

Landmarks of Emotion

In this unit, we will learn the flourish model of emotional regulation, which involves keeping us out of overwhelm. This is an introduction to the idea. We will be building on this throughout our group.

Remember, emotional regulation is necessary to befriend our emotions and decode them. This model is based on Kristy Arbon's Somatic Self-Compassion Model, which helps us be more aware of our bodies and how to care for ourselves.

Knowing how to identify your landmarks of emotion can help you understand when you are about to become overwhelmed, then take action to soothe and calm yourself.

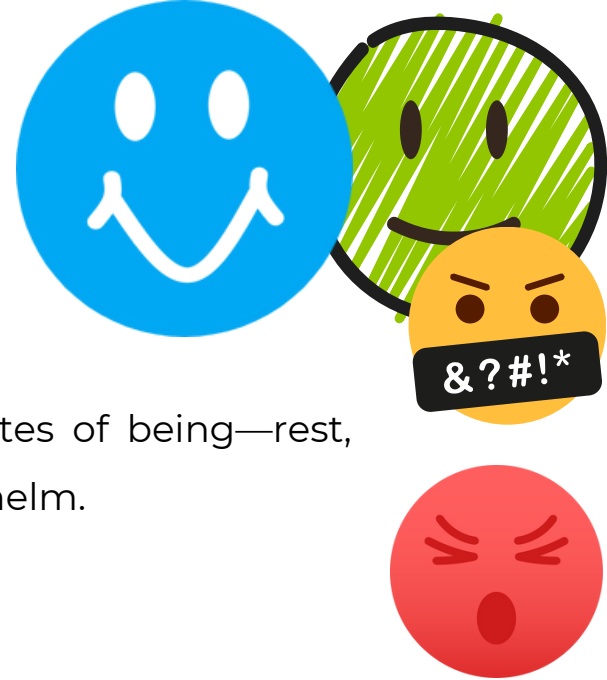
When overwhelmed, your brain may interpret the overwhelm as a danger and cause you to go into fight-flight freeze or fawn.

You may find yourself in those old behavior patterns you might want to be doing less, like shutting down, hiding, pleasing, or perfectionism. The more you experience this stress pattern, the more likely you will feel drained and exhausted and have less control over your life and less self-confidence and self-trust.

There is another way!

Let's learn about it.

The Four States



We can think of ourselves as having four states of being—rest, challenge, approaching overwhelm and overwhelm.

Rest

Rest can be described as an easeful state. It's a calm and effortless state. Most behaviors we make when in this state will be conscious and chosen.

Rest might be a tricky state to recognize and stay in. Our brain's survival bias might make it boring and uninteresting, but rest is still important. This bias can make us notice all the unpleasant parts of our experience and disregard the signs that we are resting. We can learn to recognize when we are resting and appreciate it when our needs are fulfilled. Life is not always about difficulty, and survival bias or negative bias is not always our reality. Noticing our resting states and adding more of them to our lives can help add more emotional regulation.

Noticing the Signs of Being at Rest



Breathing freely

Loose muscles

Feeling
spaciousness

Feeling
content

Thinking clearly

Awareness of
our spirituality,
whatever it is

Noticing the Signs of Being at Rest



Take a minute and jot down your signs of being at rest. You can focus on thoughts, sensations, feelings, what your body wants to do when you think of or are at rest, and images that come to mind.

Images

Body sensations

Feelings

Activities you
are doing

Thoughts

What your body
wants to do



Challenge

Challenge is another state we can be in. When we are challenged, we use our resources successfully and learn and grow. We live our life consistent with our values and usually maximize our strengths while in this state. In an upcoming unit, you will have the opportunity to explore your strengths and values.

When you are learning something new, you might be in a challenge state. For example, you might find yourself in a challenge during this course. Words like curious, excited, learning and growing, and fun can be used to describe a challenge state, but you may also experience mild irritation.



Noticing the Signs of Being in Challenge



When we are in a challenge state, we are doing something meaningful, but we can manage the stress and enjoy what we are doing without too much distress.

Alert

Curious

Mildly
annoyed or
irritated but
determined
to grow

Excited

Mild to
moderate
tension but
still can learn

Engaged

Noticing the Signs of Being in Challenge



Take a minute and jot down your signs of being in a challenge. Some key areas to pay attention to are. What are your thoughts, sensations, and feelings while in a challenge state? What does your body feel like doing, and what images come to mind when you think of the challenge state?

Thoughts

Sensations

Feelings

Images

What are you
doing

What do you
want to do?

Challenge



The goal is to stay concentrated on the job in front of us, even when it is hard, and to prevent ourselves from becoming overwhelmed by the standards of perfectionism, shame what others demand of us, or our inner critic sets that are not being fulfilled. These are things that take us out of challenge into overwhelm.



Moving from Challenge to Overwhelm

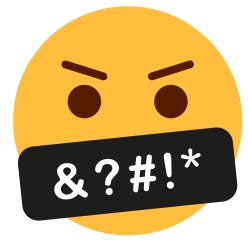


Once you start to feel like you are no longer making choices and things are happening too fast or without your awareness, your confusion can turn to panic.

For example, your mild irritation may become something you can't manage. You may want to run away and escape, avoid, argue, or lash out, or you may find yourself shutting down and dissociating. These are all signs of approaching overwhelm.



Moving from challenge to overwhelm

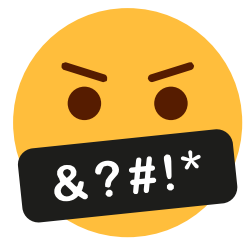


A great aim is to either remain in a state of rest or challenge and stay out of overwhelm. To live in a world of people with typical neurological development, you have probably been conditioned to ignore your body's signals and force yourself to do too much to survive.



There are better ways than this, so the goal is to give you the tools to take care of yourself in a manner that is more mindful of what your body needs.

Noticing the Signs of Moving from Challenge to Overwhelm



This is the hardest step of all, but if you can tune in to some of your body's signs that you may be starting to tip from challenge into overwhelm, you can take better care of yourself. Here are some typical signs.

Worrying

Mind
becomes
busy

Nausea

Heart is
racing

Thinking is
fuzzy

Muscles
might tighten

Thoughts
start to
become
negative

Noticing the Signs of Moving from Challenge to Overwhelm



What are some of your signs that you may be tipping from challenge to overwhelm?

Thoughts

Sensations

Images

What are you
doing?

Feelings

What do you
want to do?

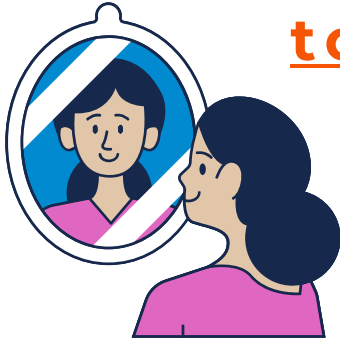


Remember, the more regulated you are, the more your brain can think clearly about your feelings to help you make decisions in your best interest.

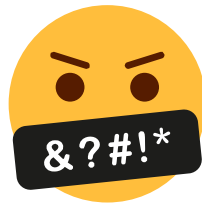
This will build your self-trust and self-confidence—Something you have been deprived of.

You may have never been taught to pay attention to these signs. In fact, you've likely been taught to ignore them and push through them.

LOVE
YOUR
body
♥



Moving from challenge to overwhelm



Reflection Question

Can you think of some ways and times that your family or societal structures have taught you to ignore the signs of your moving overwhelm?

You may have been taught your feelings in your body don't matter or that they are unreliable, but now you know they are not. They are often signs of something happening in your environment to pay attention to.



Overwhelm

Overwhelm is an innate response to protect you!!!

When we have been through more than we can handle, it is natural to feel overwhelmed and need a break.

It is okay to experience this, and it is normal. We should be gentle with ourselves and take time to both push ourselves and rest.

Overwhelm



Mildly difficult emotions will come up during our training. You can practice these ideas moving forward by paying attention during our group sessions to whether you are at rest in challenge or in overwhelm. If overwhelmed, care for yourself by taking a break.

In later units you will learn to:

- Notice if you begin to feel overwhelmed
- Ask yourself if you require any assistance
- Give yourself the help you need or
- Get assistance for yourself

In our self-compassion unit we will learn to ask yourself three questions:

1. What do I feel?
2. What do I need?
3. What can I do?



Noticing the Signs of Overwhelm



Here are some of the typical signs of overwhelm.

Indecisive

Feeling
disconnected or
numb

Desperate

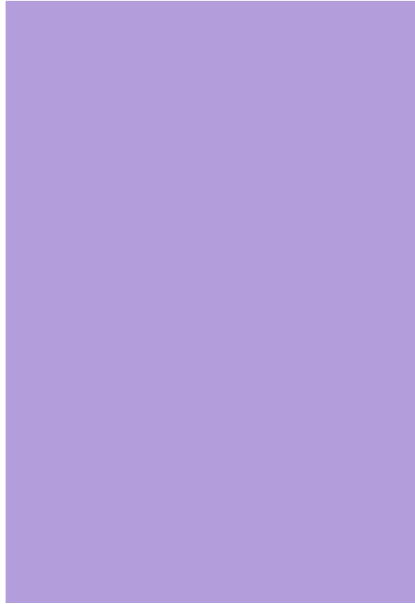
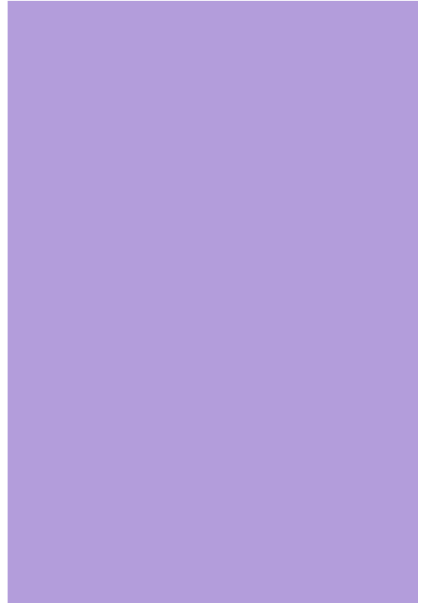
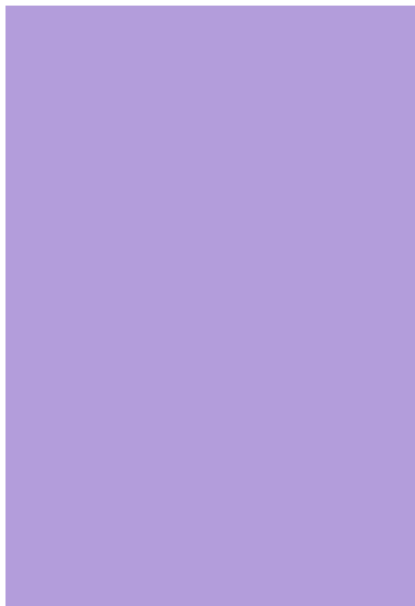
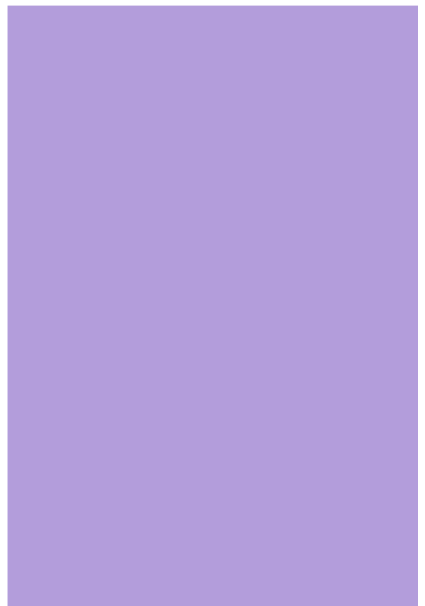
Teary and
vulnerable

Tight muscles

Want to
hide, sleep or
run away or
fight
Procrastination
or Paralysis

Noticing the Signs of Overwhelm

What are your signs of overwhelm? Think about behaviors, thoughts, feelings, things you want to do, what happens in your body, and what behaviors you want to engage in.

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Caring for ourselves when dysregulated

Rather than disregarding our needs and relying on old strategies to mask, it is essential to consider how to tune in and respond to ourselves by making wise choices.

Self awareness helps us to build the skills to tune in to our experience. Two great skills I recommend are timer check ins and body scans.

Unfortunately both of these are skills that require some practice. I'm sorry for this!

Overwhelm

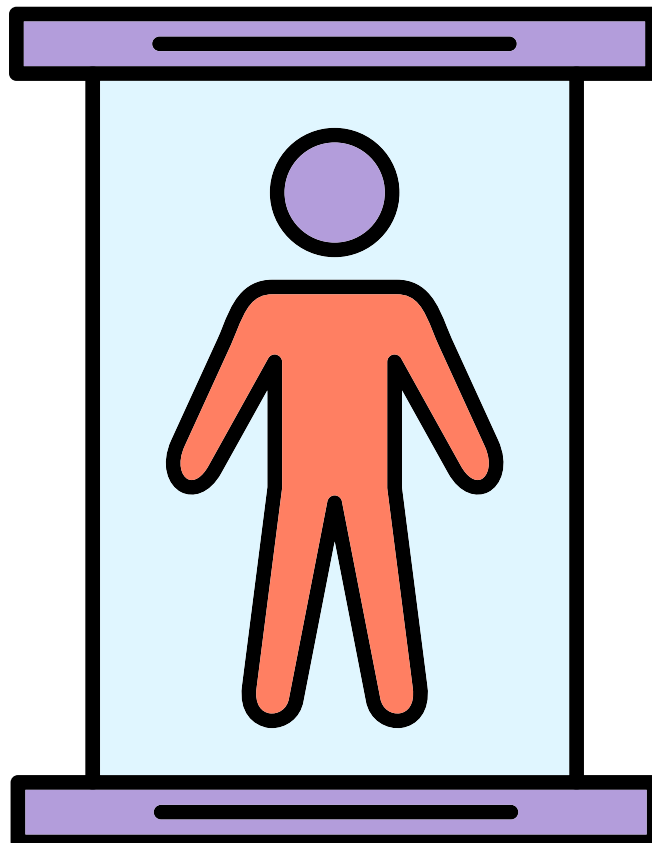


Extra Help:

You can use the Body, Feelings ,Words and Feelings Wheel to help with these practices.

Body Scans

In our course there is a link to a recording where you can practice body scans. Body scans can help you become more attuned to the signs of the landmarks of emotions. The more you do them the more skilled you will become. They also are often relaxing.



Overwhelm



Extra Help:

You can use The Body Feelings Words and The Feelings Wheel to help with this practice.

Timer check ins



You can build awareness of what you are feeling and help yourself with knowing where you are in your emotional landscape by using a timer as many times a day as you'd like.

Set an alarm two to three times a day and ask yourself what you are feeling in your body. Try to put a feelings name to it and or match it to a state, rest challenge or overwhelm. You can jot this down on paper, your phone, in an audio file or in a journal.

Other questions to build self-awareness:

- What am I feeling in your body—in this moment?
- What am I thinking—in this moment?
- What am I wanting to do in this moment?
- Is there anything I might need to do to help myself feel better in this moment?





Group Activity



Many women with adhd struggle with moving from a challenged state into the overwhelmed state.

How do you think lack of understanding and support in a neurotypical world contributes to overwhelm and emotional dysregulation?

Have others benefited from ignoring your body's signs of overwhelm, or did you learn to do this to please your teachers, family, or employers?



Group Activity



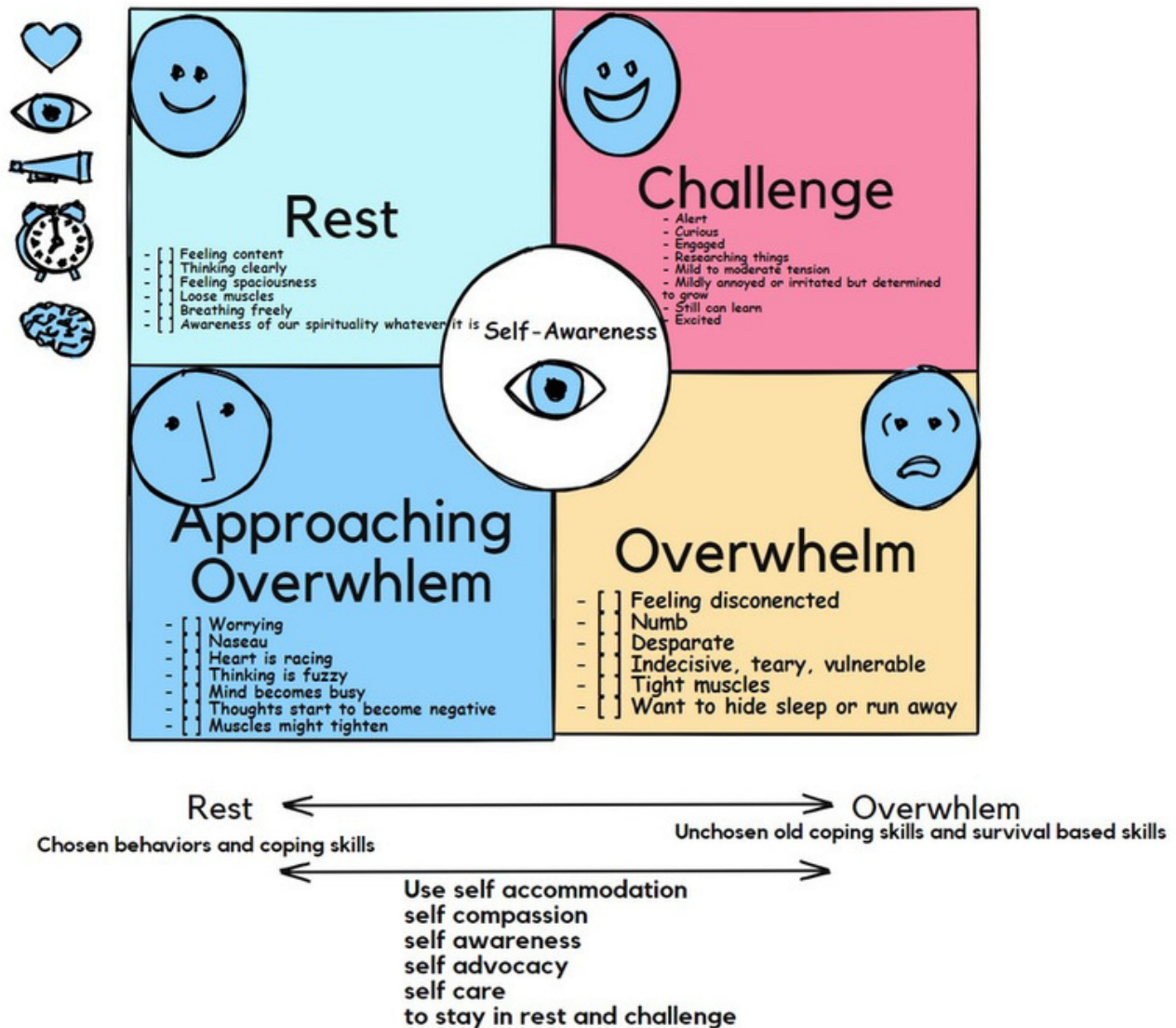
What skills have you used thus far to cope with this overwhelm if you were taught not to trust or value it?

Many women cope by hiding the things they struggle with, criticizing themselves, developing intense shame, sometimes shutting down and letting things pile up, becoming very anxious, avoiding things, and becoming perfectionists. Do any of these things describe you?

These responses are perfectly normal considering what you have had to deal with. Do you have compassion for the other women in your group and how they have been coping? Can you turn this compassion towards yourself?

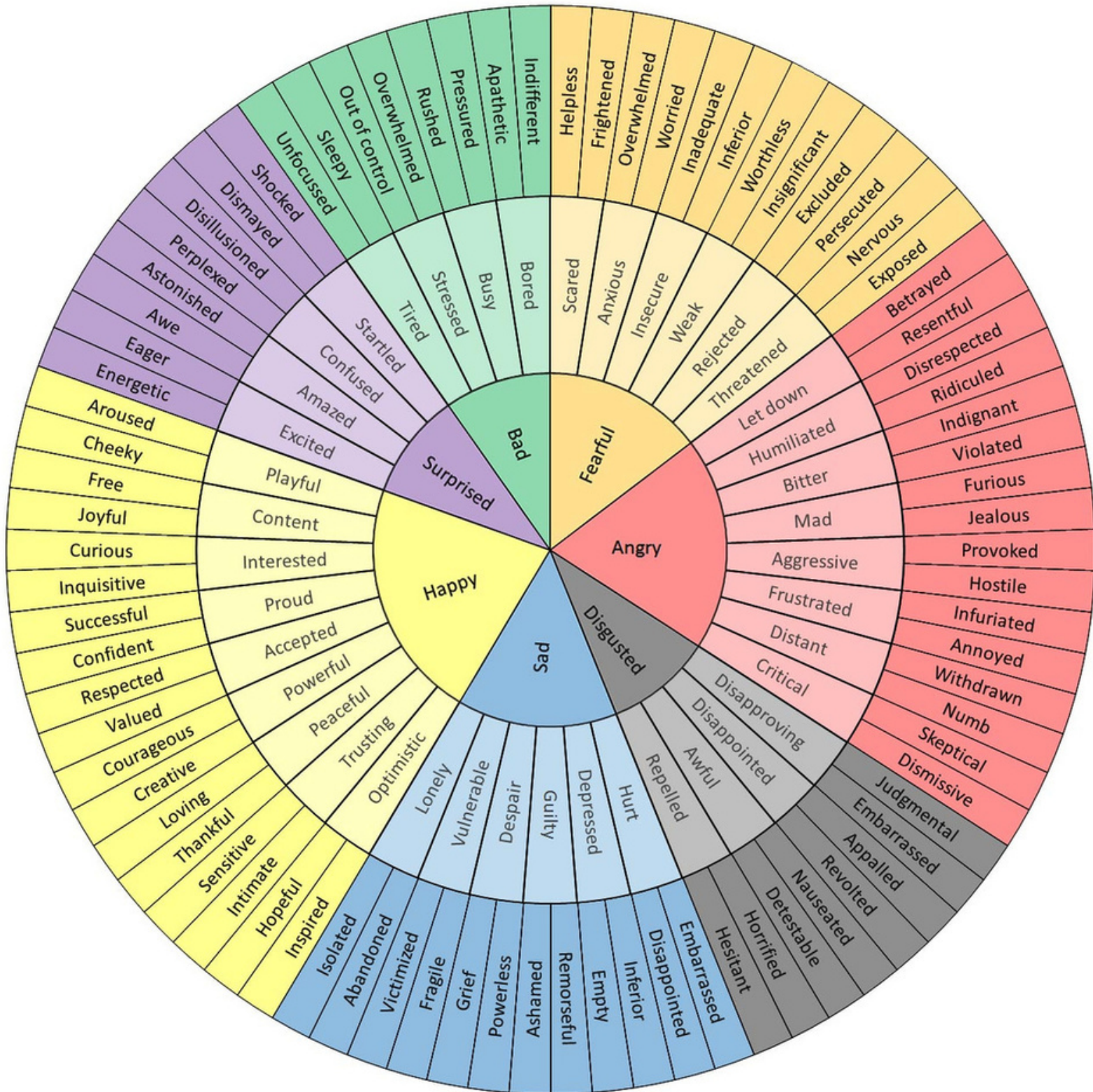
A picture of the model and our skills

Landmarks of Emotion



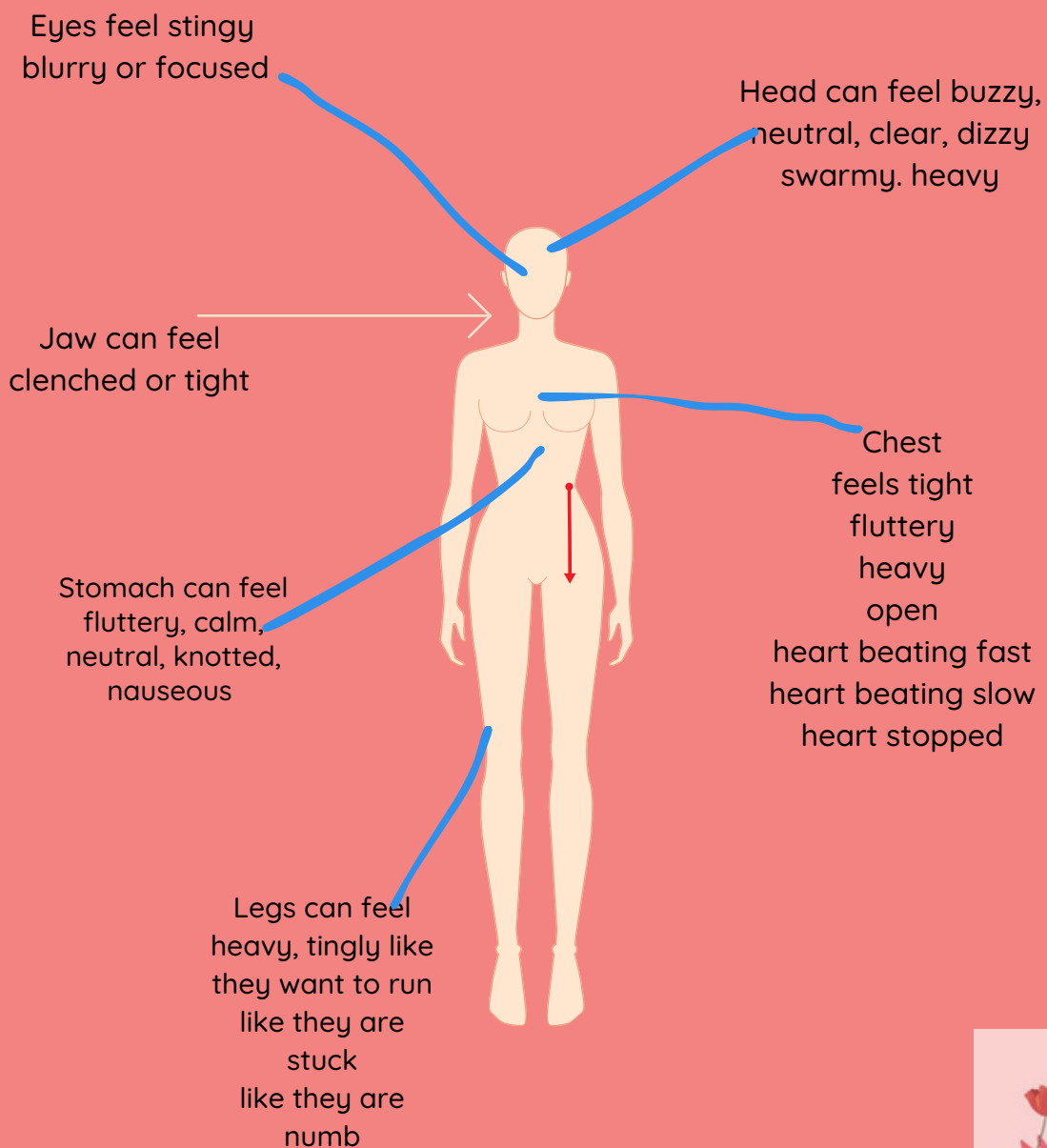
credit to Kristy Arbon

Feelings names



BODY FEELINGS WORDS

neutral knotted tingly, open, clenched, tight, loose, heavy,
swirly, itchy, fidgety



credit to Dr. Megan Neff for this idea



Flourish

A group for ADHD Women