

signs you are bottling up your emotions

- you suffer from somatic symptoms such as stomach problems, headaches, tension, vertigo & back pain
- you feel uncomfortable around emotional people or in emotional situations
- you rarely express yourself but get upset over small and trivial things
- you avoid conflict, confrontation and difficult situations in general
- you feel distant from others & don't have deep connections
- you distract yourself (e.g. endless scrolling, video games, substance abuse, overwork, constantly being busy, binge eating) when you feel uncomfortable



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learning to express your emotions verbally may sound like this

- i'm very disappointed that ___ (this is happening again)
- i felt really loved when ___ (you surprised me yesterday)
- i felt sad that ___ (you forgot about our plan)
- i'm frustrated that ___ (you are not listening to me)
- i feel happy when ___ (we do activities like this together)



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how to move through big emotions

- **pause & acknowledge** the emotion — give it space and time
- **sense** the emotion in your body — where do i feel it?
e.g. tightness in the chest, muscle tension, stomach cramps, jaw clenched, pounding heart,...
- **name** the emotion
e.g. i feel sad / happiness / fear,...
- **remember** — you are safe & all emotions pass
- **attribute** the cause — what caused it to appear? what happened right before it appeared?
- **decode** its message — why is it visiting me? what message does it have & what need is wanting to be met?
- **act** — decide how to cope and act
- **let it go** — when you feel ready, let the emotion go in a safe way that works for you



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EXERCISE:

*Breakout into small groups and have each group choose 2 scenarios to work through using
handout guidelines and practice using assertive language*

Scenario 1: You are waiting in line to order a café and suddenly someone cuts in front of you while giving you a mean stare.

Scenario 2: You planned to meet up with your friend at 3pm to grab lunch and your friend is late. They show up at 3:20 as if nothing has happened.

Scenario 3: Your family member is visiting for the holidays, and they keep making comments about your weight and how you should ease up on the food.

Scenario 4: You cooked dinner for your partner/friend and they had agreed to clean the dishes, but it's getting late, and the dishes are still dirty in the sink.

Scenario 5: Your parent insists that she wants to speak with you every day of the week and you feel uncomfortable with that.