

## Emotions and Work Behaviour

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PDN Conference  
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## Individual Exercise

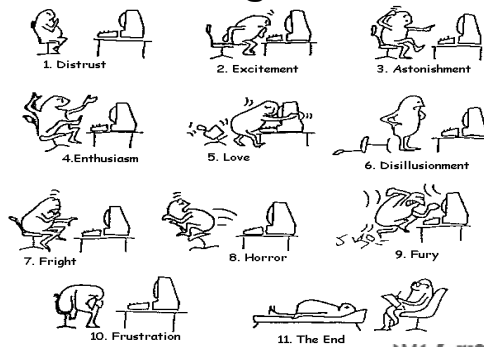
1. Think about your job over the last week.
2. What emotions have you experienced or witnessed in others?
3. Write down each of these emotions (one emotion per post it note).

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## Emotions in Organisations



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## Four Key Learnings

- 1. Emotions determine thoughts / actions
- 2. Emotions are contagious
- 3. Emotions are not what they seem
- 4. Emotions are variable.

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## Emotions determine actions

- Descarte – “I think therefore I am”
- Damasio – “I feel therefore I think”
- Without emotion there is no action.
- Thinking produces conclusions.
- Emotion leads to action.

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## Emotion & Cognition

- Inverse relationship between emotion and thinking
- When emotion is high (or intense) thinking will be impaired.
- Physiological reason
  - Blood flow is altered from cognitive to emotional areas (Drevets & Raichle, 1998)
  - Attention is diverted to the strongest emotion (Marsella & Gratch, 2002)

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## Emotional Progressions

### Anger

Irritable  
Annoyed  
Frustrated  
Upset  
Mad  
Angry  
Furious  
Enraged

### Happiness

Positive  
Calm  
Content  
Amused  
Pleased  
Happy  
Joyous  
Rapture

### Fear

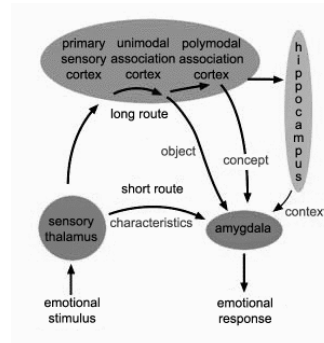
Attentive  
Wary  
Edgy  
Nervous  
Worried  
Fearful  
Panicked

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## Emotional Pathways in the Brain



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## Emotions are contagious

- At the individual level
  - Toxic emotions
  - Emotional vampires
  - Uplifting
- At the group level
- At the organizational level

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## Using Emotions

- Dealing with others
  - Storytelling
  - Empathy
- Dealing with self
  - Music
  - Cognitive reappraisal
  - Self talk

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## Emotions are not what they seem

- Positive emotions are good
- Negative emotions are bad
- Emotions are not good or bad but rather useful and not useful.
- Fear – produces a fight flight response – attention to action
- Happiness can trigger anger

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## Happy Worker Productive Worker

- Happy Workers are productive workers
- Premise
  - Negative emotions distract us
  - It will be more enjoyable to work in a pleasant environment
- Research disproves this
  - Productive workers are happy workers

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## Happy Worker Productive Worker

- Emotional Extremes
  - Extreme happiness can be as distracting as extreme sadness or fear
- Emotions appropriate to Work
  - Teacher's in class – enthusiasm
  - Principal disciplining – gravitas
  - Principal rostering - ??????

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## Emotions are variable

- Personality theory is based on stability
- Intelligence is based on stability
- Emotions (mood) are based on stability
- BUT
- Emotions are anything but stable
- Variables
  - Situation
  - Physiological state
  - Psychological state
  - Personal triggers

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## Behaviour is not stable

- Human are emotional beings
- Variation in emotion is the norm



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## Emotional Triggers

- Based on personal values
- Generally initiate short cut emotion to behaviour
- Triggers will vary between individuals
- Important issues is understanding your own triggers.
- Cognitive reappraisal / Putting into Context / Perspective Taking

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## Conclusion

- Emotions are not simple
- Emotions impact on all our behaviour
- Emotions are physiological as well as psychological
- Emotional control needs experience
- Emotions are a personal responsibility
- Reflection is as important as training

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## Questions / Discussion

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