

Emotional Identification

FACILITATOR HANDOUT

Emotions are important. Emotions are normal and everyone experiences them. Emotions link to our mood and that, in turn, links to our actions and behaviours. By noticing and managing our emotions, we can influence our actions and behaviors.



Activity

Ask why we need to understand our emotions?

This isn't about getting rid of emotions! Emotions help us recognise when things are good or aren't right. A lot of people I have worked with wish that they were able to stop themselves getting angry. But anger can be a good emotion! It can help us recognise when things aren't right, or something is happening that is not in line with your values. Think about Greta Thunberg. She displays anger at climate change as it is against her values – she uses this anger for a positive purpose. It can be an agent for change. Think about other people that have used strong emotions for positive change: Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr etc.

HOWEVER – what is important is how we choose to react to our emotions. We can only make a choice on how to react when we actually know what emotion we are experiencing.

We can learn to identify emotions using mindfulness and observing and describing what we are experiencing. Then we can think about whether the emotion is working for us or not. For example:

E.g. If it is working for you then experience it (e.g. walking in a dark alley at night will make you feel anxious, so use this emotion to be extra vigilant, walk quickly, go another way). This is an example of emotions working for you.

E.g. You are worried that you disrespected a teacher you like, so you can use emotions to rectify the situation (apologise then let it go and move on). This is an example of emotions working for you.

E.g. You are worried about a test so you are irritable with your siblings, watch TV and don't study, and shout at your parents. You feel depressed so you end up lying in bed all day and don't go school. This means you fall behind and feel even worse. This is an example of emotions working against you.

Exercise - A-Z of emotions on the white board

Explain that there can be many emotions but they can be grouped together into 'families' of emotions. Each family has a function and an action urge. Discuss the table below.

| Family | Fits the facts | Function | Action urge |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Anger | Threatened Blocked from goal | Energy burst | Attack |
| Fear | Danger | Protection | Avoid/run Freeze |
| Sadness | Loss | Recover/replace Don't lose anymore | Cling to/pine for lost item Withdraw |
| Joy | Potential benefit for you | Repeat/do more of | Do more of Maximise gains |
| Guilt | Social crime | Keep in group | Repair |
| Shame | Social crime Risk expulsion | Keep in group | Hide yourself or your crime |
| Disgust | Toxic substance | Safe from contamination | Repel or recoil from |



Activity

Using the table for reference, get them to complete the worksheet on a personal example of when they experienced a strong emotion, what 'family' the emotion sits in, the function and the action urge.

N.B If they struggle to come up with their own examples, there are a few listed below.

Example: You hear a horn BEEEEEEEEEP very loudly while out walking your dog.

Example: You bought yourself your favourite tub of ice cream then get home to find that someone has eaten it all and put the tub back in the freezer.



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