

## Being aware of emotions

Do some of your thoughts bring up difficult emotions? You can develop flexibility in your inner monologue by stepping back from thoughts that cause you suffering. This will help you better respond in stressful situations.

Here is an exercise in six simple steps to try when you are experiencing hard times.

**1. Observe:** Take a step back and look at the situation or the series of ideas that triggered the emotion. What's involved? What happened? Where and when did it come about?

**2. Express yourself:** Name what you feel. How are you feeling?

Evaluate the intensity of your emotion from 0 to 8



**3. Identify your automatic thoughts:** Note the thoughts that came to you before, during and after the event.

Evaluate your level of belief in your automatic thoughts from 0 to 8



**4. Question your thoughts:** What evidence supports or contradicts these thoughts?

**5. Look for alternatives:** Are there other possible explanations? How might another person see the situation?

**6. Check back on your emotion:** After doing this exercise, do you feel your emotions differently?

## Checking in on your mental health

Have you noticed that you're often in a bad mood, and it's not improving despite your efforts? Whether it's problems in your personal life, at work, with your family or with finances, many things can affect your mental health.

*Should I be worried about my mood?*

Take a short **quiz** to take stock of your mental health by scanning the QR code:



 **I get the help I need**

**811: Info-Social**  
(Choose option 2)

*24/7 phone assistance*

A psychosocial professional will analyze your needs and refer you to the right resource for your circumstance.

Get more information to take care of your mental health at: <https://quebec.acsm.ca/en/>



**Understanding your emotions**

**TO BETTER ACCEPT THEM**

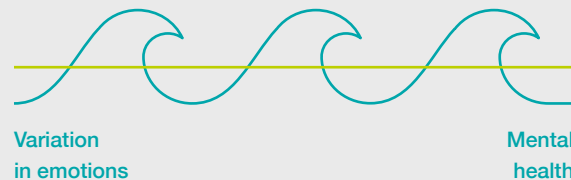


## Understanding the role of emotions

*Do you ever experience hard times that generate unpleasant emotions?*

Anxiety, stress, sadness, doubt... even though these emotions are difficult, they are useful, a bit like physical pain. They draw your attention to problems and prompt you to take a look at what's going on. This helps you find solutions and regain your balance.

Remember that good mental health doesn't mean always feeling good with no difficult emotions; it means maintaining your inner equilibrium despite emotional ups and downs.



Accepting hard times as a normal part of life and finding ways to overcome them is one of the keys to good mental health.

## Tools to better manage emotions

### Developing a kind inner monologue

*How do you speak to yourself when you are experiencing hard times?*

Many people think it's better to ignore their emotions to avoid wallowing in them. But this approach is ineffective and can actually harm your self-esteem.

- » **Step 1** : Recognize that you are going through a hard time.
  - Ouch! That hurts!
  - I feel... (name the emotion : angry, discouraged, anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, panicked, etc.)
- » **Step 2** : Put things in perspective.
  - I'm not the only one feeling this.
  - We all go through hard times.
- » **Step 3** : Be kind to yourself. Place your hands on your heart and ask yourself:
  - What do I need to hear in this moment?
  - What might help me? Can I give myself what I need?

## Practice mindfulness

Did you know that our brain spends a lot of time **thinking about the future** and **ruminating about the past**? Even though these thoughts can be useful, if they are too frequent, they can also create **anxiety** and **affect your mood**.

To maintain your **balance**, it's important to take time to **ground** yourself in the **present moment**. By observing your physical sensations, your emotions and your thoughts, you will find greater **inner calm**.

Mindfulness can be practiced in the form of meditation (there are many meditation apps available) or in day-to-day activities : savouring each bite when you eat, walking in nature and engaging all your senses or listening to music attentively.

## Breathe deeply and slow your heart rate when emotions overwhelm you

Do you feel your heart pounding when you're angry or stressed? There is a close connection between the heart and emotions. When an intense emotion arises, a breathing technique can help slow your heart rate and calm your mind. Here's how you do it :

1. Place one hand on your belly and breathe in slowly through the nose until you feel your stomach filling with air.
2. Exhale slowly through the mouth and feel your belly deflate under your hand.
3. Repeat this sequence for 5 minutes. You can use it as needed or several times a day.

