




# Your Nourished Life

## W4.3 - Meeting Emotional Needs without Food

### Generally Helpful Actions

Here are seven possible actions that are *generally* helpful in meeting your emotional needs with compassion and care, not overeating:

1. **Remove or reduce irritants** (noise, heat, full bladders, bras...); if interactions with people are upsetting, take a “time out”, even if just a few minutes in the washroom
2. **Express your feelings:**
  - a. Talk to yourself
  - b. Cry
  - c. In free writing: set a timer for 5-10 minutes, keep pen moving at all times... shred or burn
  - d. Via physicality: dance... movement
  - e. To a supportive, compassionate person if available
3. **Belly breathing:** breathe in to count of 3, breath out to count of 3... your belly moves in and out... do for a minute or two
4. Remember that **you are not alone in your experiences and feelings** by accessing lyrics, poetry, and/or online resources for your challenge (Google rendered 11 million, 84 million and 117 million hits for searches “coping with teenagers”, “loneliness”, and “I hate my job”, respectively!)
5. **Listen to music** that expresses your feelings... and/or helps you move into a more positive emotional state
6. **Gratitude:** noticing what is good (but be careful not to invalidate “negative” feelings... aim to hold both at once, using gratitude as something you ALSO feel)
7. If available, seek **solace and renewal in nature**, or at least the outdoors, such as pattering in the garden

- 
8. **Hug/hold yourself:** find your heart with your right hand, and wrap your right arm around to your back... then wrap your left arm in front, hugging your right arm. Squeeze... and feel yourself IN the container of your body.

### ***Actions for Specific Feelings***

Here are some things to try instead of eating when you are feeling:

#### ***Anger/Frustration***

- 5-10 minutes of venting can help, including yelling, swearing, screaming (e.g., in the car)
- reset breathing — breathe out for as long as you can, then take a big gasping breath in (do 2-3 times), then belly breathe in to count of 3, out to count of 3, having your belly move out and in
- write a nasty letter and burn it over the sink, then wash up
- is there a boundary that you need to set or reset... calling upon you to speak up?
- Own ideas:

#### ***Sadness/Melancholy***

- cry... allow your tears to flow and subside
- talk to a friend in person, on the phone or online
- listen to a [self-compassion meditation](#) MP3
- if sadness is a persistent experience over weeks, speak to your physician about depression screening and a referral for counselling
- Own ideas:



## ***Loneliness***

- reach out to a friend for contact... make plans to get together
- go out and be amongst people (parks, dog parks, shops, libraries, gyms, co-working spaces, etc.)
- Google Meetups, clubs, activities, lessons, volunteering and things to do \*with\* possibly like-minded others in the future
- Own ideas:

## ***Overwhelm/Weariness***

- prioritize – what truly \*must\* be done now or today and what can be delayed or delegated?
- use the Three Song Solution: tidy up or pay bills or \_\_\_\_\_ for the 10 or so minutes of three songs
- if you are tempted to use Eff It eating to get off the hook from duties (i.e. be “bad”), ask yourself — what would you let slide after such eating? Then let it slide without overeating!
- lay down, rest or nap; go to bed early; lie in the bath tub; have a tea; use essential oils
- Own ideas:



### **Anxiety/Worry:**

- Worry cards: write worry on one side... then on the other side:
  - Possible actions to take, or solutions to try... if any
  - Answers to the “what if” worry... what **would** you do if the bad thing happens? Have a plan or two or three.
  - Expressing your hope, wish or prayer for a good outcome
- take a hot bath or shower... take in aromas
- stretch or do some yoga poses
- make or do something to distract yourself
- write down times you got through and things turned out okay
- Many short videos guiding you through some easy exercises on how to ground and calm yourself can be found on this [YouTube channel](#)
- if anxiety is a persistent experience over weeks, speak to your physician about a referral for counselling
- Own ideas:

### **Boredom:**

- Make a MENU of things you find interesting or engaging to do in the home and outside the home... with a range of options depending on your energy level, mood, weather, etc.
- Get off social media and streaming TV – look over your MENU and DO something
- Google hobbies, Meetups, clubs, activities, lessons, volunteering and things to do in the future and take one step towards exploring an appealing option
- Own ideas:



**Envy:**

- what is the yearning underneath the sour hopelessness? What do you want?
- if you will truly never have it, such as a child, allow grief and sadness with compassion
- if could possibly have it, such as travel, imagine how and set up a baby step (e.g. trim some expenses and save \$50/week).
- Own ideas:

**Celebratory:**

- share with supportive people
- Pat yourself on the back (literally) and say congratulatory things to yourself
- indulge in non-food treats that float your boat... flowers, candles, soaps, books, magazines, make up, music, accessories, hobby supplies, etc.
- Use practicing maintenance days for choosy celebratory foods/beverages
- Own ideas: