

FEELING IN CONTROL

navigating the negative



Negative emotions are part of life, but we often prefer to shut them out and wish them away. Situations that leave us feeling sad, frustrated, angry, or jealous may be uncomfortable, but they can be valuable as well. They offer an opportunity to assess the benefits of negative emotions and experiences and understand how we can use them for personal improvement. The best approach to navigating negative emotions is to accept them, while also engaging in activities that can counter-balance them in an authentic way.

According to renowned psychologist, Ceri Sims, one strategy that can help us cope with negative emotions combines a series of techniques identified by the acronym TEARS of HOPE.

THE ABCDE DISPUTATION TECHNIQUE

Dr. Martin Seligman, a leader in the field of Positive Psychology, developed the ABCDE method for disputing your negative thoughts. It's based on the idea that your thoughts can generate your feelings. So, if you take active control of your thoughts, you can take active control of your emotions.

This approach focuses on identifying the underlying thoughts that influence our emotions and behaviours and then actively challenging these beliefs. It's best done as a writing exercise and it's an ongoing process that you can repeat often when facing negative thoughts and emotions.

Pay attention to the ADVERSITY that sparks negative emotion. Describe it specifically, but be objective.		DISPUTE the accuracy of your beliefs through:
Record your negative BELIEFS . Write the thoughts running through your mind verbatim.		a. Evidence. <i>That's not completely true because...</i>
Record the CONSEQUENCES of your beliefs - the feelings and actions that resulted from what you thought. Ask yourself if these consequences make sense given your beliefs.		b. Alternative. <i>A more accurate way to see this is...</i> c. Perspective. <i>The most likely outcome is... and I can do... to handle it.</i>
		Identify how the disputation changed your ENERGY . Note changes to your mood and behaviour and any new solutions you discovered.

TEARS of HOPE

T each & learn.

Be self-aware and open to better understanding how your mind and body respond to stress and the signals they provide you.

E xpress & enable sensory and embodied experiences.

Be curious and open to experiences that come your way – both positive or negative.

A ccept & befriend.

Focus on increasing your own self-compassion and tolerance for frustration.

R eappraise & reframe.

Learn how to challenge automatic negative responses by seeing things from a different perspective.

S ocial support.

Invest in relationships with yourself and others by implementing practices (e.g. meditation) that help increase self-compassion, self-acceptance, forgiveness, and connection to others.

H edonic well-being & happiness.

Strive for a 3-to-1 ratio of positive vs. negative emotions. Enjoy positive experiences, focus on happy memories, and savor successes to increase the time you spend authentically feeling good.

O bserve & attend to.

Practice mindfulness and address situations in a non-judgmental manner.

P hysiology & behavioral changes.

Focus on relaxation, breathing exercises, and self-care to calm yourself.

E udaimonia.

Strive to achieve the life you want and live with a sense of authenticity.

Sources: www.verywellmind.com/embrace-negative-emotions-4158317 | www.verywellmind.com/learned-optimism-4174101 | Images by Freepik