

# SELF-REGULATION FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING

Self-regulation is the cornerstone of mental well-being, it empowers you to effectively manage your stress while establishing a foundation for healthy behaviors and relationships. This practice can be easily incorporated into your daily routine, all you need is just 5 minutes a day!

Self-regulation is the ability to monitor and manage your energy states, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in ways that produce positive results such as well-being, loving relationships, and learning. Without it, engaging in services, activities, and following advice is challenging.

## What Happens When You Are Dysregulated?

With dysregulation, your thinking, behavior, heart rate, and breathing can become erratic. Everyone experiences dysregulation at times, but it is prevalent in people who have experienced trauma.

You may experience sudden panic or depression, intense emotional reactions, or physical symptoms like numbness, clumsiness, forgetfulness, or feeling scattered. In these states, it becomes challenging to accurately perceive reality, often mistaking safe situations for threats or vice versa. Your judgment may falter, leading to repetitive mistakes.

Regulating your brain can take hours or even days once you become dysregulated. Some people may resort to semi-effective strategies like overeating carbs, smoking, drinking, or engaging in risky behaviors to expedite the process. However, when you are dysregulated, it becomes challenging to be present, productive, responsible, and maintain connections with others.

## Key Signs Your Brain is Dysregulated

You feel spaced out, at a loss for words, can't remember where you are.

You feel scattered, trying to do a lot of things at once and finishing nothing.

You are in a rage.

You can't feel parts of your body – hands, mouth, face, nose, feet.

**The good news is that you can re-regulate your brain.** With practice and paying attention, you can notice when it's happening and identify the triggers, allowing you to take steps to re-regulate.\*

*\*Adapted from Anna Runkle, PPACES Connection post, April, 18, 2023.*

# IT TAKES JUST MINUTES

## Benefits of Self-Regulation for Your Mental Health

Improved self-esteem

Better sleep

Decreased anxiety symptoms  
*(i.e. panic attacks)*

Lower risk of medical issues  
*(i.e. heart disease, high blood pressure)*

Improved communication and relationships

Higher motivation

AND MUCH MORE!

Self-regulation is not about eliminating feelings like stress, anxiety, anger, frustration, fear, etc., because these are all normal human feelings. Instead, it's about being able to handle those feelings when they inevitably show up.

### How to Practice Self-Regulation

If you're just getting started with implementing new self-regulation techniques into your life, be intentional about setting aside time in your day to do it. For example, you can set an alarm on your phone for 12:00 pm every day as a reminder to do a 5-minute guided meditation. Or, right when you wake up, ease your body into the day with 5 minutes of stretching.

Try different techniques and find what works best for you. After a while of consistently scheduling these self-regulation practices, they will start to feel more natural and become a familiar part of your routine.

Check out the following worksheets for different daily self-regulation ideas that you can do in just 5 minutes! Or, create your own calendar using the blank template with your favorite ways to self-regulate.



# MONTH:

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Grasp your hands tightly for 5 seconds, then release and notice how they feel. Keep your attention focused on the feeling for as long as you can.	Sing along to your favorite song! Pay attention to how it makes you feel. Savor these emotions and see if they carry over throughout the day.	Set aside 5-30 minutes and turn off the television, the radio, and your phone, while giving your mind the gift of quiet.	4-4-4 breathing: Inhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, then exhale for a count of 4. Repeat 4 times.	Smile at 5 random people. Intentionally making eye contact and smiling at someone you don't know can unintentionally make their day.	Fidget toys or soft things that occupy your hands are great for when you feel stressed, anxious, or need help focusing.	Take a 5-30 minute break to go outside, look up at the sky, and soak up the sunlight.
Do some spring cleaning! Check out page 5 for tips on decluttering your workspace and home space.	Think about a time or place where you were happy or having fun. What were you doing, where were you, who were you with?	Hug a family member, friend, pet, or a stuffed animal. Hugging often creates a feeling of calmness and relaxation.	5 minute dance break! Dancing reduces levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) and increases endorphins (the body's "feel-good" chemicals).	Channel your creativity by drawing, doodling, painting, or building something.	Spend 5 minutes in silence and appreciate your surroundings. Keep your eyes closed to block out stimulation and sharpen your non-visual awareness.	Add a new 5 minute activity to your bedtime routine for better sleep, like reading a book, taking a bath, or brewing a cup of noncaffeinated herbal tea.
Spend 5 minutes doing something to challenge your brain, like a puzzle, sudoku, brain teasers, crosswords, or playing an instrument.	Write down affirmations that you can look at throughout your day. Check out page 7 for examples.	Stimulate your sense of smell with a candle, essential oils, or a diffuser.	Notice 4 things in your day that generally go unnoticed. For example, the sound of children giggling, the fresh scent of soap, or the brightest flowers in your garden.	Write down things you are thankful for. Practice gratitude throughout the day, for 5 minutes at a time.	If you sit a lot for work, stand up and walk around or stretch for the last 5 minutes of every hour.	Complete one thing that's been on your to-do list that you could finish today, like scheduling your dentist appointment or putting away the laundry.
Play! As we get older, we forget how important play is. Find a fun game, bring a volleyball to the beach, or hang out with that friend you can be silly with.	Use your vocal cords for things like humming to stimulate your vagus nerve. This helps get us out of the "fight or flight" response and into a more relaxed state.	Cross your arms over your chest and tap back and forth on your opposite shoulders with your finger tips. This "bilateral stimulation" helps calm the nervous system.	7/11 breathing: Inhale for a count of 7, and slowly exhale for a count of 11 to help regulate both respiration and heart rate and calm the sympathetic nervous system.	Place your index and middle fingertips at the temple just beside the eyes. With light pressure, begin 6 to 8 clockwise circular movements, then repeat counterclockwise.	Notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 sounds you can hear, 2 smells, and 1 taste. Using your 5 senses is a great way to practice grounding and mindfulness.	Sit or stand in direct sunlight within the first 5 minutes of waking up. This helps sync your circadian rhythm, giving you more energy during the day and a better night's sleep.
Take 5 minutes to text a friend. This could be a simple hello to catch up, tell them about something you did today, or send something funny and share a laugh.	Cook a new recipe, but do it mindfully. Notice all the colors, smells, textures, and tastes of each ingredient.	Give yourself a compliment for something you accomplished today, no matter how big or small.	Use your non-dominant hand in a daily activity, like brushing your teeth or using your fork. Studies show this activates both sides of your brain and increases creativity.	Do slow head movements for 1 minute each. Roll your head around clockwise, then counterclockwise, then up and down, and lastly side to side.	Listen to a 5 minute meditation before bed to ease your mind and body into falling asleep.	Read a book, a short story, or an article and let your mind be immersed in the narrative.

 Visit the California Schools VEBA YouTube Channel for self-regulation tips and guided meditations.

 Check out [vebaresourcecenter.com](http://vebaresourcecenter.com) for mental well-being tips and resources.

MONTH:

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# DECLUTTER YOUR WORKSPACE

Decluttering your workspace is important for your mental health for several reasons.

## **Reduced Stress**

A cluttered workspace can create a sense of overwhelm and increase stress levels. Clearing the clutter helps create a calmer environment, allowing you to focus better and feel more at ease.

## **Improved Focus and Productivity**

A tidy workspace eliminates distractions and allows you to concentrate on the task at hand. When your surroundings are organized, it's easier to stay focused.

## **Enhanced Creativity**

Clutter can stifle creativity and hinder the flow of ideas because of the sense of overwhelm it can create. A clean and organized workspace gives you a blank canvas for inspiration and encourages creative thinking.

## **Increased Clarity**

A clutter-free workspace promotes mental clarity. When your physical space is organized, it reflects a sense of order and helps clear mental clutter. This can help you think more clearly and make decisions from a calm place.

## **Boosted Motivation and Well-being**

A clean and organized workspace can have a positive impact on your overall well-being and motivation. It creates a sense of pride, boosts self-confidence, and makes you feel more in control of your environment, leading to increased motivation and a more positive mindset.





## HERE ARE 5 WAYS TO DECLUTTER YOUR WORKSPACE IN 5 MINUTES OR LESS:

**1 Clear your desktop:**  
Take a moment to remove any unnecessary items from your desk surface. Put away pens, papers, and other objects that are not currently in use.

**2 Organize your cables:**  
Spend a few minutes untangling and organizing the cables and cords around your workspace. Use cable clips or ties to keep them neat and prevent them from getting tangled.

**3 Sort your papers:**  
Quickly go through any loose papers on your desk and sort them into categories such as "to-do," "file," or "discard." This will help you prioritize and reduce paper clutter.

**4 Clear your digital desktop:**  
Take a moment to organize the files and folders on your computer desktop. Delete any unnecessary files and create folders to keep things organized.

**5 Empty your trash:**  
Emptying your trash bin or recycling bin is a simple yet effective way to instantly declutter your workspace. Dispose of any waste or unnecessary items.

### ***Not at work? No problem!***

**Here are 5 things you can toss, recycle, or gift to clear the clutter at home!**

**Extra pens!** Pick 5-10 pens to keep and toss the rest.

**Empty electronic boxes** – if you've never used them before, you won't start now. Recycle them!

**Pick 5 pieces of clothing you haven't worn in 6 months or more and donate them!** Not sure where to start? Try your sock drawer and toss any worn-out or mismatched socks!

**Clear your pantry or refrigerator of expired food.**

**Junk mail** – today's the day to tackle that pile of junk mail! Recycle what can be recycled and file the rest.

# DAILY AFFIRMATIONS

Using positive affirmations can have incredible benefits on your mental health. They can boost your self-confidence, improve your self-esteem, and help you maintain a positive mindset. By consistently repeating affirmations, it's thought that you can rewire your thoughts and beliefs, leading to a more optimistic and empowered outlook on life.

To incorporate affirmations into your daily routine, start by writing down a list of affirmations or positive notes that resonate with you. Not sure what to write, no problem, we've created a list to help you get started!

Keep this list somewhere easily accessible, such as on your phone or a sticky note on your mirror. Throughout your day, take a moment to read and reflect on these affirmations, allowing their positive messages to sink in. You can also set reminders on your phone or schedule specific times to review and recite your affirmations, reinforcing their impact on your mindset and well-being.

## "I am" Affirmations:

- I am enough, just as I am, and I embrace my uniqueness.
- I am strong and resilient, capable of overcoming any challenge.
- I am capable of achieving my goals and dreams.
- I am worthy of love and happiness.
- I am deserving of success and abundance in all areas of my life.

## "I feel" Affirmations:

- I feel joy and happiness flowing through every cell of my body.
- I feel motivated and inspired to take action towards my goals.
- I feel energized and alive, ready to embrace each new day with enthusiasm.
- I feel proud of myself and all the progress I have made on my personal journey.
- I feel confident in who I am and what I have to offer.

## "I love" Affirmations:

- I love and appreciate my body for all that it does for me.
- I love and celebrate my unique talents and abilities.
- I love the person I am becoming.
- I love and accept myself unconditionally.
- I love and embrace the challenges that come my way, as they help me grow.

“

I AM ENOUGH, JUST AS I AM, AND  
I EMBRACE MY UNIQUENESS.

”



CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

VEBA

YOUR HEALTH,  
OUR PURPOSE