

Understanding Your Emotions

Objective

To identify fifteen different emotions and record details about how you have experienced those emotions.

What to Know

Emotions are an important part of your life, and the goal is to become aware of them, to understand them, learn to regulate them, and to express them appropriately.

If you are aware of your emotions, you can learn to manage them better and express them in healthier ways. In addition, you will be able to recognize other people's emotions and handle them appropriately. This worksheet will help you explore fifteen emotions you may have experienced at some time in your life.

What to Do

1. **Despair and hopelessness** are often associated with tragic events. If you are desperate, you might stop wishing and planning for the future, because you have lost hope. You may even feel like giving up on life.

Describe a time when you felt despair or hopelessness.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Have you ever noticed when other people were hopeless? What did you do?

How does despair and hopelessness influence your relationships with others?

2. **Sadness** appears when you lose something very significant. You may grieve as you process your loss. Sadness can be accompanied by suffering, fear, and other feelings, like disappointment.

Describe a time when you felt sadness.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Have you ever noticed when other people were sad? What did you do?

How does sadness influence your relationship with others?

3. **Anger** refers to being upset, displeased, or annoyed because of something perceived as wrong or bad. It involves a strong or hostile response to a threat, provocation, or hurt.

Describe a time when you felt anger.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are angry? What do you do?

How does anger influence your relationship with others?

4. **Fear** is an uncomfortable emotion you feel when you perceive danger or a threat.

Describe a time when you felt fear.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are frightened? What do you do?

How does fear influence your relationships?

5. **Disappointment** occurs when someone does not act in way that matches your expectations, which can make you frustrated, sad, or angry. Expectations that lead to disappointment may be realistic, based on a fair and honest giving and receiving process. Or they can be unrealistic, as in a situation when you expect others to fulfill all your desires and needs.

Describe a time when you were disappointed.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are disappointed? What do you do?

How does disappointment influence your relationship with others?

6. **Spite** is the desire to hurt, annoy, or offend someone. You might feel malicious, mischievous, or angry.

Describe a time you felt spiteful.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are spiteful? What do you do?

How does spite influence your relationships with others?

7. **Shame** is a feeling of embarrassment or humiliation that arises because you think you did something dishonorable, immoral, or improper. It is a self-conscious emotion associated with a negative evaluation of yourself.

Describe a time you felt shame.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are ashamed? What do you do?

How does shame influence your relationships?

8. **Guilt** may occur when you think you did something wrong. You may believe (accurately or not) you have compromised your moral standards or values and have a significant responsibility. Guilt can be irrational, powerful, and sometimes destructive.

Describe a time you felt guilty.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people feel guilty? What do you do?

How does guilt influence your relationships?

9. **Boredom** refers to lacking interest and concentration. You believe you have nothing to do, you cannot find anything interesting in your surroundings, or your day is dull and tedious.

Describe a time you felt bored.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are bored? What do you do?

How does boredom influence your relationships?

10. **Anxiety** is a feeling of nervousness or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. It is a state of inner turmoil, of generalized and unfocused worry. Anxiety can increase feelings of weakness and helplessness when faced with danger.

Describe a time when you were anxious.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are anxious? What do you do?

How does anxiety influence your relationships?

11. **Happiness** includes positive emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. You feel life satisfaction and subjective approval of yourself. It can be associated with fulfilling your wishes or hopes, having pleasant expectations for the future, and sharing that satisfaction with others.

Describe a time when you felt happiness.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are happy? What do you do?

How does happiness influence your relationships?

12. **Empathy** is the capacity to understand and feel what others are feeling from their point of view. You may respond with care and compassion.

Describe a time you felt empathy.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are empathic? What do you do?

How does empathy influence your relationships?

13. **Pride** results from positive self-evaluation when you think you or your actions met the approval of others. It is a reaction to success in achieving a goal and it is associated with feelings of accomplishment and increased self-esteem.

Describe a time when you felt proud.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are proud? What do you do?

How does pride influence your relationships?

14. **Gratitude** is the quality of being thankful and the ability to show appreciation for and to return kindness. When you feel gratitude, you might have more positive coping strategies, your personal worldview might be more optimistic, and you may be altruistic.

Describe a time you felt gratitude.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are grateful? What do you do?

How does gratitude influence your relationships?

15. **Trust** is the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of self, someone, or something. Underneath the feeling of trust is the belief that people will follow through on their promises and do what they say they will do.

Describe a time you trusted yourself or someone else.

What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

Do you notice when other people are trustworthy? What do you do?

How does trust influence your relationships?

Describe any feeling(s) you have experienced that are not mentioned above.

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
