

## Workshop: The Integrated Home Visitor: Strategies to Promote Whole Brain Integration and Resilience

### 8 Ways to Improve Self-Regulation ([www. Mindtools.com](http://www.Mindtools.com))

**1. Leading With Integrity:** Managers who are self-regulated lead with integrity. They are good role models, they practice what they preach, and they create trusting environments. They do the right thing for the right reasons, even when it means they don't take the easiest option.

People who live and work with integrity are often successful because others respect them. To behave with integrity, identify your [values](#) <sup>+</sup>. These are the things that you won't compromise on, even if they put you at a disadvantage. (Recognize that you'll sometimes lose opportunities by behaving ethically, but that you'll win "the long game.") Then, start living these values every day. Admit your mistakes, take responsibility for your actions, and listen to your inner voice.

People tend to treat you how you treat them, so, if you don't want to experience bad behaviors from others, don't exhibit them yourself. Equally, if you remain positive and optimistic – even in the face of adversity – you team members will likely do the same.

**2. Being Open to Change:** People who self-regulate cope well with change, and adapt their behavior to different situations easily. Importantly, they think about change positively, and see it as an exciting opportunity for self-development. (Conversely, people who resist change can experience a great deal of stress, and other negative physical and psychological effects.)

If you struggle to cope with change, try using the [Transactional Model of Stress and Coping](#) <sup>+</sup> to look objectively at your change situation, and to analyze how you can respond to it effectively. Other tools like [SWOT](#) <sup>+</sup>, [Risk Analysis](#) <sup>+</sup> and [Impact Analysis](#) <sup>+</sup> can also help you discover new opportunities, and to manage and eliminate threats.

**3. Identifying Your Triggers:** An important part of being self-regulated is [self-awareness](#) <sup>+</sup>, particularly when it comes to knowing what your weaknesses are, and how other people's behavior can affect you negatively.

Identify your triggers by making a list of all the times when you've given in to your negative impulses at work. When you've identified emotions and reactions that aren't useful, replace them with more positive behaviors.

For example, you might discover that you tend to snap at colleagues when you feel your workload is out of control, because you have back-to-back meetings. If this is the case, you might want to schedule "free" appointments in your diary to avoid this situation.

#### Tip:

Consider keeping a [Stress Diary](#) <sup>+</sup> to identify where you need to improve your stress management skills, and to understand the levels of stress at which you are happiest and most effective.

**4. Practicing Self-Discipline:** In their 2012 study, "[Masters of the Long Haul](#)," researchers Thomas Bateman and Bruce Barry said that self-regulation is the single most important factor in achieving long-term goals.

People who show initiative or work toward challenging goals often encounter difficulties and setbacks, but those who are able to keep going eventually succeed.

Develop self-regulation by working on persistence and self-discipline. These are traits that keep you working hard, even when you are not "in the mood" and your goals seem out of reach. For example, keeping focused on how you'll feel when you've finished your project might be the best way to avoid procrastinating, or giving up on a difficult project completely.

**5. Reframing Negative Thoughts:** People who are self-regulated are able to choose the wolf they feed. If you experience a negative event or obstacle at work, tune in to your negative thoughts. Ask yourself whether they're reasonable and stand up to fair scrutiny. For example, did you really not get the job because you're "not good enough," or was it because your colleague had more experience in a specific area? Consider using [affirmations](#) + and [visualization](#) + to manage your negative thoughts and to control how you react to similar situations in the future. By rationally assessing the facts, you can undo the damage that negative thinking may have done. For instance, saying to yourself, "I can do this, I've done it before" is much more motivating than, "I can't do this, I'm hopeless!"

Another strategy is to find something positive about the situation. This small shift in perspective can transform your thinking and make you feel more optimistic about the future. For example, imagine you've received some feedback that upsets you and causes negative thoughts to spiral. Take the emotion out of the equation for a moment, and think about whether there's any element of truth in it. If there is, how can you improve your performance next time? If there isn't, take the [initiative](#) + and talk to the other person to address any misunderstandings.

**6. Keeping Calm Under Pressure:** Self-regulation is about remaining calm in the face of adversity, and keeping your cool. If you're in a situation where you're losing control of your emotions, try to remove yourself for a few moments – either physically or mentally. For example, [relaxation techniques](#) + such as deep breathing can help you to calm down – it interrupts any negative thoughts, and puts you back on a more positive path. Breathe in slowly for five seconds, then breathe out for five. Focus on your breathing, and nothing else. Do this at least five times.

**Tip:**

Remember, the more you practice self-regulation, the more successful you'll be at it.

**7. Considering the Consequences:** If you find yourself in a difficult situation, or if you're trying to control your impulses, think before you act and consider the consequences. Remembering what happened when you reacted badly in the past can remind you why it's important to be self-regulated.

Or, imagine how you look and behave when you're not in control – this will give you some perspective on the situation. For instance, if you're about to shout at your team member, imagine how you would look. Is your face red and sweaty? Are you flailing your arms around? How would you feel working for that person? You'd probably not want to.

**8. Believing in Yourself:** Another important element of self-regulation is self-efficacy. This is your belief in your ability to achieve your goals. To develop this, work on your [self-confidence](#) <sup>+</sup>. Focus on the experiences in your life where you were successful, to put your mistakes and setbacks into perspective.

Choose to believe in yourself, and surround yourself with other positive and confident people. The more you see the success of others whose skills and abilities are similar to yours, the more likely you are to believe that you can also achieve that success.

Combine all of this positive energy with great [stress management strategies](#), and you'll soon improve your levels of personal confidence.

### Key Points

Self-regulation is the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses, and to think before you react. It makes up one of the five elements of emotional intelligence, a concept developed by psychologist Daniel Goleman, and it helps us stop unhelpful behavior, and keep calm under pressure.

We all have the ability to control the way we react to situations. Build on your skills by leading with integrity, being open to change, practicing self-discipline, and believing in yourself. Keep calm under pressure by identifying your triggers to stress and reframing negative thoughts, and always consider the consequences of your actions.

Satya Kline @ [www.cultivatingconnection.org](http://www.cultivatingconnection.org) - Additional self-regulation strategies:

- Deep breathing with an exaggerated exhale tells the brain that you are safe and can calm down.
- Exercise – even a little does a lot for calming the nervous system. Take a walk or stretch.
- Music can change a mood from negative to positive. Have some feel good tunes ready for use!
- Thinking about a person you love or a happy memory and holding that in your mind for at least 20 seconds.
- Identify what you are feeling – “name it to tame it.” Feelings are never wrong, they are important information that your body is giving you.
- Try a short meditation just focusing on your breath or maybe a phrase that helps you feel more centered.