

Managing Difficult Emotions

There are many different emotions we will feel throughout our lifetime. Stress is a part of life and we will experience conflict in relationships, grief in many forms, and feel overwhelmed in different situations. No emotion is inherently negative, but there are ways that we express these emotions that can be negative or positive. It's important to remember to never deny or ignore how you are feeling; however, it is important to learn how to deal with distressing emotions by way of positive expression. We don't want to bottle up these difficult emotions.

So how can we express our emotions in a more helpful way?

- **ANGER**

- **negative expression:** violence, aggression, yelling, hostility
- **positive expression:**
 - address an issue before it escalates
 - go on a walk
 - exercise
 - take a break or a pause
 - check in with yourself

- **FEAR**

- **negative expression:** avoidance, panic, worry, freezing
- **positive expression:**
 - sit with it, determine what really scares you
 - humor
 - breathing exercises
 - slowly expose yourself to your fear
 - find safety

- **KEEPING THINGS INSIDE**

- **negative expression:** quick to react, upset but won't talk about why, struggling to focus
- **positive expression:**
 - journaling
 - talking to a supportive person
 - meditate
 - go on a walk
 - don't blame yourself, give yourself a much needed break

- **GRIEF**

- **negative expression:** not letting yourself grieve, trying to forget
- **positive expression:**
 - cultural family traditions to remember your loved one
 - write a letter to loved one
 - talk about this person/pet to someone
 - lighting a candle
 - join a support group

- **JEALOUSY**

- **negative expression:** anger, fear, feeling out of control, quick to judgment
- **positive expression:**
 - increase healthy communication
 - self-compassion; learn to love and appreciate yourself
 - redefine trust
 - journaling
 - take a break from social media

- **DEPRESSION**

- **negative expression:** aggression, self-harm, social withdrawal, not caring
- **positive expression:**
 - give yourself some time to cry
 - journaling
 - exercise to increase endorphins
 - reach out to a supportive person
 - make a list of what you're grateful for

- **ANXIETY**

- **negative expression:** avoidance, fear, worry, anxious habits
- **positive expression:**
 - identifying what's bothering you and attempt problem-solving
 - only give yourself a set amount of time to think about your worries, but then move forward
 - meditation
 - create a manageable routine
 - focus on what you can control

- **LONELINESS**

- **negative expression:** social withdrawal, losing friendships, cutting ties, stuck in a cycle
- **positive expression:**
 - seek professional help
 - make it a point to reach out to friends (video call, social media, texting, writing letters, etc.)
 - volunteer
 - focus on strengthening the relationships you already have
 - develop your interests or hobbies

Hotline/Crisis Numbers

24-hr Crisis Line: 602-222-9444

24-hr Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

24-hr Teen Lifeline: 800-273-TALK or 602-248-8336

ASAP (Adolescent Substance Abuse Program): 602-434-0249

EMPACT: 866-205-5229

Find Help Phoenix: [Find Help Phoenix](#)

Mercy Maricopa 24-hrs. Hotline (AHCCCS only): 800-631-1314

Pathways Substance Abuse Program: (480) 921-4050

State Treatment Hotline: 800-662-4357

Trevor Project 24 hour hotline (LGBT): 866-488-7386