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This article is about ‘keeping your cool’.

It explores what emotion regulation is, why it is important, and the most effective ways of ‘not losing it’.

And don’t forget, our last article was about grief, and healing from grief. Click [here](#) to find out more!

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Emotion Regulation : How to keep your cool!

By Amanda Pulford
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Let’s face it ... we’ve all lost our cool at some stage, haven’t we? If we’ve become overwhelmed by emotions such as anger, sadness or anxiety, these emotions and our behaviours can affect our own happiness and our relationships with others. Unfortunately, as adults we’re expected to be able to keep our emotions in check, or at least cover them up so that we don’t lash out, say things we don’t mean, or look reckless. Keeping our emotions in check is what emotion regulation is all about.

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Recent research has suggested that there are nine possible emotion regulation strategies.

1. **Social support seeking** : Turning to others for reassurance and ideas.
2. **Self-medication** : Using substances to ease your emotions.
3. **Deliberate self-harm** : Inducing harm to oneself.
4. **Acceptance** : Taking a situation in your stride.
5. **Positive reappraisal** : Looking at the bright side of a troubling situation.
6. **Expressive suppression** : Trying to contain your emotions.
7. **Rumination** : Going over and over in your mind the situation that provoked the emotion.
8. **Behavioural avoidance** : Staying away from the emotion-laden situation.
9. **Cognitive avoidance** : Staying away from thoughts about the emotion-laden situation.

However, this research has also sought to determine if these strategies are useful. Can you guess which strategies are less effective than others at reducing the emotion you're trying to keep in check?

If you guessed 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9 ... you're right. **Self-medication** and **self-harm** are damaging to your mental and physical well-being. **Rumination** will only make anger,

sadness, and anxiety increase. And **avoidance** isn't very effective when there's a problem you need to deal with, rather than shove under the surface.

So, if you're trying to not lose your cool, then strategies 1, 4, 5, and 6 might be for you. Seek reassurance and ideas from your social network, accept the situation you're in, look at the positive side of a difficult situation, and contain your emotions (don't deny them, just don't let them take over).

And don't forget, if you, or someone you know would like help with emotion regulation, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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