

# UP Skills for Work

for People with Diverse Abilities

## Adaptability: Self-regulation



# Welcome to *UP Skills for Work!*

*UP Skills for Work* helps you build skills for learning, work, and life. This workbook is written for people with diverse abilities.

## What's in this workbook?

Change happens all the time. Adaptability skills can help you feel ok when you have to change how you think or act. Self-regulation is an important part of your adaptability skills.

In this workbook, you'll learn about:

- what self-regulation is
- how self-regulation can help you feel ok with change
- strategies for self-regulation

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## What is self-regulation?

Adapting to change can make you feel strong **emotions**. Feeling emotions is normal. But sometimes your emotions can be overwhelming. When this happens, you might not feel in control of yourself and how you act.

**Self-regulation** can help you calm down. When you're calm, it's easier to think before you act. You can have more control over your actions.



**Emotions** are the ways you feel. For example, emotions can make you feel happy, sad, or angry.

**Self-regulation** is the ability to manage how you act when you're having strong feelings.

## Self-check

How well do you think you manage your emotions and actions?  
Write an "x" beside the box that feels like you.

How well do you manage yourself and your actions?	X
I'm always in control of myself and my actions	
I can sometimes control myself and my actions	
I need to work on controlling myself and my actions	

## Meet Mia

Mia rides the bus to work every day at 8am. One day, the bus driver says, “The bus schedule is changing tomorrow. This bus will come at 8:15 instead of 8.”

Mia needs to adapt to this change. She needs to find a different way to get to work on time.



- How do you think Mia feels about this change?  
Put an x beside the emotions you think Mia might be feeling.  
You can choose more than one emotion.

Emotion	X
Happiness	
Sadness	
Fear	
Anger	
Surprise	

- What are some other emotions Mia might be feeling?

## Why is self-regulation important?

Adapting to change can be hard. It can make you feel lots of different emotions. It's ok to feel any emotions you're feeling.

You might feel:

- excited
- **stressed**
- frustrated
- angry



Feeling **stressed** means you feel worried or tense.

Sometimes you might feel very strong emotions. You might feel like you want to:

- shout
- cry
- throw things
- say things you don't mean

When you feel like you can't control your actions, it's important to try and self-regulate.

When you're not calm, it's hard to think and control how you act. Adapting to change is harder when you don't have a chance to think before you act.



## Think about it

Different emotions can make your body feel different ways.

For example:

- If you're **angry**, your face might feel hot or your heart might beat fast
- If you're **nervous**, you might feel like there are butterflies in your stomach

When you understand how you're feeling, it's easier to know when you need to self-regulate.

What does your body feel like when you're calm? Think about your heart, your breathing, your head, and all the other parts of your body.

Now read the situations below. How would your body feel different in each situation?

- You're **happy** because you just got a gift you always wanted
- You're **angry** because somebody called you a bad name
- You're **sad** because your friend moved away
- You're **excited** because you get to try a new food
- You're **stressed** because you're late for work

## How to self-regulate

Strong emotions can make you feel like you're losing control of yourself and your actions. If this happens, try to stay calm. When you're calm, it's usually easier to self-regulate. Staying calm can help you control your actions.

Here are some things you can do to help stay calm if you're feeling strong emotions. Try the strategy that works best for you.

### **Stop before you act.**

Before you do anything, pause and count to 10 slowly. You can also try deep breathing. Breathe in through your nose slowly. Breathe out through your mouth slowly. Focus on your breathing until you feel calmer.

### **Try positive self-talk.**

Pick a phrase that reminds you that you're a strong person. Some ideas that might work for you:

- "I'll try my best"
- "I can handle hard things"
- "I'm proud of myself"

### **Relax your muscles if you can.**

Raise your shoulders so they feel tight. Hold them tight for 5 seconds, and then relax. Then try tightening and relaxing other body parts: face, hands, arms, legs, and feet.

### **Share how you're feeling.**

Tell a friend or family member how you feel. Sharing your emotions can sometimes make you feel calmer.

# Congratulations!

You've learned about self-regulation and how it can help you adapt to change.

## Practice your skills

Here are some ways you can practice what you learned:

- Pay attention to how your body feels when you have different emotions
- Practice ways to stay calm when you feel strong emotions
- Make sure you feel calm before you act

## Take action

Self-regulation is a skill. You need to take action to get better at a skill.

Write a **pledge** to act.



A **pledge** is a serious promise to yourself and others.

I pledge to practice my self-regulation skills.

I will

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