tools That Actually Work

1

BOX BREATHING (4-4-4-4)

- Breathe in for 4.
- Hold for 4.
- Out for 4.
- Hold for 4.
- Repeat x3 to calm the nervous system.

2

THE "NAME IT TO TAME IT" TRICK

Say out loud what you're feeling.

"I feel anxious." "I feel mad."

Naming the emotion helps take away some of its power.

3

COLD WATER RESET

Splash your face or hold something cold.

It tells your brain: *you're safe now.*

4

SHAKE IT OFF

Literally.

Stand up and shake your body for 30 seconds.

It helps reset your nervous system.

1

THE 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel (touch)
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste

Helps pull you out of a spiral and into the present.



CO-REGULATION TIPS FOR PARENTS

Stay calm yourself

Your nervous system sets the tone.

Offer space—but stay close

Let them cool down without feeling abandoned.

Use “I see you’re struggling. I’m here when you’re ready.”

Model the same tools

breathe with them, validate emotions without trying to fix them immediately.

BONUS: QUICK REGULATION KIT IDEAS

Put these in a small box or bag your teen can grab when overwhelmed:

- Fidget item
- Peppermint gum or essential oil
- Index card with a breathing exercise
- A playlist of calming songs
- A photo of a pet or a person they love

FINAL NOTE

Emotions are normal.

Regulation is a skill—not something you’re born with. It takes practice and patience, for both teens and parents.

LOOKING FOR MORE SUPPORT?

📞 Book a consultation call:

www.bftherapy.ca

✉ Email us at:

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