

Wellbeing resources

Managing emotions



Emotions are part of our everyday lives.

To understand emotions, it is helpful to know the following:

- An emotion is a response to an event or a thought.
- Some emotions are not easily identified.
- Sometimes you can feel a rush of conflicting emotions eg fear and excitement.
- Emotions are not facts.
- There are no right or wrong feelings or emotions.
- Emotions can sometimes overwhelm us.
- Some emotions can trigger other emotions eg grief followed by anger.
- Remember 'good' or 'ok' are not emotions.

Some emotions are so intense that they overwhelm us and stop us from thinking clearly.

Men and emotions

Gender expectations shape the lives of both men and women. Men are often told

- 'Being a man' means being in control and pushing down emotional responses.

- Men should not show vulnerability, fear or pain.
- If a man struggles with managing his emotions he might be seen as 'less of a man.'

Men trying to be strong often push down their emotions and that can affect in a bad way their health for example their gut or heart health.

Men who have experienced child sexual abuse have lots of emotions

- They are worried about opening 'a can of worms' if they talk about what happened to them when they were children.
- They talk about emotions coming out of nowhere.



- They talk about detaching from their emotions, for example checking out or going numb, as a way of surviving.

Men who have been sexually abused as children, often say they are worried that others will judge them if they show any emotional distress by crying when they talk about the abuse.

What can help male survivors show their emotions?

If they can manage their emotions, they can increase how they think and choose their emotional response.

- First up the nervous system needs to be calm. This can best be done by taking a few deep breaths.
- Sometimes they can be swept along by emotions and racing thoughts. If that happens they should try and calm themselves for example by going outside into nature, making a hot drink, standing up and stamping their feet.

Even though an emotion might be intense at times, they can learn to sit with an emotion.

An emotion is not who we are but it is something we feel at a particular time.

We can all become caught up with negative thoughts and self-talk. As well as physically calming ourselves, it is good to become aware of and distance ourselves from unhelpful and negative thoughts.

It can be helpful to put together a bank of emotional memories of happiness, fun, personal connections, closeness, strength and resilience. We can all draw on these memories when we are feeling overwhelmed.

