

The REST technique

When confronted with distressing situations, it can be challenging to cope with overwhelming emotions, so we may respond by acting impulsively. But taking a step back from an emotionally upsetting situation can give us an opportunity to examine the situation more objectively. As a result, we are more likely to choose healthier solutions.

The REST technique is useful when you are experiencing painful emotions. It encourages you to shift your attention from emotions to facts and solutions and helps you pause, clear your head, and then determine a helpful action plan to address the situation.

Relax:

Stop what you are doing, take a breath, and pause. Step away from the situation for long enough that you do not act impulsively – take a hot bath, call a supportive friend, or go for a walk. It’s an opportunity to help yourself calm down before evaluating other options.

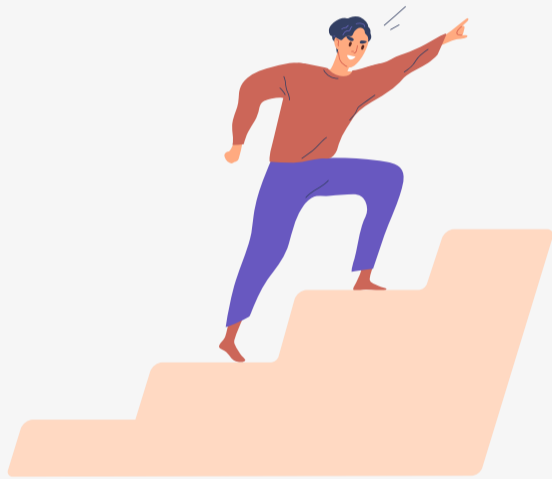


Evaluate:

Identify the facts within the distressing situation. Notice how you feel physically and emotionally. Observe what other people are doing and how they are reacting. Some questions to ask yourself can be “How do I feel?”, “What is happening?”

Set an intention:

Set a goal or make a plan to address the situation. It could be choosing a self-soothing activity that helps you relax, asking someone for help, or negotiating with others. The intention may also have a larger goal, for example, improving communication or problem-solving strategies.



Take action:

Finally, put your plan into action with intention and awareness. While it might not solve the problem, this action will be more helpful than the impulsive behavior.

It's never too late to start getting the most out of your life. Discover the top 8 practical ways to build mental wellness and feel your best.

