

A NEW HARBINGER SELF-HELP WORKBOOK

A
Single Therapy
for

ANXIETY + PHOBIA
PTSD + ANGER
SHAME + GUILT
DEPRESSION

Mind and Emotions

A Universal
Treatment *for*
Emotional
Disorders

Based on Proven Techniques from COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY,
ACCEPTANCE and COMMITMENT THERAPY, and DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY

Matthew McKay, PhD | Patrick Fanning
Patricia Zurita Ona, PsyD



Self-Help Seal of Merit
Association for Behavioral
and Cognitive Therapies

In Mind and Emotions, Matthew McKay, Patrick Fanning, and Patricia Zurita Ona provide invaluable information for people experiencing difficulties regulating their emotions. Not only will readers learn about the factors contributing to their ongoing pain, but they'll also learn practical skills for improving their ability to manage these intense emotions. I love the fact that these authors were able to reflect real-life psychotherapy by taking an eclectic approach to the treatment of emotion dysregulation.

—Sheri Van Dijk, MSW, RSW, psychotherapist in Ontario, Canada, and author of *The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook for Bipolar Disorder*, *Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life for Teens*, and *The Bipolar Workbook for Teens*

This concisely written book offers well-developed, practical tools for readers intent on attending to their emotional needs. There is indeed a synergy in combining the best of cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, and acceptance and commitment therapy—it's an approach that promises to help readers pursue a purposeful life.

—Patricia J. Robinson, PhD, health care consultant and coauthor of *The Mindfulness and Acceptance Workbook for Depression and Real Behavior Change in Primary Care*

Many self-help books offer tips and suggestions on how to cope with only one challenging emotion, such as anxiety or depression. Unfortunately, anxiety and depression go together, and most of us who struggle in dealing with one emotion have difficulties in managing others as well. This new and impressive workbook by McKay, Fanning, and Zurita Ona provides a welcome alternative to having to buy and follow separate books for each specific emotional difficulty you may encounter in life. Mind and Emotions will guide you through an easy-to-follow set of skills designed to put you, rather than your emotions, back in charge of your life.

—Robert D. Zettle, PhD, professor of psychology at Wichita State University in Wichita, KS, and author of *ACT for Depression*

Mind and Emotions provides a wide range of strategies and exercises for changing the behaviors and thoughts that contribute to uncomfortable feelings such as anxiety, depression, anger, and shame. This book is practical, well-written, and packed with helpful advice.

—Martin M. Antony, PhD, ABPP, professor of psychology at Ryerson University in Toronto and author of *The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook*

At last! Here's your chance to clear the clutter off your shelves and get rid of all those other self-help books that don't work. McKay, Fanning, and Zurita Ona have put together a single, effective treatment for multiple forms of emotional pain. Based on research and years of success, Mind and Emotions is sure to be the one book people will turn to for help.

—Jeffrey C. Wood, PsyD, clinical psychologist, coauthor of *The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook*, and author of *The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Skills Workbook for Personality Disorders*

Mind and Emotions offers a clear and practical entry into the complex and often confusing world of emotions and emotional pain. The authors are experts in the field of mental health and psychotherapy, and it shows in this work. Their accessible and easy-to-follow practices will empower and promote emotional healing for anyone who takes the time to work through this excellent program.

—Jeffrey Brantley, MD, consulting associate in the Duke Department of Psychiatry, author of *Calming Your Anxious Mind*, and coauthor of *Daily Meditations for Calming Your Anxious Mind* and the *Five Good Minutes*® series

With compassion and clarity, the authors present a universal approach to the universal pain and suffering that accompanies mental health problems. Readers will find much in Mind and Emotions to calm the emotional storms that are barriers to living life fully and passionately.

—Michael A. Tompkins, PhD, San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy and University of California, Berkeley, and author of *Digging Out*

This book is beautifully written in simple, clear, and precise language. In very short, highly informative chapters, the best-known techniques for learning to manage painful emotions are described and then a range of concrete strategies for practicing these strategies is presented. This book can not only be used as part of a self-help program, but also as part of an emotion management skills training group or as an adjunct to individual counseling for emotion management difficulties.

—Kirk Strosahl, PhD, author of *Real Behavior Change in Primary Care*

Mind and Emotions draws thoughtfully on a transdiagnostic perspective and a triad of evidence-based treatments for emotional problems. Beyond its self-help value to the public, this unique workbook constitutes a rich resource for practitioners seeking to enhance their therapeutic effectiveness.

—Thomas F. Cash, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Old Dominion University and author of *The Body Image Workbook*

The tools described in this book are drawn from the most effective therapies for emotional disorders that are available today. Used consistently, these tools can change your life.

—Jacqueline B. Persons, PhD, director of the San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy and clinical professor at the University of California, Berkeley

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For my students, whose desire to understand human behavior and help those in pain has inspired me and taught me so much.

—MM

For the dedicated teachers, therapists, and researchers upon whose shoulders we stand.

—PF

For all those who are willing to try something new despite their pain and struggles.

—PZO

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CHAPTER 1

The Universal Treatment

This book is intended for people struggling with emotional pain, and for psychotherapists seeking an effective treatment for emotional suffering. It offers a universal protocol, meaning that these same treatment steps are effective regardless of the particular emotion that distresses you. It will help you with feelings of anxiety, depression, anger, shame, or guilt. It will also help if you're struggling with high levels of multiple emotions, a situation referred to as emotion dysregulation.

Why Use a Single Treatment for All Emotional Problems?

For many years, psychotherapy researchers focused on developing treatments specific to each emotional disorder. There were individual treatments for the six main anxiety disorders, several for depression, and several for anger, as well as protocols for guilt and shame. All in all, researchers developed more than two dozen treatment regimens for emotional disorders.

This profusion of treatments had good and bad aspects. On the good news front, psychological science had developed multiple research-based protocols that had been proven effective. They helped people and changed lives. The bad news can be summarized as follows:

- ✦ People with comorbidity (more than one emotional problem) had to undergo more than one treatment. Treatments were often done sequentially, so therapy for one problem might be delayed until another emotional problem was addressed.
- ✦ Skills developed to cope with a particular emotional problem often couldn't be applied to others. So, for example, if you underwent a successful treatment for social anxiety in your twenties, that wouldn't have given you the tools you'd need to cope with depression in your thirties.
- ✦ It was hard to evaluate which of the research-based treatments available for a particular problem would work best for a given individual. Each treatment is based on a slightly different theory of what causes the problem, but almost no research has been done on matching treatments to an individual's traits, characteristics, or typical ways of coping. So we didn't know much about what works for whom.
- ✦ Most of the protocols for emotional disorders were focused on symptoms and symptom reduction. They didn't address the common underlying factors that create and maintain all emotional disorders. Called transdiagnostic factors (TDFs), these can be understood as dysfunctional coping strategies that start out as attempts to manage stress but backfire and end up creating severe emotional pain. A treatment that targets TDFs—the cause of emotional problems—may be more effective than those focused solely on symptoms. (More on TDFs later.)

These problems were solved with the development of treatments that simultaneously target *all* emotional problems. Instead of focusing on symptoms, which are clearly different for each emotion, new treatments targeted the underlying causes of all negative emotions—causes such as avoidance, rumination, masking, and negative appraisals. We'll discuss these causes in detail in chapter 2, *The Nature of Emotions*.

New Research: Universal Treatments for Emotional Problems

There are currently three research-based universal treatments for emotional disorders. The first is dialectical behavior therapy (DBT; Linehan 1993), which focuses on the following key skills for overcoming emotional problems:

- ✦ Mindfulness and acceptance
- ✦ Distress tolerance
- ✦ Self-soothing

- ✦ Doing the opposite
- ✦ Emotion regulation
- ✦ Interpersonal effectiveness

The second is acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson 1999), which aims to build psychological flexibility by developing skills in the following areas:

- ✦ Mindfulness
- ✦ Observing and accepting emotions
- ✦ Defusion (observing and distancing from thoughts)
- ✦ Values-based committed action

A third universal protocol emerged from cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT; Moses and Barlow 2006; Allen, McHugh, and Barlow 2008). It emphasizes the following skills:

- ✦ Mindfulness
- ✦ Emotion awareness and acceptance
- ✦ Cognitive restructuring
- ✦ Changing emotion-driven behaviors
- ✦ Emotion exposure

The effectiveness of each of these therapies is supported by strong research evidence from numerous randomized controlled trials. All three have been proven to help people struggling with overwhelming emotions. As to the question of which is better, we don't know. Very little research has evaluated these treatments in head-to-head trials. However, comparing and measuring which of these therapies has the best outcomes may not be terribly important, for three reasons:

- ✦ It may take years to get conclusive answers, if the data *ever* becomes clear.
- ✦ There is significant overlap between the three treatment programs. All include mindful observation of experience, some form of emotion acceptance, and exposure exercises to help people face difficult emotions. Each protocol has methods for changing how people relate to their thoughts, thereby making negative thinking less believable. And each treatment helps people learn how to steer away from emotion-driven behaviors, which only make emotional pain worse, and take more effective action instead.

- ✦ The treatment components that are unique to a particular protocol—self-soothing, doing the opposite, and interpersonal effectiveness in DBT, and defusion and values-based action in ACT—can be added to the common components to create a single universal treatment. There’s no reason to have a horse race to see which therapy is better. We can combine them.

So here’s the bottom line: These therapies work, and the combined protocol presented in this book works. You don’t have to learn individual and sometimes complex treatments for each emotional problem you face. You can work your way through a single set of steps and get help with any and all emotions.

In this book you’ll find the common elements of all three universal protocols, plus the most effective unique components of each. These are the topics covered in chapters 4 through 13, and they offer the best help that cutting-edge research has discovered:

- ✦ Values in Action
- ✦ Mindfulness and Emotion Awareness
- ✦ Defusion
- ✦ Cognitive Flexibility Training
- ✦ Self-Soothing
- ✦ Doing the Opposite
- ✦ Interpersonal Effectiveness
- ✦ Imagery-Based Emotion Exposure
- ✦ Interoceptive Emotion Exposure
- ✦ Situational Emotion Exposure

How to Use This Book

Before beginning the ten treatment chapters, you need basic information about how much your difficult emotions are affecting you right now, how emotions work, and how you get into emotional trouble. So do the exercise at the end of this chapter, and then read chapters 2 and 3 before doing anything else. The exercise at the end of this chapter will help you establish a baseline score for how much difficulty you’re having with emotion regulation right now.

In chapter 2, *The Nature of Emotions*, you'll learn to identify the four components of an emotional response. Developing the ability to observe a problematic emotion is the first step toward regulating that emotion. Later in chapter 2 we'll introduce you to seven transdiagnostic factors that underlie emotional disorders. Each of these TDFs is a coping strategy that attempts to provide immediate relief from emotional pain, but in the long term all of them only intensify emotions and make the pain worse. We provide a questionnaire to help you identify which TDFs are having the greatest influence on your emotional life. It's quite possible that you don't use all of these problematic coping strategies. If that's the case, you may wish to skip chapters that target a TDF that isn't relevant to you. By assessing your use of TDFs, you can tailor this program to your own needs.

Chapter 3, *The Cost of Avoiding Emotions*, helps build your motivation for working with and sticking to this program. You'll learn to recognize the many faces of avoidance and assess the costs of each. Avoidance takes a huge toll on your life and vitality, and paradoxically, it also intensifies the very emotions you're trying to get away from. In chapter 3 we'll also discuss the benefits of improved emotion regulation. The payoffs can be dramatic, so it's worth it to know the benefits before beginning the program (and this will probably also help with motivation).

Chapters 4 through 13 are the treatment chapters. Work your way through these in order, but feel free to skip any that target TDFs you aren't struggling with. However, do read and work through chapter 4, *Values in Action*, chapter 5, *Mindfulness and Emotion Awareness*, and chapters 11 through 13, on emotion exposure, regardless of the TDFs you use. They're critical to learning emotion regulation and essential for everyone. Also, be sure to fill out the *Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale* (DERS; Gratz and Roemer 2004) halfway through your work with this book and again at the end of the emotion exposure chapters. This will give you an objective measure of how your emotion regulation skills are improving.

The last chapter, *Relapse Prevention*, is also vital. You need to know how to recognize the signs that emotional problems are reemerging and have a specific plan for what you'll do about it. This will keep you from slipping back into old, ineffective patterns.

How to Work This Program

Just reading about emotion regulation skills isn't enough. You can only master them by doing the exercises in this book and putting them into practice in your daily life. Changing your experience with overwhelming emotions starts with changing your behavior—how you think and how you act. Casting aside your old coping responses—the TDFs—is essential to creating a new life and a new relationship to your emotions.

We'll be with you every step of the way, showing you the path, coaching you, and giving you examples of how others have succeeded. We'll offer helpful strategies and step-by-step guidance,

and also provide answers to many of your questions. We admit it: Working this program *is* work. But if you do the work and change your old avoidance patterns, a lot of your emotional pain will fall away and become just a memory. The research-tested approaches in this program can open the door to a new life.

We encourage you to start now, with the following exercise. The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz and Roemer 2004) will establish a baseline measurement of how much your difficult emotions are affecting you today. Halfway through your work with this book, you'll fill out the DERS again to assess your progress, and then at the end of the book you'll fill out the DERS one last time, to discover how far this journey has taken you. Pick up your pen, open the door to your future, and begin the changes you've been yearning for.

DIFFICULTIES IN EMOTION REGULATION SCALE (DERS)

Please indicate how often the following statements apply to you by writing the appropriate number from the scale below on the line beside each item.

1	2	3	4	5
almost never (0-10%)	sometimes (11-35%)	about half the time (36-65%)	most of the time (66-90%)	almost always (91-100%)

1. _____ I am clear about my feelings.
2. _____ I pay attention to how I feel.
3. _____ I experience my emotions as overwhelming and out of control.
4. _____ I have no idea how I am feeling.
5. _____ I have difficulty making sense out of my feelings.
6. _____ I am attentive to my feelings.
7. _____ I know exactly how I am feeling.
8. _____ I care about what I am feeling.
9. _____ I am confused about how I feel.
10. _____ When I'm upset, I acknowledge my emotions.
11. _____ When I'm upset, I become angry with myself for feeling that way.
12. _____ When I'm upset, I become embarrassed for feeling that way.
13. _____ When I'm upset, I have difficulty getting work done.
14. _____ When I'm upset, I become out of control.
15. _____ When I'm upset, I believe that I will remain that way for a long time.
16. _____ When I'm upset, I believe that I will end up feeling very depressed.

17. _____ When I'm upset, I believe that my feelings are valid and important.
18. _____ When I'm upset, I have difficulty focusing on other things.
19. _____ When I'm upset, I feel out of control.
20. _____ When I'm upset, I can still get things done.
21. _____ When I'm upset, I feel ashamed at myself for feeling that way.
22. _____ When I'm upset, I know that I can find a way to eventually feel better.
23. _____ When I'm upset, I feel like I am weak.
24. _____ When I'm upset, I feel like I can remain in control of my behaviors.
25. _____ When I'm upset, I feel guilty for feeling that way.
26. _____ When I'm upset, I have difficulty concentrating.
27. _____ When I'm upset, I have difficulty controlling my behaviors.
28. _____ When I'm upset, I believe there is nothing I can do to make myself feel better.
29. _____ When I'm upset, I become irritated at myself for feeling that way.
30. _____ When I'm upset, I start to feel very bad about myself.
31. _____ When I'm upset, I believe that wallowing in it is all I can do.
32. _____ When I'm upset, I lose control over my behavior.
33. _____ When I'm upset, I have difficulty thinking about anything else.
34. _____ When I'm upset, I take time to figure out what I'm really feeling.
35. _____ When I'm upset, it takes me a long time to feel better.
36. _____ When I'm upset, my emotions feel overwhelming.

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Scoring: Put a minus sign in front of your rating numbers for these items: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 17, 20, 22, 24, and 34. Then sum up all your ratings, adding the positives and subtracting the negatives, and write the result here: _____.

This number represents how much your upsetting feelings are affecting your life today, at this moment. This is a baseline figure, so the exact number isn't very significant. What's more important is the difference between this number and your score when you do this exercise again, halfway through your work with this book, and your score after you've finished the treatment chapters of the book. As you gradually acquire emotion regulation skills, your score will decrease.

CHAPTER 2

The Nature of Emotions

This chapter examines how emotions work and how they help us survive. It will also give you the tools to observe your emotions and identify the four components of an emotional response. This knowledge will help you recognize how emotions turn into behavior and give you a moment of choice in deciding whether to act on emotion-driven urges.

Unfortunately, the ability to observe and understand emotions isn't enough to achieve emotion regulation. You'll have to go one step further and learn to identify the seven dysfunctional coping strategies that fuel negative emotions and trap you in patterns of chronic anxiety, anger, or depression. As mentioned in the introduction, these seven ineffective coping responses are sometimes called transdiagnostic factors because they underlie—and, in fact, cause—emotional disorders.

How Emotions Work

In the course of human evolution, emotions developed for a specific purpose: to spur us toward actions that help us survive. Negative emotions are a signal that something is wrong or threatening and push us to cope. Anxiety pushes us to avoid dangerous situations. Anger drives us to fight

back against threats, damage, and hurt. Sadness encourages us to slow down and withdraw, to seek quiet time for processing a loss, or to recalibrate our efforts after a failure. Shame demands that we hide and stop doing what might result in disapproval.

The point is, emotions are useful. They help us change course as we face new problems or new circumstances. They help us adapt to curve balls that threaten to destabilize our lives—or even end them.

Here's another key point: Emotions, no matter how intense or upsetting, all have a natural life span. If you watch carefully, you'll observe that all feelings develop like a wave. They rise, crest, and finally recede, and they're time limited. Seeing an emotion as a wave can help you wait it out, rather than getting swept up in emotion-driven behavior.

When you're in the middle of an intense feeling, sometimes it seems as if it will go on forever. This is an illusion created by the strength of the emotion, and sometimes by efforts to resist or suppress the feeling. You have multiple emotions each day, and many thousands over the course of your life. Every emotion will end or morph into something else. Learning to be patient, to watch that process, is one of the key skills you'll gain from this book.

We humans can't control emotions, meaning we can't stop them or get rid of them with an act of will. An extraordinary wealth of scientific research has revealed that attempts to suppress, numb, or push away emotions usually fail. What we resist persists. Feelings we attempt to suppress simply go on longer, and often turn into chronic emotional disorders.

To understand how suppression exacerbates and intensifies an emotion, consider the case of a violinist in a volunteer community orchestra who had surges of anxiety during several performances. His response was to do everything possible to control the feeling, including constantly watching for the first signs of sweating or a rapid heartbeat. But the effort not to feel anxious only focused his attention on the symptoms of fear. If he detected any sensations that might indicate fear, he tried to control the experience through avoidance—to the point where he started to think he wouldn't be able to perform if he felt fear—and that was a really scary and upsetting thought. The more he paid attention to his body and watched for anxiety during a performance, the greater his fear became. So remember: You can't stop emotions, and some efforts to control them will only make them worse.

Components of an Emotional Response

An emotional response is a lot more than a mood state or a feeling. It has four components, and it's important to understand and recognize each of them: affect, emotion-driven thoughts, physical sensations, and emotion-driven behavior.