

All children have core emotional needs. When our basic needs are met, we thrive. However, if these needs are not met (or if they are met excessively), we develop **early maladaptive schemas**. A big part of overcoming your schemas is learning to meet your core emotional needs in healthy ways.

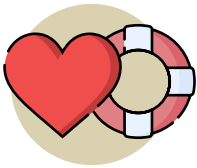
When you were a child, were you:

- Loved, protected, and encouraged?
- Able to think and act independently?
- Free to express your feelings and needs?
- Allowed to be spontaneous, playful, and creative?
- Subject to reasonable rules and boundaries?

What are core emotional needs?

Every human being has the same basic needs – for food, water, shelter, and rest. People also have core *emotional* needs. All children are born with these basic emotional needs.

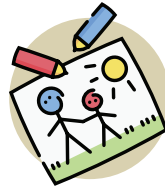
Love and safety



Independence



Self-expression



Playfulness



Limits and control



If your core emotional needs were not met during your childhood, you are likely to develop early maladaptive schemas. Many experiences can lead to unmet emotional needs:

 <p>I was abused by a family member.</p> <p>You experienced trauma.</p>	 <p>my parents weren't affectionate.</p> <p>You weren't given enough of something.</p>	 <p>I could do whatever I liked as a child.</p> <p>You were given too much of something.</p>	 <p>I was told to never trust people.</p> <p>Your family taught you something unhelpful.</p>	 <p>my family were different to everyone else.</p> <p>You grew up in difficult circumstances.</p>
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- The strength of these emotional needs varies from person to person. For instance, one child might have a greater need for self-expression than their sibling. This explains why children growing up in the same environment might develop different schemas.
- Sometimes a child's personality or 'temperament' can affect whether their emotional needs are met. For example, if you were a sensitive child, your parents may have been overprotective. This might have stopped you getting the independence you needed.
- Finally, parents sometimes find it difficult to care for their child in the way need because of their own personalities or life experiences.

How do I address my unmet emotional needs?

- 1. Recognize that you have unmet needs.** Acknowledging your unmet needs can be painful. Some people are so used to having unmet needs that they simply aren't aware of them. Others find the idea of unmet needs uncomfortable because they think it is a sign of weakness (it isn't), or because they don't want to criticize their family.
- 2. Heal your past unmet needs.** Sometimes we need to go backwards to move forwards. Revisiting memories linked to your unmet needs and comforting the child you were can heal the pain linked to your schemas.
- 3. Meet your current needs in healthy ways.** This might involve developing relationships that meet your needs, asking for your needs to be met, and breaking patterns in your behavior which get in the way of your needs.