

Practitioner's Guide to Emotion Regulation in School-Aged Children

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by

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 Springer

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This text is designed for school psychologists and other mental health workers in schools to strengthen their capacity to help children and adolescents who must learn to regulate their emotions or strengthen their ability to do so. After thirty years in education working with children and adolescents, emotion regulation appears to me to be a key variable in student functioning that we have not fully understood or successfully addressed. The text is dedicated to the children who must frequently deal with intense emotion that they have difficulty controlling. Not only are these children and adolescents the most challenging and tiring for parents and school staff, they are also the most interesting and the most fun when their emotions are positive.

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Introduction

After thirty years in education, a practitioner begins to step back and reflect upon the “big picture.” What do we as mental health practitioners do well? What are the areas in which we have to develop more skills, strategies, and techniques in order to help students function more successfully? Why are some of our most frequent interventions not working? How can we do better? These questions are inevitable, and they are not easily answered.

One practice that is not working well is the training in social skills. School psychologists and other practitioners spend a lot of time attempting to train for social skills when there are considerable data to indicate that these efforts are often not successful. A major flaw in training for social skills is poor generalization. The skills that we teach, and that students appear to learn at least in the contexts in which we teach them, are not being exhibited in the environments in which students need them. In the fast-moving, confusing, often noisy, and complex peer world, all of our efforts to train social skills are invisible. The peer world is, of course, where young people need these skills the most, for fitting into that world is vitally important for their general emotional adjustment as well as for academic success!

When students are observed, the skills that were trained are not being used. One of the primary problems is the fact that many children who need social skills training cannot control their emotions well enough to think about using their skills, if in fact they can focus on them well enough to think about using them or even can recall them at all.

Emotion regulation is a critical missing piece in our training. Moreover, we must considerably change the way we deliver skills and strategies. Many of the ones that we teach are not developmentally appropriate, are not intensive enough, are not delivered often enough, or are not delivered in relevant contexts.

There are considerable data available to help us improve our training and the targeted and specific interventions that we want to deliver to help schoolchildren. Some of these data are ignored and some are not well known, but the information is available if we look for it. Regulating emotion is a fairly new focus of researchers, and we do not yet know enough about how to help children who are having difficulties. This book is designed to support the work of school

psychologists and other mental health workers in schools in regard to understanding, facilitating, and strengthening students' emotion regulation.

Chapter 1 offers a basic introduction to the "hot topic" of emotion regulation. A broad view of the subject is helpful, although there does not yet seem to be a clear, agreed upon definition of emotion regulation among researchers. Several concepts related to emotion regulation are discussed along with the domains and components of emotion regulation. 'Good enough' ability to regulate one's emotions means physical and mental health for students, and in our culture learning to regulate emotion appropriately is critical for academic success, personal satisfaction, and a sense of competence and resilience. Current research dealing with the relevance of emotion regulation for students will help school psychologists and other mental health practitioners appreciate why they have to understand the science of emotion regulation as well as the clinical work needed to help students from preschool through high school.

The discomfort and pain that underdeveloped emotion regulation causes children and adolescents are covered in Chapter 2. Although dysregulation at a particular stage of development can be temporary with no long-term effects, repeated patterns of emotion regulation that strongly interfere with competence can place a student at risk for developing a disorder or can be the symptoms of a disorder. The chapter discusses the role of emotion dysregulation in physiological disorders and in the major disorders of childhood: borderline personality disorder, autism spectrum disorders, bipolar disorder, attention-deficit disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and the depressive disorders. Considerations for interventions are introduced. The control of negative emotions is the key to helping children who have identified disorders or are at risk for developing disorders. It is also important to strengthen effortful control and attention.

A brief understanding of the connection between the brain and the body with the goal of making emotion less mysterious and possibly more controllable is delineated in Chapter 3. Children's emotional behavior may represent an "affective style" of responding. We have to appreciate that there are individual differences in the ways in which emotions are experienced, how often they are experienced, and to what degree.

The brain structures that are involved in emotional learning include the amygdala, the prefrontal cortex, and the hippocampus. The "stress response" is a brain-based reaction that triggers behavior. When a child who is already exhibiting poor emotion regulation is placed under stress, it will be especially difficult for him or her to regulate emotion and recover. The appeal of feeling better in the present may overcome the appeal of any longer-term goals. An improved understanding of the biology of emotion can help us in our search for interventions that will be helpful in several ways.

It is important to understand typical development, so that underdeveloped emotion regulation can be identified early and addressed. In Chapter 4, we see that the emotion regulatory aspects of temperament are helpful in appreciating an individual's response to his or her several primary environments. Children with different temperaments can be distinguished by the ways in which they

regulate their emotions. Researchers trying to determine the relationship between a child's temperament and his or her growing ability to regulate emotions have explored how behaviors that reflect temperament influence styles of emotional control. The connection between emotion regulation, attention regulation, and temperament also affects a child's developing social competence. Development of emotion regulation during infancy and toddlerhood and the role of language are discussed as well as emotion regulation during the preschool period. Emotion regulation is a key developmental task of the early childhood period, yet significant numbers of children continue to have difficulty as they begin formal schooling.

The influence of parenting styles and practices on the development of emotion regulation and the various ways that children learn about emotions are described in Chapter 5. "Positive parenting" is a term that is used to describe parent-child interactions that are important for the study of the development of emotion regulation. Family expressiveness of positive emotion has been connected to emotion regulation as has family 'talk' about emotions.

Parents' reactions to children's negative emotions are particularly influential in regard to the development of emotion regulation. Children who are punished when they exhibit negative feelings associate their emotion with negative consequences, which increases their distress and the intensity of the emotion, and it is difficult for these children to regulate their emotions. Children whose parents who use an interactive style around expression of emotion that is similar to "coaching" can generally regulate their emotions and tend not to behave aggressively. Both parenting and child behavior can also be explored in terms of approach and avoidance motivation. Finally, a number of interventions have been developed to help parents increase positive behaviors when interacting with their children, and these are discussed as well.

Emotion in the classroom has recently been recognized as an area of interest by researchers. Chapter 6 examines a student's ability to regulate emotion and function in class. Anxiety is the most frequently experienced (and studied) academic emotion in the school setting. There is a body of research to indicate that anxiety decreases children's test performance as do their beliefs about their competency in various school subjects.

There is convincing evidence to indicate that early relationships with teachers as well as parents are important in determining whether or not a child will learn self-regulation skills and emotion regulation, take others' perspectives, and develop relationships. Classroom climate is also important. When it is ambiguous or negative, avoidance behaviors, disruption, and cheating are more likely. Evidence is provided that indicates that emotion regulation in children and adolescents can be improved. Programming is explored and its importance becomes clear when we realize that emotional and social skills are closely connected to academic performance.

Students may feel that their most important issues have to do with friendships and other peer relationships. Chapter 7 deals with peer relationships. Young people who are strong in effortful control of their emotions are socially

competent and are liked by their peers. Emotion dysregulation places children at risk for isolation from or rejection by their peers. The peer group is a key source of emotional knowledge and practice. Boys and girls learn how and when to express emotion through social interactions with their peers, and display rules are learned within the context of the peer group. Children create their own rules about how emotions can or cannot be expressed. Prosocial behavior is significantly reduced even when young people simply think that they may be excluded from the group. In order to avoid rejection, they must learn to keep anger under control and express it carefully. Emotion regulation is especially important when considering victims of bullying.

Students with varying abilities in emotion regulation and varying degrees of reactivity may respond differently to different types of interventions. The varieties of interventions available for consideration by school psychologists to deal with peer issues include curricula that feature empathy training and antibullying techniques, and these are reviewed.

School is stressful for many students. Chapter 8 deals with how students adapt to stress and how they can be helped to develop more effective strategies. Young people develop coping styles to deal with stress within and outside of school. Among the less adaptive strategies are suppression, rumination, avoidance, and negative self-thinking. More adaptive strategies include behavioral distraction, optimism, problem solving, positive reappraisal, and detached mindfulness. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has good support as an intervention for use with children and adolescents to improve self-regulation. Newer approaches include mindfulness, acceptance, and emotion coaching. Specialized interventions for coping with anxiety, depression, and anger management are reviewed.

Interventions are the focus of the next two chapters. Chapter 9 suggests various ways in which school psychologists and other mental health workers in schools can support teachers and parents. A particularly important variable in helping children develop good emotion regulation has to do with how adults react to children's negative emotions. It is clearly important for adults to correctly 'read' a child's temperament and emotional style and to respond appropriately. For example, researchers have paid particular attention to the parenting styles of those adults who have highly anxious children. These reticent children influence their parents, who then become overprotective. Parents and teachers have to teach emotion vocabulary and talk with students about emotions. Emotion coaching is a style of interacting that can be used by both parents and teachers.

Teachers also have to be more aware of differences among their students so that their reactions will be appropriate and helpful and not add to their students' stress. In classrooms where the climate is positive, these students are both supported and protected. Interventions that are helpful for children as they develop emotion regulation skills include stress reduction, emotion coaching, modeling, and direct teaching of coping skills. Today we have the added pressure of dealing with students from diverse backgrounds. When a child's

family culture does not match the predominant culture of the school, considerable stress can be placed on the child, the family, and the school. Issues around culture, gender, and various student handicapping conditions make helping children develop emotion regulation a considerable challenge.

It is clear that the same tools, strategies, and techniques are not appropriate for students of all ages and ability levels. Tools used to assist children and adolescents to regulate emotion and behavior may have to be adapted to increase the likelihood that they will be used. It is particularly important to adapt tools for young children. Cognitive interventions have been shown to be particularly useful for adolescents and adults, and many of these tools can be easily adapted so that they can be used effectively with younger schoolchildren. Some easily adapted techniques involve, for example, number scales, mantras, self-talk, acceptance, problem solving, and fear hierarchies. A few tools designed for juveniles with autism spectrum disorders or learning disabilities can also be used for those with weak emotion regulation. Interventions described Chapter 10 range from 'quick' tools for young people with mild emotion regulation problems to more complex techniques for students with significant weaknesses in emotion regulation.

General and practical information for school psychologists who want to establish both targeted and intensive interventions for students with poor emotion regulation can be found in Chapter 11. Although boys and girls who have more extreme difficulty with emotional regulation stand out in the school setting, tools are needed to identify both the student who has more moderate needs and the more specific skills that a student may have to master. Generalization and transfer (carrying over skills taught in one environment to different environments) must be directly addressed. Finally, the major steps in providing treatment for problems in emotion regulation are specified.

Several individuals have been enormously helpful in the preparation of this text. Two young artists, Hunter Ward and Summer Ward, deserve special thanks. Sandra Ward, a talented medical editor, provided many ideas for organizing and strengthening the readability of the text. Janet Lemnah meticulously read and corrected the manuscript, identifying errors and changes that were needed. Few people have her ability to attend to detail in the same way. Most of all, Dick Macklem supported me in this project both emotionally and by reviewing text. Without his strong encouragement and support it would never have been completed. The work and support of these individuals is deeply appreciated.

It is hoped that this text will prove to be a practical tool for school psychologists and other mental health workers in school environments. The worksheets and handouts included may be copied for the use of the individual practitioner as long as the source is correctly identified. They may not be used for any purpose other than helping an individual student and his or her family and may not be reprinted or distributed for any other reason.

Chapter 1

The Importance of Emotional Regulation in Child and Adolescent Functioning and School Success

Emotion Regulation

Spending any time at all in or around a school provides ample opportunity to observe students who are having difficulty coping with the stresses of their daily lives. On a playground you might see a student with an angry expression pushing another student out of the way. Or, you might hear one yelling at his playmates about whether or not he is “in” or “out” of the game. You might spot yet another student sulking long after being reprimanded by a playground monitor, or one isolating herself from others on the edge of the playground avoiding interaction and even eye contact with any of the other children playing nearby.

Inside the school building you might see a parent or teacher trying to calm an hysterical student or a frustrated teacher trying to interact reasonably with one who has “shut down” completely and cannot hear anything that is being said to him. You might find an older student hiding in the restroom trying to calm down after having “escaped” temporarily from the teasing he was being subjected to in the cafeteria. Or you might observe a student who is frequently “scapegoated” by peers hugging the corridor walls, walking at the slowest pace possible toward her classroom. You may see a student scribble all over an almost finished paper or crumple it up because he has made an error.

You might see a student taking a test who is dealing with so much emotion that she cannot even begin to write. You may observe one who cannot focus or organize his thinking well enough to even begin to focus on the work in front of him. In a high school you may see a student turn to his locker and hit it hard with his fist after being reprimanded by a teacher or rejected by a girlfriend. You may suddenly realize how often a particular student is visiting the school nurse, especially around exam time. You may wonder why a student sits alone at lunch wearing a cap or hood to hide his face when others appear to be socializing comfortably.

None of these observations is unusual, although they may not be apparent to the casual observer or even seen regularly, depending on the awareness and expertise of staff and the general climate of a particular school. On the other

hand, you may observe students yelling, demoralized, or actually fighting in a school, or totally withdrawn, when the school's climate is less healthy and the staff less competent. Although none of these observations in and of itself points to pathology, all of these students are having difficulty controlling or "regulating" their emotions. At the very least, difficulty regulating one's emotions would result in unhappiness; at worst, it could result in serious emotional or behavioral problems.

Regulating our emotions involves a necessary and important set of skills that all of us must master to some degree in order to negotiate our day-to-day lives, and emotion regulation has become a "hot topic" in several disciplines. Interest, research, and knowledge around the construct of emotion regulation are expanding rapidly (Eisenberg, Champion, and Ma 2004). Researchers in a number of fields—social and personality psychology, child and normal development, cognition, neuroscience, psychopathology, education psychology, and now school psychology—now realize that the ability of individuals to regulate emotion is relevant to their specific academic areas. Emotion regulation has become an overriding theme in affective science (Rottenberg and Gross 2003) and a major and popular topic in developmental psychology (Eisenberg, Champion, et al. 2004). Cole, Martin, and Dennis (2004) consider emotion regulation to be "an exciting lens through which to study development" (p. 330).

Definitions of Emotion Regulation

Researchers and theorists have not as yet settled on an agreed upon definition of emotion regulation. In fact, there is considerable discussion and debate around it—to the extent that questions have been raised in regard to its usefulness as a scientific construct (Cole, Martin, et al. 2004). Although one area of agreement is the idea that emotion regulation involves internal processes that have to do with emotions, not everyone considers intent or overt behavior as a consequence of emotion regulation or lack thereof in their definition. There is disagreement in regard to whether or not the concept includes external regulation of a child by parents or teachers and if both voluntary and involuntary regulation can be included. Nor is there total agreement in regard to anticipatory emotion regulation as an important component of emotion regulation.

The literature provides a number of definitions. Cole, Martin, et al. (2004) wrote about emotion regulation as the changes that are associated with emotions once they are triggered by some event or situation. Bridges, Margie, and Zaff (2001) consider emotion regulation to be a group of processes that a person might use to call up a positive or negative emotion, hold onto the emotion, control it, or change it, and they differentiate between the *feelings* of emotion and how emotion might be *displayed*. Thompson (1991) was interested in both extrinsic and intrinsic actions associated with behavioral reactions as a result of experiencing emotions. Dahl (2001) looked at emotion regulation as the

individual's effort toward managing emotion so that a particular emotion could be used for a purpose. A simple way to think about emotion regulation is to think of it as the action an individual might take to control: (a) *which* emotions are experienced; (b) *how and when* they are felt by the individual; and (c) the *ways* they are expressed or might be observed by others (Gross 1998b; Westphal and Bonanno 2004). Gross and Thompson (2007) write that the term emotion regulation could mean regulation by emotions or it could refer to how emotions are controlled (pp. 8–9). They use the term emotion regulation to explain how emotions are regulated, and that is how the term is used here.

It is not only the definition of emotion regulation that has complicated the study of these processes, but the fact that it is very difficult for researchers to separate emotion from emotion regulation. They use different definitions (if they use any definition at all) and different tools or measures to determine a child's ability to self-regulate. Much of the research on emotion regulation has focused on very young children or on mother-child dyads. Fortunately, this is changing because practitioners who are struggling with children's problems on a day-to-day basis cannot wait for theorists and researchers to come to full agreement. Thus, it makes the most sense for practitioners to take a broad view of emotion regulation as they acquire a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and develop interventions to prevent difficulties with emotion regulation in the children they are working with and to find ways to strengthen children's emotional competency.

Emotion Regulation and Related Concepts

Our emotions serve important functions, including preparing us for action, helping drive decision making, helping us make judgments about the environment or the context in which we find ourselves, and giving us cues about others' intentions (Gross, 1998). Increasing, decreasing, or maintaining a particular emotion is the action we take in order to regulate emotion. Emotions can involve positive as well as negative affect. They tend to involve specific objects or goals and are aimed toward action or behavior. Emotion regulation, emotional regulation, affect regulation, mood, coping, stress reduction, self-regulation, effortful control, and self-control are the several concepts that have been closely associated in the literature.

Emotion Regulation versus Emotional Regulation

The terms emotion regulation and emotional regulation are often used interchangeably, although semantics might make a distinction between them. Lévesque and colleagues (2003) use the term *emotional* self-regulation to refer to modulating behavioral and physical aspects of emotion. They (Lévesque et al. 2004) describe emotional self-regulation as one of the "cornerstones of

socialization and moral development” (p. 361). Gross and Thompson (2007) prefer the term “emotion regulation” (p. 8).

Affect Regulation

Affect can be considered the most general and categorical term (Schutz, Hong, Cross, and Osbon 2006). Within the broad, general category of affect we might include emotions, feelings, moods, attitudes, affective style, and temperament (Davidson, Scherer, and Goldsmith 2003). Gross (1998b) uses the term affect as the “superordinate category,” which includes: (a) emotions, (b) emotion episodes (including the context in which emotions occur), (c) moods, (d) dispositional states, and (e) traits. More recently, Gross and Thompson (2007) wrote that affect regulation is the overriding category. Coping, emotion regulation, mood regulation, and psychological defenses would be subcategories.

Mood

The terms “affect,” “mood,” and “emotion” are often used without distinguishing one from the other. Part of the problem is that words such as “emotion” and “mood” are part of our everyday language, but there is an important distinction between emotions and moods. Moods last longer than emotions and may not have an easily identifiable trigger. Emotions are mostly of short duration and arise in conjunction with a trigger or stimulus of some kind. Several researchers have described moods as low-intensity emotions (Linnenbrink, 2006; Pekrun 2006; Schutz et al. 2006), but moods are pervasive and sustained and can bias our thinking more than our behavior.

Moods are diffuse, occur over time, and give rise to actions such as approach or avoidance. Efforts to regulate mood or to repair mood are directed at changing feelings rather than behavior because moods change slowly. Rottenberg and Gross (2003) suggest a helpful analogy: “If emotional reactions are like storms then moods are like seasonal climate change” (p. 228). Defenses are stable and automatic and are involved with the experience of emotion. Because emotion is malleable, regulation is possible, and individuals can learn to intensify, depress, or maintain emotion.

Coping and Stress Reduction

Coping and stress deal with decreasing negative affect. Pardini, Lochman, and Wells (2004) listed three components of negative affect: (a) depressed mood, (b) fear, and (c) anger. When exposed to stressful events or situations, students

may experience anxiety or anger. Anger is experienced in relation to events that are interpreted as threatening, such as a cutting remark by a popular peer, a brief physical contact perceived as a threat, or a perceived attack on one's self esteem. Sadness may be experienced in reaction to a loss or a disappointment. Anxiety may be felt in situations that are novel or when one feels exposed. Young people attempt to decrease the intensity of negative emotions with various coping and stress reduction strategies; i.e., thinking of something else, trying to relax, speaking assertively, or walking away from the situation.

Self-Control

Self-control is our ability to make ourselves fit better into our environments by overriding impulses and responses so that action can be stopped. Research indicates that people with strong self-control have better outcomes than people with less self-control. Students with more self-control also earn higher grades, are better adjusted, have better relationships with others, and respond to others in more emotionally appropriate ways. Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004) indicated that self-control can be more clearly conceptualized as self-regulation. These authors cited a series of studies indicating that students with good self-control:

- Respond more competently socially as preschoolers.
- Function better socially as reported by parents.
- Are more popular.
- Have higher social status.
- Earn better grades.

A high level of self-control has been related to low levels of anger and a lowered tendency to vent or “let off steam,” with reduced outward aggression. Well-controlled students tend to use “talking” to deal with their anger and therefore manage anger in a more constructive manner than those with a low level of self-control. Students with more self-control also have higher self-esteem and less shame than students with less. The current data available on the benefits of self-control are correlational rather than causal, but nevertheless are quite promising as justification for interventions to improve students' functioning.

Effortful Control

Effortful control involves stopping action by refocusing attention. It involves attention regulation or attention control in addition to behavior regulation. Effortful control is a dimension of temperament and can be thought of as the self-regulation component of temperament. It is a central and an

important component of emotion regulation (Eisenberg, Smith, Sadovsky, and Spinrad 2004) and can be used to regulate both behavior and emotion (Spinrad, Eisenberg, Cumberland, Fabes, Valiente, Shepard, Reiser, Losoya, and Guthrie 2006).

A student must be able to both initiate action and inhibit action that may result from an environmental trigger that ignites a strong emotion (reported in Buckley and Saarni 2006). In the midst of a heated discussion, a teacher might instruct a student to “sit down.” The student must not only sit down but also inhibit an inappropriate remark in order to decrease the heat of the moment. Effortful control also includes regulating one’s attention by shifting attention away from a trigger or by focusing attention on something else. Thus researchers feel that effortful control involves executive functions such as integrating information and planning (Eisenberg, Smith et al. 2004; Eisenberg and Spinrad 2004). A student who is ruminating or obsessing on failure in the midst of a testing situation must be able to stop this negative thinking and refocus on the test question in order to avoid failure.

Effortful control is involved in self-regulation and affords a prediction of positive social functioning. Students who have skills in effortful regulation can ameliorate negative feelings, handle their anger, are sympathetic, and get along well with others. A child who fails to hit the baseball in a game on the playground must be able to shift his attention away from thoughts of letting himself and the team down or from looking bad in front of his peers, so he can muster up the concentration and effort to try again. Strong effortful control is most likely associated with resiliency (Spinrad et al. 2006).

It is important to distinguish among these varied concepts when engaging in research to advance knowledge, but it may be less critical for practitioners. Given our focus on identifying strategies to help children deal with poorly controlled emotions, our interest in training approaches to develop competency in regulating emotion, and our desire to develop interventions by which parents and teachers can help students regulate their emotions, the distinctions that are important in research become less significant.

Domains of Emotion Regulation

Various researchers and theorists describe differing numbers of domains of emotion regulation. Menesini (1999) writes about three levels:

- Regulation of sensation (input regulation).
- Information processing (central regulation).
- Response selection (output regulation).

Menesini conceptualizes emotion regulation as a sequence of events or processes, so that a problem at any point in the sequence would result in failure to

regulate emotion. Yet others suggest that although the factors are interrelated, no individual factor is responsible for failure (Behncke 2002).

In practically terms, we can isolate several skills or domains involved in regulating emotions, including: (a) interpreting the facial and bodily expressions of emotion (information processing); (b) how clearly a young person can express his or her own emotions; (c) how aware the young person is of his or her emotions (emotional knowledge); (d) to what degree a young person understands his or her emotional triggers and has knowledge of the consequences of expressing that emotion in the respective culture; and (e) the ability to manage the intensity to which an emotion is felt and expressed (Shipman, Schneider, and Brown, 2004; Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts, 2006). These domains and skills interact with one another.

Gross (1998b) described five sets of processes or five points in emotion generation that are involved in emotional regulation:

- Situation selection.
- Situation modification.
- Attentional deployment.
- Cognitive change.
- Response modulation.

Situation selection is the ability to interpret the context in which one finds oneself. Situation modification is the ability to use one's thinking and problem-solving ability to change the emotional impact of the situation. Attention deployment is the ability to move one's focus away from the situation triggering the particular emotion. Cognitive change refers to reinterpreting the context so that the experience is not felt as intensely or as irrationally or inappropriately. Response modulation refers to using strategies to dissipate the emotions that are felt at the time. The first four processes can be thought of as *antecedent focused* and the fifth as *response focused* (Beauregard, Levesque, and Paquette 2004).

The components of emotion regulation that we must consider include: “the latency, rise time, magnitude, duration, and offset of responses in behavioral, experiential or physiological domains” (Gross 1998a, p. 288). A student must be able to experience emotions without being overwhelmed and must learn to express emotions in a manner that is socially appropriate. He or she must also be able to express emotions without interfering or disrupting the interaction that is going on at the time. The student must remain in control when:

- Striking out in a ballgame.
- Disagreeing about an issue during a conversation.
- Making a mistake on an academic task or in a competitive game.
- Being reprimanded by an authoritative adult.
- Getting back an assignment with a low grade.
- Being mistakenly accused of a behavior.
- Seeing someone stepping in front of him in line.