

## How do You Cognitively Regulate Emotions? (The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, CERQ)

---

### Instructions

Emotion regulation is the ability to modulate – that is, change and alter one’s emotional experiences. Emotion regulation is differentiated from suppression, i.e. ‘bottling up’ one’s emotions, and is also different from catharsis, where one expresses or vents their emotions. This questionnaire assesses how well you regulate emotions through a range of cognitive processes such as positive reappraisal (rethinking the emotion-causing event more positively), acceptance, rumination and self-blame. State how often you think in the following manner when experiencing strong threatening or stressful life events.

|   | Almost never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Almost always |
|---|--------------|--------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| 1. I feel that I am the one to blame for it.                                    |              |        |              |            |               |
| 2. I feel that I am the one who is responsible for what has happened.           |              |        |              |            |               |
| 3. I think about the mistakes I have made in this matter.                       |              |        |              |            |               |
| 4. I think that basically the cause my lie within myself.                       |              |        |              |            |               |
| 5. I think that I have to accept that this has happened.                        |              |        |              |            |               |
| 6. I think that I have to accept the situation.                                 |              |        |              |            |               |
| 7. I think that I cannot change anything about it.                              |              |        |              |            |               |
| 8. I think I must learn to live with it.  |              |        |              |            |               |
| 9. I often think about how I feel about what I have experienced.                |              |        |              |            |               |
| 10. I am preoccupied with what I think and feel about what I have experienced.  |              |        |              |            |               |
| 11. I want to understand why I feel the way I do about what I have experienced. |              |        |              |            |               |
| 12. I dwell upon the feelings the situation has evoked in me.                   |              |        |              |            |               |
| 13. I think of nicer things that what I have experienced.                       |              |        |              |            |               |
| 14. I think of pleasant things that have nothing to do with it.                 |              |        |              |            |               |
| 15. I think of something nice instead of what has happened.                     |              |        |              |            |               |
| 16. I think about pleasant experiences.   |              |        |              |            |               |
| 17. I think about what I can do best.   |              |        |              |            |               |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 18. I think about how I can best cope with the situation.                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. I think about how to change the situation.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. I think about a plan of what I can do best.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. I think I can learn something from the situation.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. I think that I can become a stronger person as a result of what has happened.               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. I think that the situation also has its positive sides.                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. I look for the positive sides to the matter.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25. I think that it could have all been much worse.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26. I think that other people go through much worse experiences.                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27. I think that it hasn't been too bad compared to other things.                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28. I tell myself that there are worse things in life.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29. I often think that what I have experienced is much worse than what others have experienced. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30. I keep thinking about how terrible it is what I have experienced.                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 31. I often think that what I have experienced is the worst that can happen to a person.        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 32. I continually think how horrible the situation has been.                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 33. I feel that others are to blame for it.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 34. I feel that others are responsible for what has happened.                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 35. I think about the mistakes others have made in this matter.                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 36. I feel that basically the cause lies with others.   |  |  |  |  |  |

### Scoring

Almost never = 1, Rarely = 2, Occasionally = 3, Frequently = 4, Almost always = 5

Total self-blame = Average items 1 – 4

Total acceptance = Average items 5 – 8

Total rumination = Average items 9 – 12

Total positive refocusing = Average items 13 – 16

Total refocus on planning = Average items 17 – 20

Total positive reappraisal = Average items 21 – 24

Total putting into perspective = Average items 25 – 28

Total catastrophizing = Average items 29 – 32

Total blaming others = Average items 33 – 36

## Interpretation

Less effective ways of cognitively reappraising a stressful or demanding situation include self-blame, rumination (replaying unpleasant memories and emotions), catastrophizing (thinking of the situation as being the worse than it actually is) and blaming others. More effective ways towards cognitively reappraising one's emotions include acceptance, positive refocusing (redirecting one's focus towards other, unrelated, pleasant things), positive reappraisal (seeing the positives from the difficult situation) and putting into perspective. The average for each of the dimensions, from a sample of 301 adults is as follows. Note that there are two average scores, since data was collected during two different times.

Self-blame = 8.22, 8.56

Acceptance = 11.01, 10.43

Rumination = 10.46, 10.11

Positive refocusing = 10.01, 9.79

Refocus on planning = 13.03, 12.57

Positive reappraisal = 12.46, 12.30

Putting into perspective = 11.64, 11.26

Catastrophizing = 6.05, 6.05

Blaming others = 6.38, 6.04

## Reference

Garnefski, N., & Kraaij, V. (2007). The cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 23*(3), 141-149.