

“Dealing with Difficult Emotions”

How to Navigate Anger, Disappointment, and Frustration

The goal isn't *how not to feel* these emotions but rather *what to do* with them when they show up. Difficult emotions are often an organic and authentic response to a challenging situation or circumstance. They serve a purpose. They alert us to a distressing or disturbing experience and prompt us to acknowledge our reaction. However, anger, disappointment and frustration are places we should *linger* but not *live* in.

Why?



- These emotions, while usually directed at an external source, are experienced internally. We alone sit with these and deal with what manifests as a result; not the person, event, or circumstance that we are angry, disappointed, or frustrated with.
- There are very real consequences to our physical and emotional well-being when we consistently and chronically experience anger, disappointment and frustration and we don't engage constructive coping strategies to manage these emotions.
- Difficult emotions often mask an underlying emotion, like grief, fear, anxiety, or guilt. They compromise our ability to *feel* these other emotions, and in doing so, limit the opportunity we have to address the other emotion and move forward in a healthy way.

Navigation Strategies

- **Mindfulness-based practices:** These bring forth awareness in the moment without judgment. Utilizing a regular mindfulness-based practice creates a neutral, safe space which helps us identify the underlying emotions.
- **Self-reflection:** Ask yourself, “*How is this difficult emotion serving ME?*” (Is it helping me to move forward in a healthy, productive way? Or is it keeping me stuck?)

- **Manage your expectations:** These difficult emotions often arise when our expectations don't match reality. Try to identify aspects of the situation or circumstance that you can influence, change, or control and focus your emotional energy on those. Let go of everything else.
- **Emotional flexibility:** Embrace that you can feel a difficult emotion and simultaneously feel another, more productive emotion. For example, you may feel frustrated by the messy kitchen but grateful your partner cooked dinner. Angry that your child was at a party drinking but relieved they are home safe. Disappointed you didn't get a promotion but hopeful for next time because you made it to the final round of consideration.
- **Self-compassion:** Difficult emotions are part of the human experience. When they pop up, grant yourself the same grace and compassion you would extend to a beloved friend or family member.

Navigating these difficult emotions takes intention and practice but it is a skill that can be learned! Ulliance can help. Our coaching and counseling services can assist you when you encounter these difficult emotions and can help you develop strategies to manage them.

Ulliance Life Advisor Well-being addresses the most preventable and most costly well-being conditions by leveraging the combination of digital tools and resources, one-on-one counseling and expert well-being coaching.



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