



# 6 Dimensions of Emotional Well-Being

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Healthy habits have become a bit routine, even if many of us struggle to keep them up consistently. We know we should get an annual physical, exercise regularly, eat fruits and vegetables and watch our blood pressure and cholesterol, etc. Often easier said than done. But while these physical aspects are essential to health, that's not all there is to wellness. Emotional well-being, or the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and adapt to difficult times, is just as important to our physical and mental health. Here are six dimensions of emotional well-being to practice and develop.

## Self-Awareness

Emotional well-being starts with taking stock of your current emotional state through self-awareness. Consciously noticing your stress, thoughts, emotions, and beliefs, and what may be contributing to and influencing them is an important step to personal development.

Self-awareness requires self-examination, but an honest, non-judgmental self-analysis isn't easy. Self-awareness helps us know how and why we experience certain feelings. The more we develop self-awareness, the better prepared we are to face uncertain or difficult situations. Self-awareness is also connected to the other elements on this list, enabling better agility and purposeful living.

We can help to build self-awareness by engaging in both introspective and social activities. Introspective practices like walking, mindfulness or journaling can help you learn about your inner thoughts and processes. However, being a good listener and examining feedback from others can also be helpful to start building self-awareness.<sup>1</sup>

## Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance is not an automatic or default state. Many of us have trouble accepting ourselves exactly as we are. Self-acceptance means accepting all of your attributes, positive or negative. Without self-acceptance, it can be more difficult to develop these other aspects of emotional well-being. Positive practices may actually be less effective if you're struggling with negative self-worth.

Begin to embrace your authentic self by practicing self-regulation. Try to control negative self-talk and refocus on positive aspects of yourself. Reframe negative situations into positive opportunities for growth. Observe, don't judge feelings, and emotions when they emerge.

Once we've learned to separate ourselves from negative self-judgement and rely less on defining ourselves through external factors, we can work on improving our less-than-desirable traits and qualities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Psychology Today](#), "What is self-awareness, and how do you get it?"

<sup>2</sup> [Harvard Health](#), "Greater self-acceptance improves emotional well-being"

## Self-Care

As we struggle with seemingly endless demands on our time, self-care is often the first thing to go. It can seem expendable. While that work project or family obligation carry the expectations of others, no one is pressuring us to take time for ourselves. Unfortunately, ignoring your own needs isn't without consequence.

When we neglect self-care, all other areas of our lives suffer. This can lead to feeling burned out, depressed, lethargic, or drained. Ironically, ignoring self-care in favor of other responsibilities can make it harder to fulfil those external expectations.

To start making time for self-care, identify where you're spending your time and what kinds of self-care activities and habits are missing. If you want to make creating self-care habits more effective and efficient, start simple and keep it short. Make this activity somewhat reasonable and attainable—and then build from there. Self-care is crucial to your mental and physical health—and fortunately, it's a skill we can learn and grow.<sup>3</sup>

## Emotional Agility

There's an assumption that the only way to get through life's challenges, especially emotionally difficult times, is to tough it out. However, rigidity and endurance don't help you adapt to or learn. When next presented with a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same. Emotional agility helps build resilience and flexibility for our rapidly changing world.

Emotionally agile people have learned to embrace messiness. They don't try to avoid difficult emotions. Instead they practice self-awareness and identify their experiences. Once confronted, they can pivot towards some form of recovery, healing, problem-solving and getting help.

Emotionally agile people take the time to carefully reflect on their thoughts, emotions and behaviors to avoid rash decisions and broad-brushed conclusions. Be willing to revise and go back to the drawing board to improve your responses to change and realign your expectations with the realities you face.<sup>4</sup>

## Purposeful Living

Often we might feel like we're going through the motions of each day without enjoy or engaging with it. Flowing through our familiar routines can feel safe and comfortable, but it can limit growth and prevent us from experiencing meaning.

Purposeful living is all about identifying and prioritizing what is most important, even if that means tolerating some discomfort along the way. This isn't necessarily just one thing but could be different in different areas of life.

As with all of these aspects, changes don't need to be large or all-encompassing. Small steps each day can make a noticeable difference in how we approach our lives. Try experiencing your daily routines as if they are totally fresh and new. This can help transform your outlook and fill days with greater purpose and meaning<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Psychology Today](#), "Self-care in a busy world: 4 questions to ask yourself"

<sup>4</sup> [Psychology Today](#), "How agile are you?"

<sup>5</sup> [Psychology Today](#), "How to create meaning and purpose in our daily lives"

## Seeking Help

Finally, knowing when to seek help is fundamental to healthy emotional well-being. While focusing on personal changes and improving our own emotional well-being is possible and admirable, the help of a professional may be productive or even necessary.

If you do decide to seek help, select a therapist who best fits your needs.

- Find a practitioner with the appropriate licensure and credentials.
- Find out whether your medical insurance covers mental health services.
- Word of mouth is a good source for finding a therapist but be aware that what works well for one person might not work for another.
- Research the practitioner to check for any complaints filed against the individual.
- Be prepared to ask a potential therapist a lot of questions, like whether the therapist is experienced in treating people with similar problems as your own, what specific form of treatment will be used, etc.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [Psychology Today](#), "Should I seek help?"