

Understanding Challenging Emotions

Emotion	Function	Physical Reactions	Expressions/Actions	Ask Yourself...
Fear Anxiety Dread Nervousness Overwhelmed Panic Terror	Functions to keep us safe and out of danger – instinctual, nervous system response. Alerts us to threats, whether actual or perceived. *Anxiety is the feeling of <u>apprehension</u> or worry about a potential threat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Short of breath · Muscle tension · Chest tightness · Racing heart · Nausea/butterflies · Feeling cold, sweaty · Crying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Fight-flight-freeze response:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flight = escaping ○ Fight = anger ○ Freeze = panic or shut down/dissociation · Avoidance · Procrastination · Overthinking/worrying 	What am I fearful of? Is it something actual or perceived? Is this fear related to past, present or future? Is this fear something I can problem-solve or is it out of my control? Am I avoiding something?
Anger Annoyance Agitation Frustration Bitterness Rage Vengefulness	Occurs when our boundaries have been crossed, goals have been obstructed, or values (including people in our lives that we value) are challenged or threatened in some way. Helps us to protect ourselves and others through setting boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Feeling hot · Jaw clenching · Fists clenching · Muscle tension · Feelings of wanting to “explode” · Puffed out chest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assertiveness · Criticizing self or others · Complaining · Change in tone · Verbal outbursts · Physical aggression · Withdrawal/avoidance 	Do I know what has triggered my anger? Have my boundaries been crossed or violated? Am I protecting myself or someone else? Have my goals been obstructed? Is there some kind of injustice?
Sadness Disappointment Disconnected Hurt Defeat Suffering Grief	The response that occurs when something is not working for us and we need to release . Response to a loss , whether that is a person, relationship, job, a goal, or desired state of being. Signals to others that we need support . Encourages reflection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lethargy · Fogginess · Inactivity · Hollowness in chest or gut · Breathlessness · Sobbing, crying · Slumped posture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Withdrawal · Moving slowly · Speaking slowly or quietly · Rumination · Shutdown/dissociation 	What or who have I lost? What are my values and are they being upheld? What needs to change in my life? What needs to be released or worked through?
Shame/Guilt Self-conscious Discomposure Embarrassment Humiliation	Functions as a way to prevent us from hurting, embarrassing, or dehumanizing ourselves or others. Facilitates behavioural change in the context of our social environment. *Shame is the feeling that there is inherently something “wrong” with us *Guilt is having done something “wrong”; shame is the response to guilt (actual or perceived guilt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sensations in pit of stomach · Feeling hot · Nausea · Dread · Crying · Wanting to shrink or disappear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Self-criticism · Withdrawal · Avoidance · Fawning or appeasing others · Modifying behaviours · Hiding own behaviours or characteristics from others 	Have I or someone else been hurt? Am I feeling guilty or ashamed? If I am guilty, how can I make this right? Am I feeling guilty about something I have <i>not</i> done? If I am ashamed, where is this shame coming from?

Sources:

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