Managing difficult emotions

Difficult emotions are part of being human. Sometimes, though, stress, anxiety, loneliness or low mood can feel uncomfortable enough that we look for a quick way to escape them. This worksheet helps you notice what you're feeling and choose a response that supports you.

Pause before problem-solving
You don't have to make a feeling disappear immediately. Start by noticing it and giving yourself a moment to understand what might be going on.

1. Name what you're feeling

Think about how you've felt recently, particularly at times when an urge to watch pornography has appeared.

■ Anxious	■ Stressed	■ Lonely
■ Sad / low	■ Angry	■ Ashamed
■ Frustrated	■ Restless	■ Overwhelmed
■ Numb	■ Rejected	■ Other: _____

What was happening when this feeling showed up?

Where did you notice it in your body? What thoughts came with it?

2. What might the feeling be telling you?

Emotions can sometimes point towards a need, a boundary or something that matters to us. You don't have to know for certain — just consider what might be relevant.

What might I need right now? (e.g. rest, connection, reassurance, space, support or movement)

Responding with intention

You may not be able to choose the emotion that turns up, but with practice you can create more space between feeling something and deciding what to do next.

3. Choose a strategy to try

Tick one or two options that feel realistic. You can add your own.

- ■ Take five slow breaths and notice the room around me.
- ■ Step away from my phone or computer for ten minutes.
- ■ Go for a short walk or do some gentle movement.
- ■ Message or speak to someone I trust.
- ■ Write down what I'm thinking without judging it.
- ■ Do one small task that would reduce the pressure.
- ■ Allow the feeling to be there without immediately fixing it.
- ■ Other: _____

When am I most likely to need this strategy?

4. Make a small plan

If I notice _____, I will try _____ before deciding what to do.

What might get in the way, and how could I make the plan easier?

Remember
The aim isn't to suppress difficult emotions or get every response right. It's to notice what you're experiencing, understand what you may need, and practise a response that gives you more choice.