

# Regulating Your Emotions with Mandalas

## Objective

To better understand and manage your emotions by creating a visual representation of your emotions.

## You Should Know

Sometimes your emotions are negative and create an innate sense of danger combined with various competing and conflicting emotions to produce an internal brew of chaos mixed with fear. This toxic mix is might compel you to engage in behaviors that are impassioned but unproductive in an effort to somehow relieve all those overlapping and overwhelming feelings.

Mandalas can be used to create a visual representation that will allow you to better manage your emotions and act upon them in a way that is driven by what you value.

Mandalas can help you to

- use color to visually represent each distinct emotion you experience so that you can see all your emotions individually and as a whole;
- assert your independence and ability to manage and define your emotions in a positive way by choosing the colors that represent your emotions;
- understand how your feelings shift and evolve as you go about your day;
- create an alternate visual representation of how you would prefer your emotional life to look;
- train your focus inward so that you can practice being in the moment, allowing you to slow down, focus, and concentrate on your inner self.

## What to Do

To help you recognize and accept your competing emotional states, you will color two mandalas: a distress-driven mandala and a values-driven mandala. As you color each mandala, follow these tips for mindfulness:

- Sit in a comfortable position in a quiet room.
- Take a few deep cleansing breaths.
- Start breathing slowly and evenly.
- Slowly begin coloring, allowing your hands and fingers to take control.
- Notice the feel of the coloring implement you are using.

- When you feel completely relaxed, begin focusing on each color. Continue to focus on each color until you finish.
- Slowly scan the whole mandala you have created, taking in what you have made.
- Finish by taking a few more deep cleansing breaths.

### **Distress-Driven Mandala**

This mandala will represent your emotional state that is directed by your distress. As you color, recognize how much your negative emotions can dominate and decimate your life. This endeavor might feel difficult at first, but accepting your feelings will be cathartic and allow you to understand them instead of fearing them.

Follow these steps:

1. Record your distress-fueled emotions throughout the day over the course of a week.
2. Record what triggered each specific emotion.
3. Choose a color to represent each emotion. Use that color consistently as you complete your mandala.
4. Color your distress-driven mandala.

### Emotions Chart

Day	Trigger	Emotion	Color
<b>Example:</b>	<i>Boss yelled at me</i>	<i>Humiliation</i>	<i>Brown</i>
<b>Day 1</b>			
<b>Day 2</b>			
<b>Day 3</b>			
<b>Day 4</b>			
<b>Day 5</b>			
<b>Day 6</b>			
<b>Day 7</b>			



## Values-Driven Mandala

The second mandala will represent your emotional state that is directed solely by what is truly important to you. It will depict how you feel when your emotions do not reflect the influence of your distress and how you would like to feel in the future. As you color this mandala, focus on times when you felt these positive emotions in the past and what it was like to feel free. Doing this should help trigger feelings of hopefulness and serenity, as you realize what is possible in the future.

5. Record your values-driven emotions throughout the day over the course of a week.
6. Record what triggered each specific emotion.
7. Choose a color to represent each emotion. Use that color consistently as you complete your mandala.
8. Color your values-driven mandala.

**Emotions Chart**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Color</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>Went for a walk in the park</i>	<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Yellow</i>
<b>Day 1</b>			
<b>Day 2</b>			
<b>Day 3</b>			
<b>Day 4</b>			
<b>Day 5</b>			
<b>Day 6</b>			
<b>Day 7</b>			



Here are some ideas for using your mandalas:

- Compare and contrast the two mandalas whenever you are feeling overwhelmed by your emotions to remind you that you are more than just your distressing feelings.
- Color one mandala a week to see if your positive emotions increase or decrease.
- Put your values-driven mandala on your refrigerator, mirror, or somewhere else where you can see it and recall those serene, calming feelings every day.
- Take a picture of your values-driven mandala so that you can look at it when you are away from home and feeling anxious or negative emotions.

How did you feel while completing each mandala?

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Was one mandala easier to complete than the other? If so, why do you think that was?

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What did completing the distress-driven mandala teach you about yourself and your current emotional state?

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How do you think you will be able to use your values-driven mandala as a tool to increase positivity?

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How did completing the values-driven mandala remind you of who you are and what you want your life to represent?

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How will you use the activity in the future to enhance your progress?

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?

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