

WEEK 4

CONTENT



UNDERSTANDING OF MOOD SWINGS & EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS

5-10 MINUTES

Distribute Handout (page 82) and crayons/colored pencils. Review with the group to illustrate and explain how brain injury can impact an individual's ability to regulate their emotions. Discuss how participants can recognize their emotions using the Body Map of Emotions. Ask participants to identify where they feel specific emotions and to describe the sensation.

It can be difficult to figure out what emotion you're feeling, but your body gives you cues to help! Think about what your body feels like for each emotion and label it on the map.

- What happens in your body when you feel sad?
- What happens in your body when you feel angry?
- What happens in your body when you feel excited?
- What happens in your body when you feel anxious?
- What does it feel like when your emotions are getting out of control?

Share your map with your parents, team and P.O.!

Note: *If participants are struggling to engage, reassure participants that there is no wrong answer and provide applicable examples for each of these emotions to help lead discussion.*



DISCUSSION: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

5-10 MINUTES

WRITE the following bolded words on the whiteboard to facilitate ease of discussion with the participants. The following section provides information regarding common strategies for regulating emotions.

Since we've discussed some ways to physically identify emotions, let's talk about a few strategies you could use to manage those emotions.

- **Deep breathing** reduces stress hormones in your body and makes you feel calmer. Just taking a few deep breaths when your emotions feel out of control can help!
- **Distractions** can help you move your attention elsewhere when you're feeling strong, negative emotions. Distracting yourself with an activity you enjoy, and/or positive thoughts can lead to happier feelings and put you back in control.
- **Positive humor** helps regulate emotions by decreasing negative feelings and increasing positive feelings. Sharing a funny joke with a peer, watching a funny video, and trying to have more laughter during your day are easy ways to boost your mood!



DISCUSSION

- Have you used any of these strategies?
- Did they work for you?
- Why or why not?

Prompt for other approaches (healthy and unhealthy) participants have used to manage their moods. If medications are brought up, point out that it can be a helpful tool for some people and should be discussed with their treatment team.

MINDFULNESS BREAK

5 MINUTES

See Body Scan Meditation Handout (page 82-83) for an activity.

Pick the mindfulness activity based on what you think is most useful and relevant to the students in your group.

- *Now we're going to take a five-minute break.*
- *We will be doing a mindfulness activity. Mindfulness helps to bring our attention to the present and allows us to experience the world around us without judgment, worries, or a need to analyze. It's all about becoming aware of what you're feeling inside your body, what you're thinking about, and what physical sensations you're having.*

After the break is finished, encourage the participants to do mindfulness on their own if they found it useful.

*There are TONS of free apps available for download that guide meditation and mindfulness. If you found this practice helpful there are a variety of popular top-rated applications such as **Headspace**, **Mindfulness Daily**, **Aura**, and **Smiling Mind**.*