

| Key Points

People who have experienced abuse and trauma often experience strong emotions and this can be frightening or overwhelming. Many people cope with this by:

- Using coping strategies such as self-harm, alcohol or drugs, being obsessive or by taking risks which work to numb our painful feelings.
- Avoiding feelings. Sometimes this is out of our control but happens because we learned to dissociate (switch off or zone out) during the abuse or sometimes we (whether we realise we are doing this or not) keep ourselves too busy and distracted.

These are understandable strategies which helped you survive your experiences. However, they may now be getting in the way of your recovery.

Learning to live with Feelings/Emotions

People often avoid feelings as they fear they won't cope or that they will last forever. However, feelings are a natural part of life and if we accept rather than fight/avoid them, they will generally pass. This course is about learning to live with feelings. Recognise them, sometimes naming them and using safe coping to keep it in the 'Window of Tolerance'.

Safe Coping

Music, talking, walking, gardening/being outdoors, breathing, grounding, expressing your feelings (safely), being kind to yourself, getting support. These were all discussed in the session today.

It can be helpful for people who recognise difficulties dealing with strong emotions and developing safe coping to complete the following exercise.

I understand why I have learned to rely on:

e.g Self-harm, eating

To control my feelings but I can now accept that this is causing me problems. I can try to learn safer ways of managing my feelings and accept that it is normal to experience some feelings (good and bad).

The problems/feelings I find most difficult to cope with are:

1. e.g. Trying not to get angry

2. e.g. Pushing away bad memories that make me feel bad

3. e.g. Drinking/cutting to take away bad feelings

The safe coping skills I am going to try are:

1.

2.

3.

Skills Practice- choose any of the skills you have been taught that you like

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Practiced							
Comments							