

## Emotional Expression

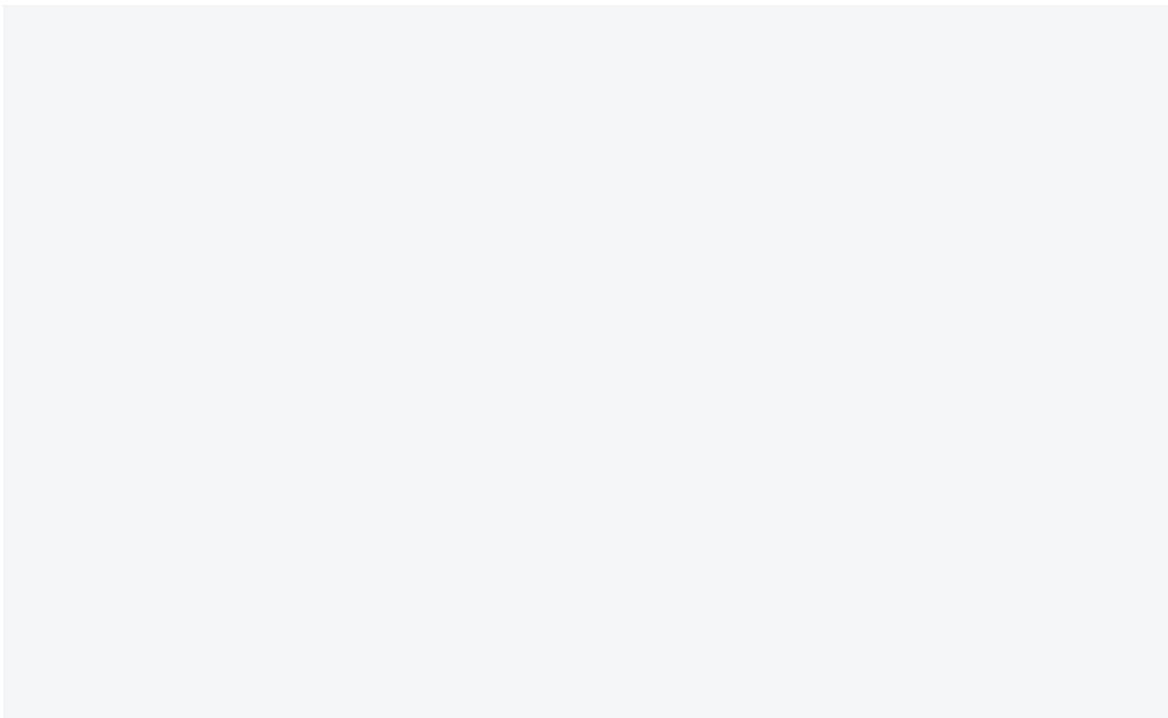
Mental imagery can be a safe place for reflecting on your emotions in real or imagined situations.

The steps below direct you to visualize a challenging experience and reflect on the emotions you feel and how you might share them.

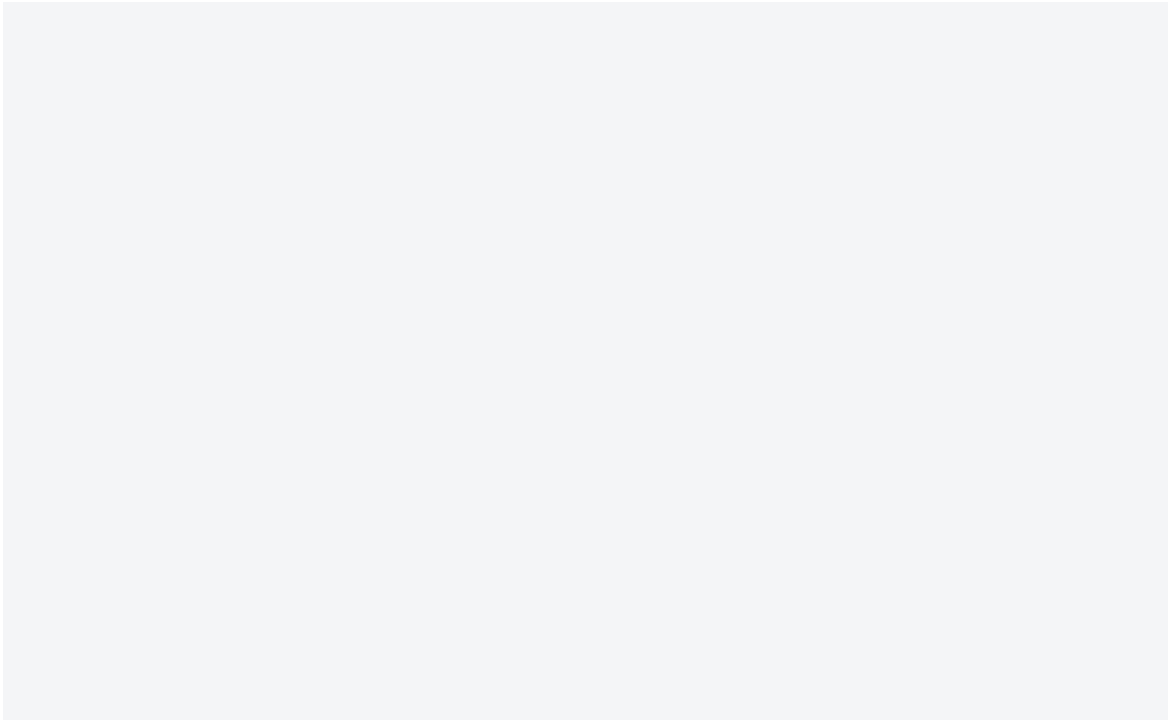
1. Close your eyes and imagine a situation (real or otherwise) in as much detail as possible that reflects an emotion you regularly experience.
2. What did it feel like for your body? Was your body tense? Did you feel hot or agitated?
3. Accept that this is a *message* communicating your emotions – give yourself permission to acknowledge this and how you felt.
4. If the experience is too intense, do not continue until you are ready.
5. When ready to continue, spend time reflecting on the emotion – accept it and cooperate with it, exploring how it feels.
6. Finally, take a few slow deep breaths and open your eyes.

Give yourself a minute or two, then:

7. Identify any needs that arose from the experience. For example, perhaps you require more closeness or more time to reflect on your life.



8. Write down the emotions you experienced. Imagine you were sharing them with someone close who you trust. What would you say?



If you feel ready, share what you wrote down with someone with whom you feel comfortable. Use this exercise as a helpful and practical way to practice expressing your emotions.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton