

It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us.

It's whānau ora, and it is the foundation that inspires every aspect of our work.

We're Yellow Brick Road, a national organisation that specialises in providing support for whānau who have a loved one experiencing mental health challenges.

After 40 years of working with people around New Zealand, we know that if the family of a loved one experiencing mental distress are correctly supported and empowered, the path they walk leads to increased wellbeing for the whole whānau.

We will walk alongside any family in New Zealand who needs support, knowledge, advocacy and empowerment as their loved one journeys towards mental wellbeing.

If you are supporting a whānau member who is experiencing Emotion Dysregulation, we can help you.

You can access our services nationwide

Our regional branches in the North and South Island allow us to reach a broad range of communities with our services.

We also provide online services including wellbeing webinars, group support and self-development programmes.

You can also find a range of support materials and resources on our website.

Contact us to find out more

Our services are free and confidential. Contact us today to find out more.

Northern Region

0800 732 825

Central North Island

0800 555 434

South Island

0800 876 682

yellowbrickroad.org.nz



Supporting families
towards mental wellbeing

**Yellow
Brick
Road**

**Understanding
Emotion
Dysregulation**

**A guide for whānau of
people experiencing Emotion
Dysregulation**

What is Emotion Dysregulation?

People with Emotion Dysregulation have difficulty managing their emotions and experience high emotional vulnerability; making them sensitive, quick to overreact and very slow to calm down. This is not their fault.

Emotion Dysregulation is an essential part of a diagnosis called Borderline Personality Disorder.

What causes Emotion Dysregulation?

Genetic and environmental factors can cause Emotion Dysregulation, as can the stresses of life. Nothing that you as a whānau member have deliberately done can cause Emotion Dysregulation, but whānau dynamics can contribute.

How do you recognise Emotion Dysregulation?

There are over 200 combinations of symptoms that make up Emotion Dysregulation. They include low self-esteem and self-judgement, impulsiveness, anxiety about emotion dysregulation and fears of abandonment. People experiencing Emotion Dysregulation can have difficulties with thinking and problem-solving, and may avoid or numb feelings with drugs, alcohol or self-harming.

1. People with Emotion Dysregulation experience some or all of the following:

- Unstable and intense interpersonal relationships
- Identity disturbance
- Intense anger and/or difficulty controlling anger.
- Recurrent suicidal behaviour or self-harm
- Reactive feelings and moods
- Chronic feelings of emptiness
- Experiencing minor problems as major crises
- 'Black and white' thinking - switching between love and hate in relationships

2. You may be feeling:

- "I am walking on eggshells"
- "I caused this". Guilt and grief are a common response to dealing with a loved one experiencing Emotion Dysregulation, especially when it is your child.
- Powerless and at your wits' end, especially if suicide threats or actions make you feel you will lose your loved one.

How is Emotion Dysregulation different from Bipolar Disorder, PTSD and eating disorders?

Bipolar Disorder, PTSD and eating disorders can often look like Emotion Dysregulation (and vice versa), or have aspects of Emotion Dysregulation present. Emotion Dysregulation can, however, exist without other mental health disorders being present.

People with Emotion Dysregulation can often be misdiagnosed, making it important they receive psychiatric evaluation and diagnosis. This helps ensure they receive the most effective medications, therapy and support.

Treatment for Emotion Dysregulation

Treatments include Dialectical behaviour therapy, Mentalisation-based therapy and medication.

A loving, supportive and validating family environment leads to better outcomes for people experiencing Emotion Dysregulation.