



Emotional Regulation and its impact on perinatal mental health



About PAFYP



Erasmus Plus KA2 – Project 2019-1-UK01-KA205-060936



Outcomes for Young Parents

- Research has shown that teenage pregnancy is associated with poorer outcomes for both young parents and their children.
- Teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, are more likely to bring up their child alone and in poverty, and have a higher risk of mental health problems than older mothers.
- **Infant mortality** rates are 60% higher for babies born to teenage mothers.
- As children they have an increased risk of living in poverty and are more likely to have accidents and behavioural problems.

Education and awareness raising can help young parents to have better outcomes for them and their child

Perinatal is the period of time when you become pregnant and up to a year after giving birth.

Common Perinatal Mental Health Problems

- Depression
- Anxiety
- OCD
- Psychosis
- PTSD

Emotions – what are they?



An emotion is a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioral or expressive response.

"Discovering Psychology" by Don Hockenbury and Sandra E. Hockenbury,

Emotions – what are they?



Happy



Angry



Sad



Frustrated



Sneaky



Scared



Surprised



Shy



Bossy



Sleepy



Embarrassed



Mean



Proud



Nervous



Silly



Disappointed



Confused



Impatient



Curious



Kind



Obnoxious



Excited



Grumpy

Emotional Regulation



Emotional regulation is **the process of recognising and controlling feelings or reactions to feelings**. In other words, emotional regulation is the management of your emotions and associated actions.

Emotional regulation, **sometimes called self-regulation**, refers to the way we deal with big feelings like anger, excitement, frustration, anxiety or low mood. It helps us to **manage disruptive emotions** and impulses.

Emotional regulation development begins in childhood.

[02 Emotional Regulation - Bing video](#)

Emotional Regulation – why is it important?

Recognising your emotions and learning to manage them is one of the most important skills you can have.



1. Understanding the reason behind your emotion



2. To help you feel more in control

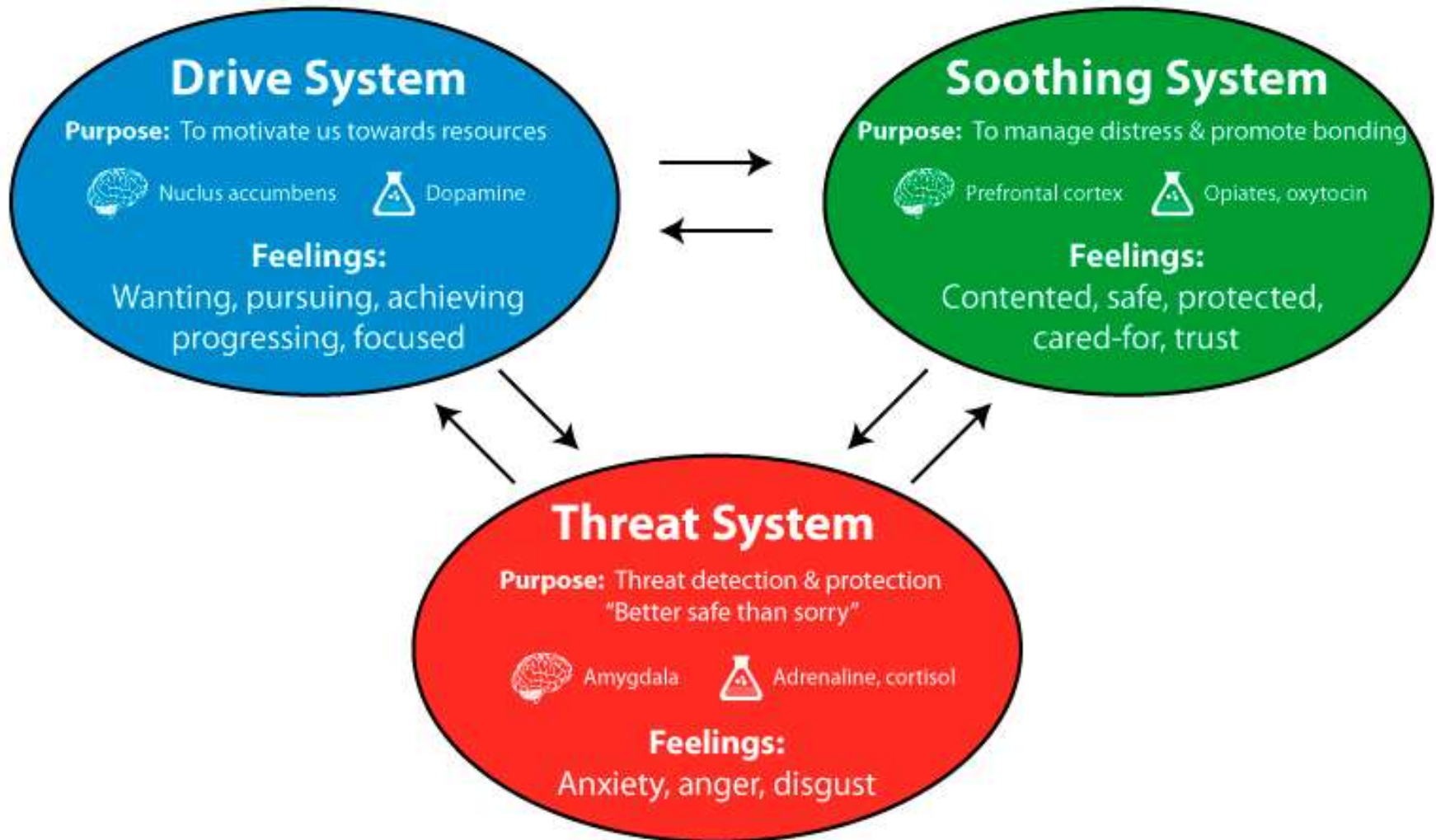


3. Negative emotions can lead to negative thoughts



4. It means we can ask for help

Emotional Regulation System



Dr Paul Gilbert, The Compassionate Mind

Emotional Regulation – Common Problems

Low self-
confidence

Low self-
esteem

Difficulty
handling
stress

Increased
anxiety

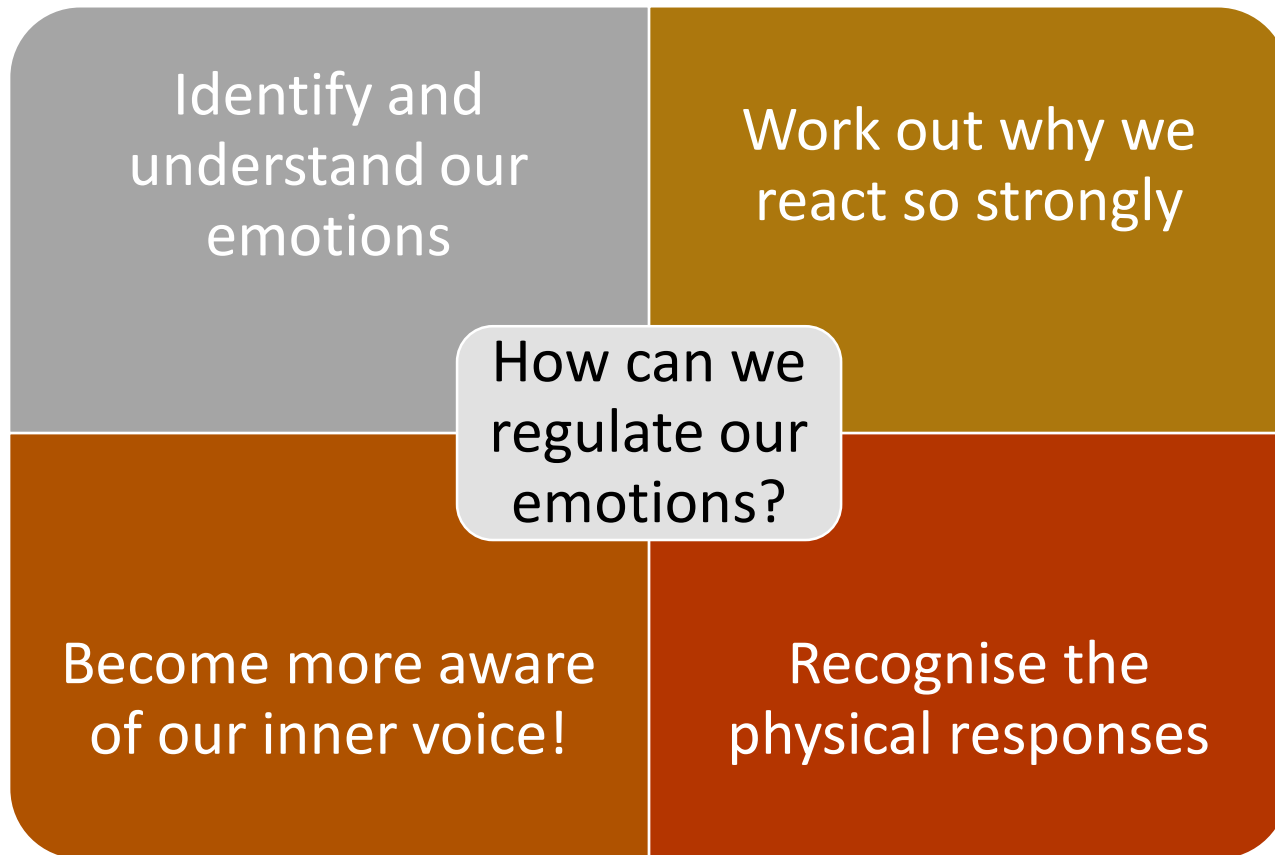
Serious
mental illness

Struggle to
bounce back



Emotional Regulation Skills

If we try to **ignore** or **blank out** our emotions we are more likely to turn to **external forms of self soothing** for example food, self harm, alcohol and so on



Managing Emotions During Pregnancy



It's hard to think clearly or feel positive when you are feeling unwell and tired. Taking good physical care of yourself, especially getting **plenty of rest and sleep**, will help to keep troubling emotions in proportion



It's also important to eat several small **healthy meals a day** and try to avoid sugary foods, alcohol, tea, coffee and fizzy drinks.



Gentle to moderate exercise can help to improve mood and general fitness, and benefits your growing baby and your labour. Try to build in some activity every day. Avoid contact sports or any strenuous exercise, particularly if you weren't active before your pregnancy .

[Managing Emotions Tips video - Bing video](#)

Managing Emotions During Pregnancy



Bottling up your emotions will only increase your anxiety. **Discuss your feelings and worries** with whoever you feel comfortable with. That might be your partner, friends, wider family, or your midwife.



Talking to other women or couples may also reveal that you are not alone in your experiences. Joining an **antenatal class** (e.g. pregnancy yoga class, or a ‘bumps and babies’ group) can give you an instant support network.



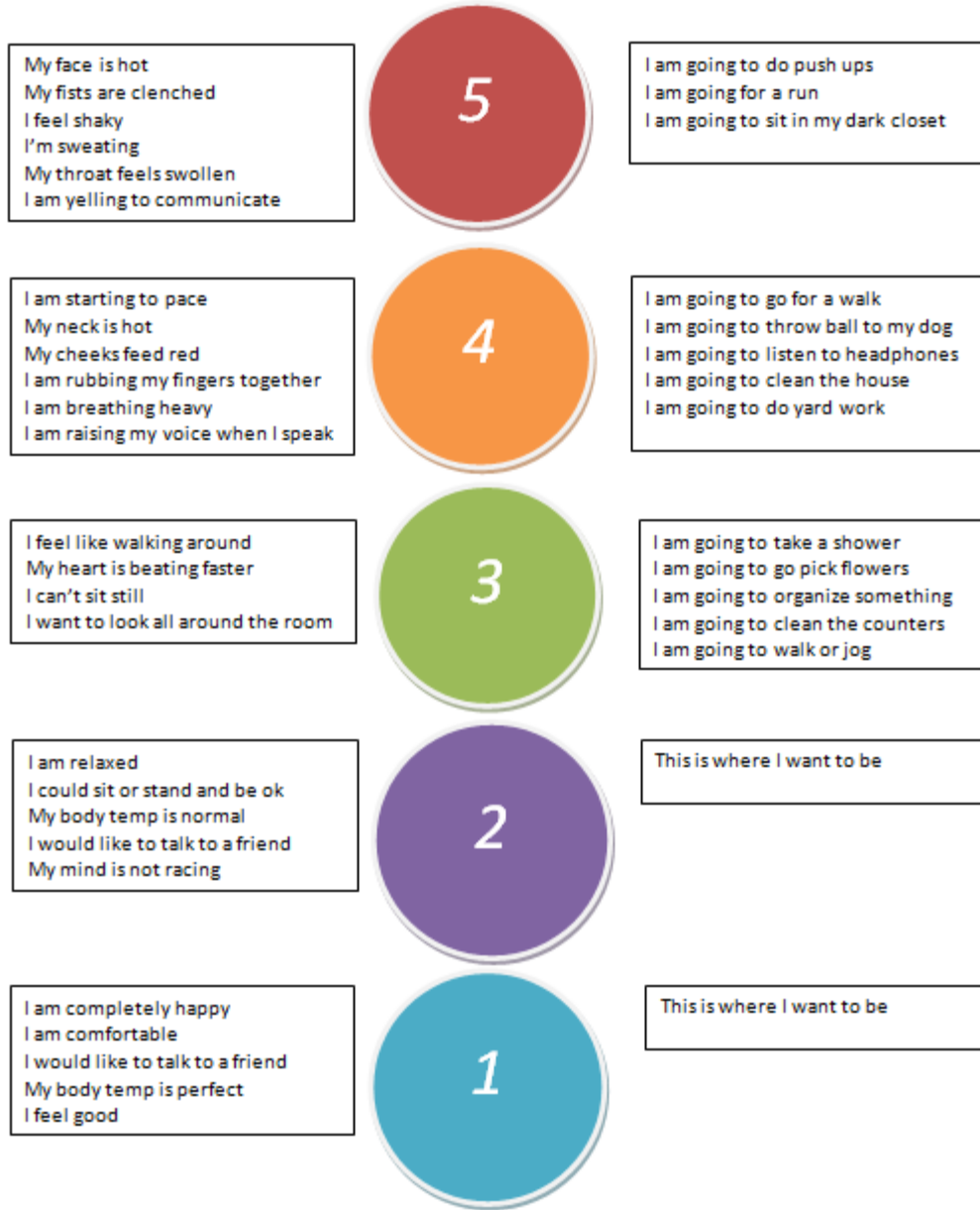
Many expectant mums find it helpful to practise **mindfulness** techniques or do something they enjoy. Using mindfulness can give your brain a rest from worrying, which will improve your mood and may help you to see things more clearly and in perspective.

[How mindfulness helps to manage emotions - Bing video](#)

Managing Emotions During Pregnancy

How I FEEL

How to Get Below 3



Needing more support with your emotions

There is a difference between normal pregnancy emotions and a mental health issue. Pregnancy can be a time when women experience mental health issues for the first time.

- Have prolonged feelings of sadness
- Have intrusive thoughts you can't control
- Repetitive patterns of behaviour (e.g. repeated washing of hands)
- Feel worthless
- Unable to concentrate or feel emotions
- Having panic attacks
- Suicidal thoughts

If you have had depression or anxiety or any other mental health diagnosis in the past, then talk through this with your midwife early in your pregnancy. A relapse can be possible during pregnancy or after you give birth.

Thank you!