

A COACHING MASTERCLASS ON

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



WORKBOOK



---

Copyright © 2019 by Positive Psychology Program B.V. All rights reserved.

This ebook or any portion thereof may not be reproduced, relabelled, or used in any commercial manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher.

Permission is not required for personal or professional use, such as in a coaching- or classroom setting.

Positive Psychology Program B.V.  
Gandhiplein 16  
6229HN MAASTRICHT  
The Netherlands

<https://PositivePsychologyProgram.com>

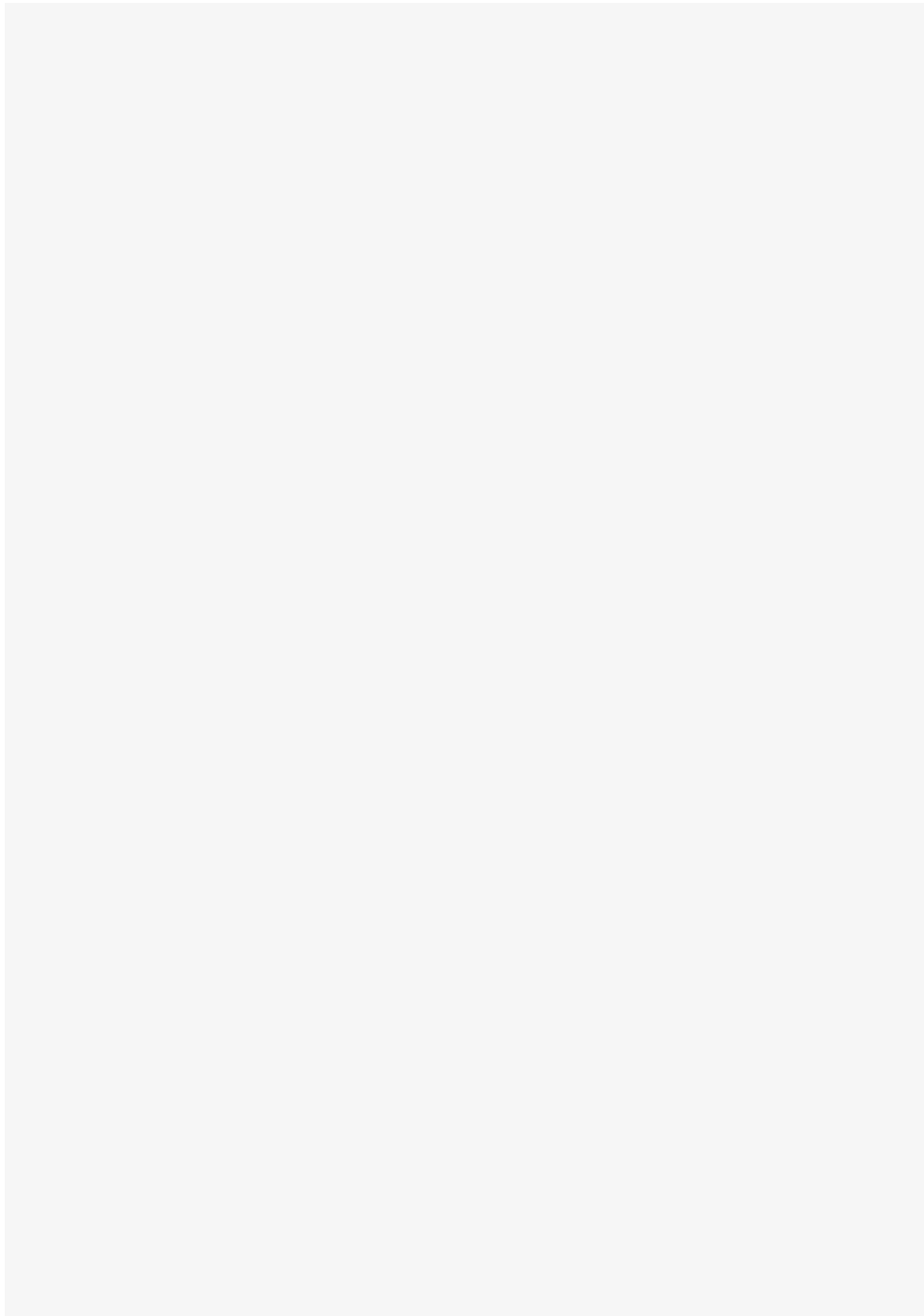


# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Your Personal Goals	3
The Sailboat Metaphor	4
The Status of Your Sailboat	7
Self-reflecting on Emotional Intelligence	8
The Feeling Wheel	13
The Emotion Meter	16
Reading Facial Expressions of Emotions	19
Building Emotional Awareness	22
Acceptance of Emotions	24
Awareness of Positive Emotions	28
Beliefs about Emotions Scale	30
Beliefs about Emotions Questionnaire	31
Identifying False Beliefs about Emotions	32
Acting Opposite to Urges	37
Needs and Values Analysis	41
Healing Through Writing	43
Using Music to Express Emotions	46

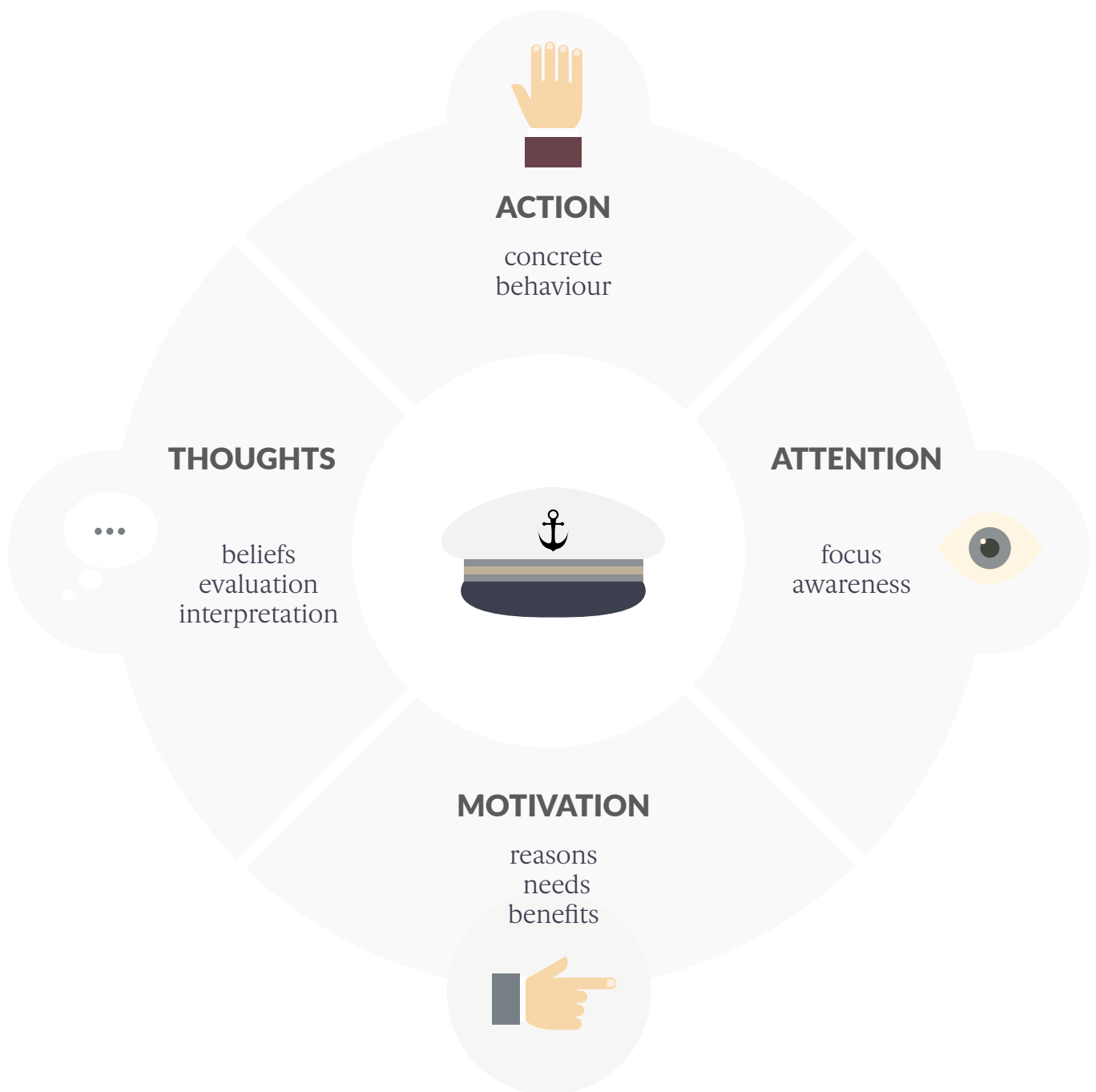
## ■ YOUR PERSONAL GOALS

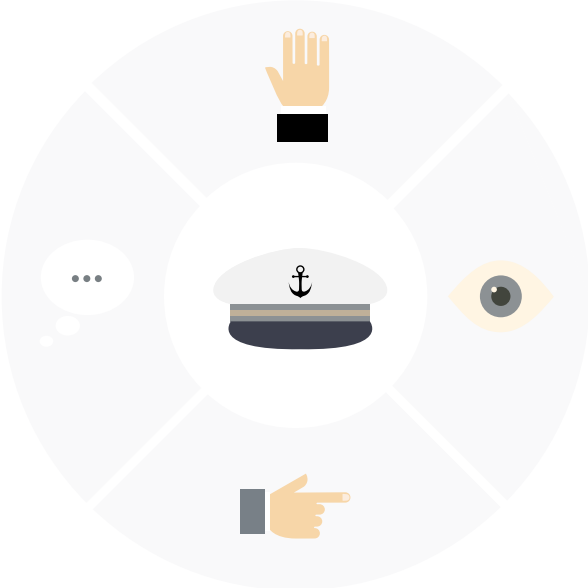
What would you like to learn in this masterclass?



■ THE SAILBOAT METAPHOR





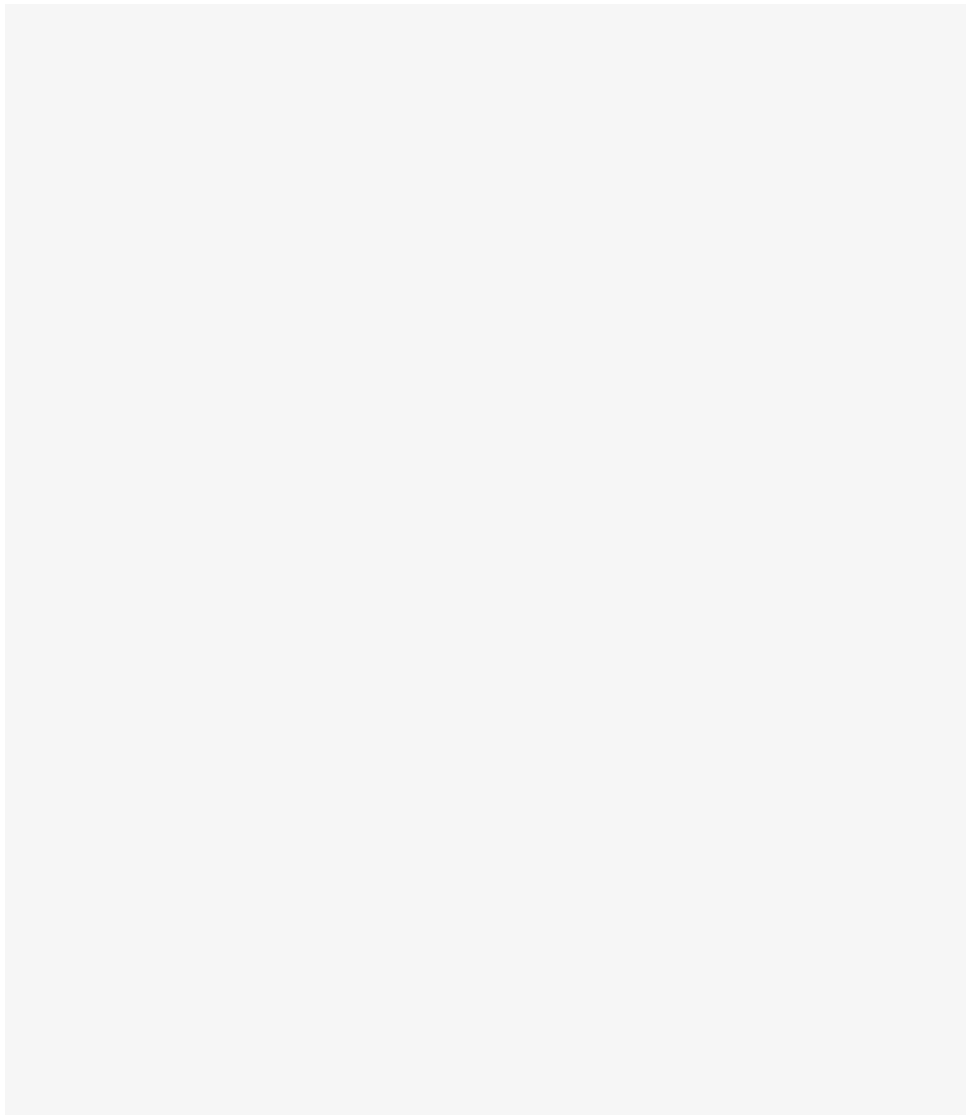


## ■ THE STATUS OF YOUR SAILBOAT

Ask the other person to use the sailboat metaphor to describe how he or she is currently doing. You may ask the following questions:

- What is the current status of your sailboat?
- How would you describe your current journey?

Invite the other person to speak as much as possible in terms of the different elements of the sailboat and their interaction.



## ■ SELF-REFLECTING ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In this exercise, you will be asked to reflect on some questions about your emotions and the way you deal with these emotions. Emotional intelligence is defined as the degree to which we are able to understand our own and other people's emotions and are able to control and use them to improve yourself. The following questions all refer to one specific aspect of emotional intelligence. First, each aspect is introduced. Next, you will find some questions that can be used to reflect on each part. You may choose one or more questions to reflect upon and then write down responses. Do not worry about grammar or writing style, just write down what comes to mind.

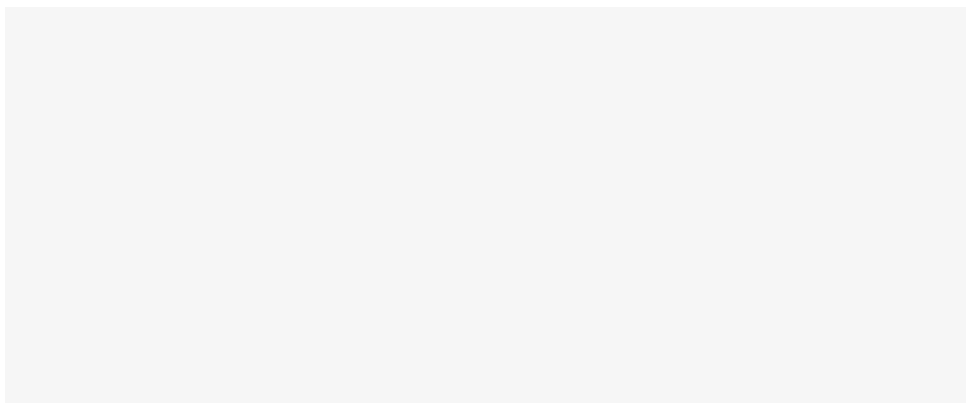
### ▶ ASPECT 1: NOTICING AND UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONS IN ONESELF

This relates to your ability to understand your emotions and to be able to express them naturally. People who are highly skilled in this area sense and acknowledge their emotions better than most people.

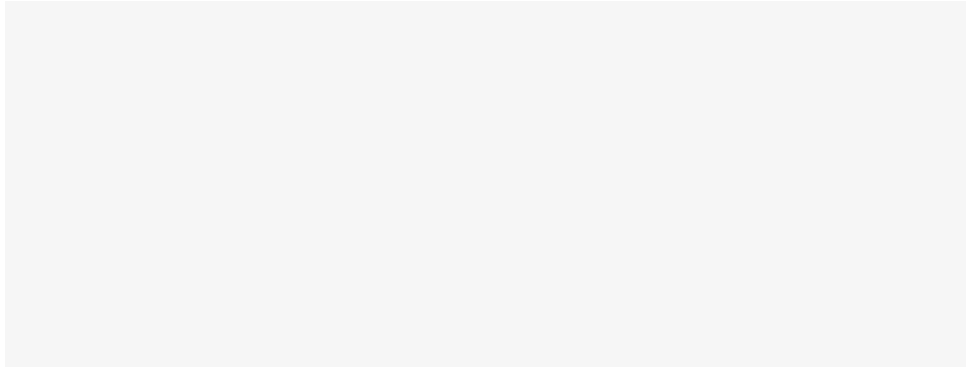
Questions to ponder:

- How good am I at identifying how I am feeling?
- How well do I know whether I am happy or not?
- How well am I able to notice when I am angry, sad, bored etc.?
- How good am I at identifying emotional swings in myself?
- How well do I know why I have certain feelings?
- How good am I at finding the right word(s) to use to express my feelings?
- In which ways do I express my emotions (e.g. writing, talking, painting, etc.)?

Write down your current appraisal of yourself regarding the abilities in this first aspect of emotional intelligence:



What do you think you might try to do to strengthen your skills here?

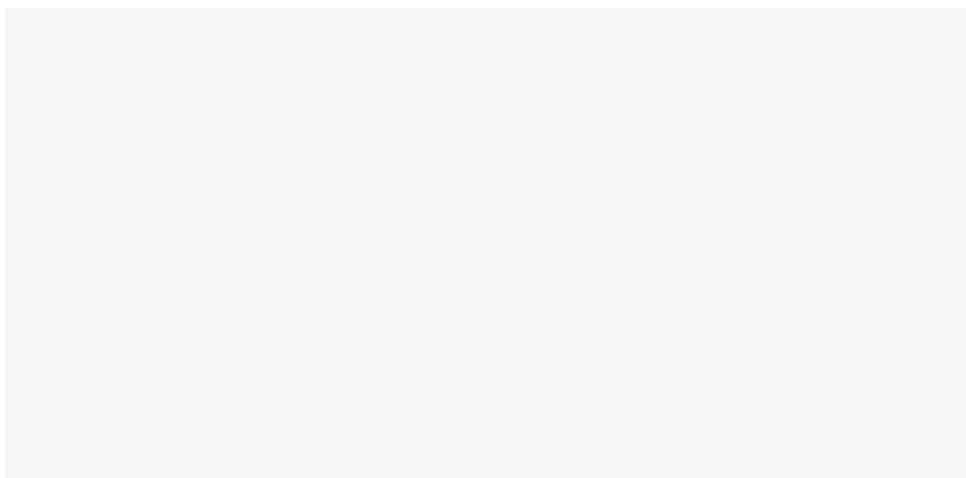


► **ASPECT 2: NOTICING AND UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONS IN OTHERS**

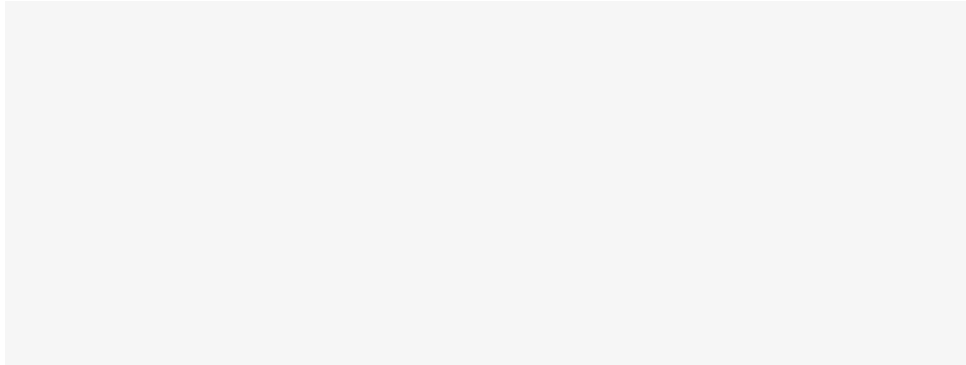
This relates to your ability to perceive and understand the emotions of the people around you. People who rate highly in this skill are very sensitive to the emotions of others. Moreover, they are able to predict others' emotional responses.

- How good am I at identifying how others are or might be feeling?
- How well do I know whether others are happy or not?
- How good am I at identifying emotional swings in others?
- How sensitive am I to the feelings and emotions of others?
- How well am I able to notice when others are angry, sad, bored etc.?
- How well do I understand the emotions of the people around me?

Write down your current appraisal of yourself with regards to the skills in this second aspect of emotional intelligence:



What do you think you might try to do to increase your skills here?

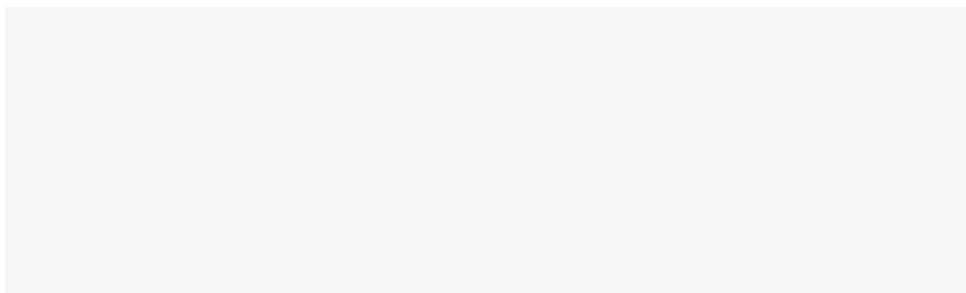


► **ASPECT 3: EFFECTIVELY REGULATING EMOTIONS**

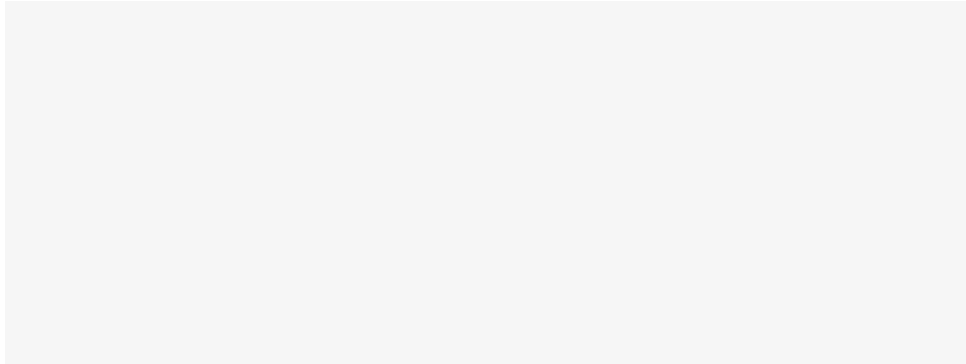
This relates to your ability to regulate our emotions, assisting you in recovering from psychological distress. A person who is highly skilled in this area is able to return quickly to “feeling normal” again after being upset. Such a person has better control over his or her emotions and is less likely to lose his or her temper.

- How well am I able to prevent my emotions from taking over?
- How well am I able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally?
- How well am I able to control my own emotions?
- How well am I able to calm down quickly when I am very angry or upset?
- How good am I at responding to an unexpected event when I am “caught off-guard?”
- How well am I able to self-regulate my behaviour even under very difficult circumstances?
- In what situations do I respond differently than I would like to respond?

Write down your current appraisal of yourself with regards to the skills in this third aspect of emotional intelligence:



What do you think you might try to do to increase your abilities here?

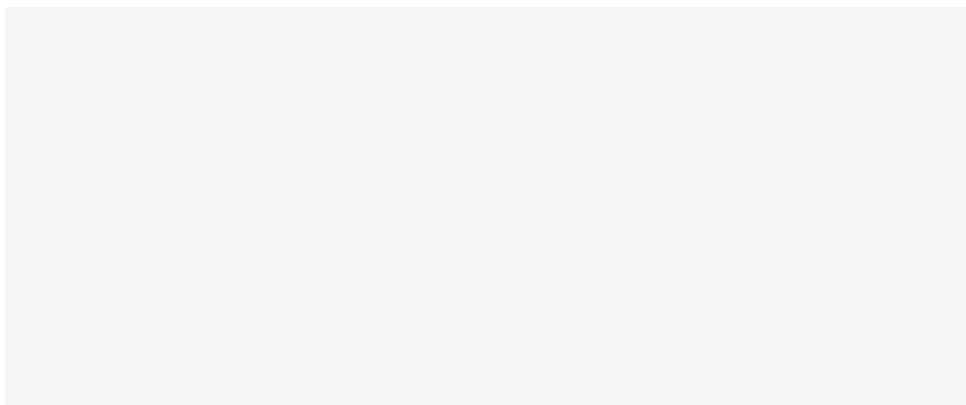


► **ASPECT 4: USING EMOTIONS TO FACILITATE PERFORMANCE**

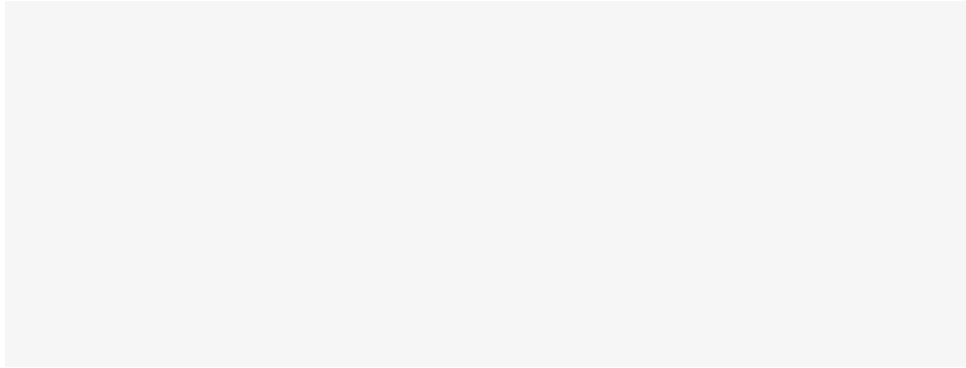
This relates to your ability to make use of your emotions by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance. A person who is highly capable in this aspect is able to encourage him- or herself to continuously do better. He or she is able to direct his or her emotions in positive and productive directions.

- How do emotions influence my performance?
- How often do I try to do creative and interesting projects when I am in a highly positive and motivated state?
- How often do negative emotions after a setback cause me to stop trying?
- Am I able to use positive emotions to deal with setbacks?
- How often do positive emotions encourage me to keep doing what I am doing?
- How often do I use my emotions to influence others?

Write down your current appraisal of yourself with regards to the skills in this fourth aspect of emotional intelligence:



What do you think you might try to do to increase your abilities here?



## ■ THE FEELING WHEEL

The ability to identify one's own emotions and those of others is a skill that is related to emotional intelligence. People differ in the extent to which they are able to identify the degree of specificity of their experiences. People high in differentiation are able to communicate more detailed emotional experiences on different occasions and use different adjectives to represent different kinds of experiences. They are better able to distinguish the intensity of emotions and use a greater emotion vocabulary. In contrast, people low in differentiation use only a few general emotional states and often struggle to communicate their feelings in specific terms. The goal of this exercise is to train people to be more detailed in describing their feelings. The exercise can help clients learn to identify or recognize emotions with more accuracy.

### ► ADVICE

- Note that the feelings depicted in the Feeling Wheel are not a complete overview of all possible feelings and emotions. Rather, they serve as a guide and starting point that may help clients to describe their experiences.
- Although this exercise can be used in many ways, using it when the emotion is being experienced is preferable because the immediate approach circumvents memory distortions or (inaccurate) cognitive representations of the experiences. This tool can be combined with The Three Minute Breathing Space, which directs attention inward and facilitates connection with the emotional state one is in.
- It can be useful for clients to carry a hardcopy of the Feeling Wheel or store a digital image on their phone, so that it can be accessed at any given time.
- Note that it is possible to experience different emotions at the same time. The emotions and feelings in the wheel are not mutually exclusive, but can exist in many combinations, even positive and negative at the same time.
- Note that the negative feelings in the inner band of the wheel are located on the exact opposite side of the wheel than the positive feelings. For instance, the positive core feeling that contrasts with sad is joyful. Although your client may use this information to gain insight in the positive emotions or feelings that are least present and may need further attention (see the tool: Positive Emotion Brainstorm), this feature of the wheel should not be used to replace or avoid emotions. For instance, when a client experiences sadness, it is advisable to allow the sadness to be present rather than to try to replace it with joyful thoughts (see the tool: Acceptance of Emotions).

## ► INSTRUCTIONS

Please take a look at the wheel on the next page. The wheel organizes 72 feelings into a pie chart and categorizes them into these 6 groups: sad, mad, scared, joyful, powerful, and peaceful.

The wheel can be useful in identifying the specific feelings and emotions you are experiencing at any given moment so that they can be addressed and resolved. For instance, if you experience a generally sad feeling, you can use the outer bands of the wheel to figure out what specific kind of sadness you might feel. For example, maybe what you are really experiencing is feeling ignored. Note that the reverse can also happen. For instance, by using the wheel you may realize that feeling inadequate may be rooted in rejection or fear on a deeper level.

### **Direct reflection in the moment**

You can use the wheel to explore the emotions you are feeling at any given moment during the day. For instance, after a nice conversation with someone, you notice a general feeling of joy. Using the wheel you may ask yourself; what kind of joy am I experiencing right now? Can this feeling best be described as excitement, creativity, cheerfulness, etc.?

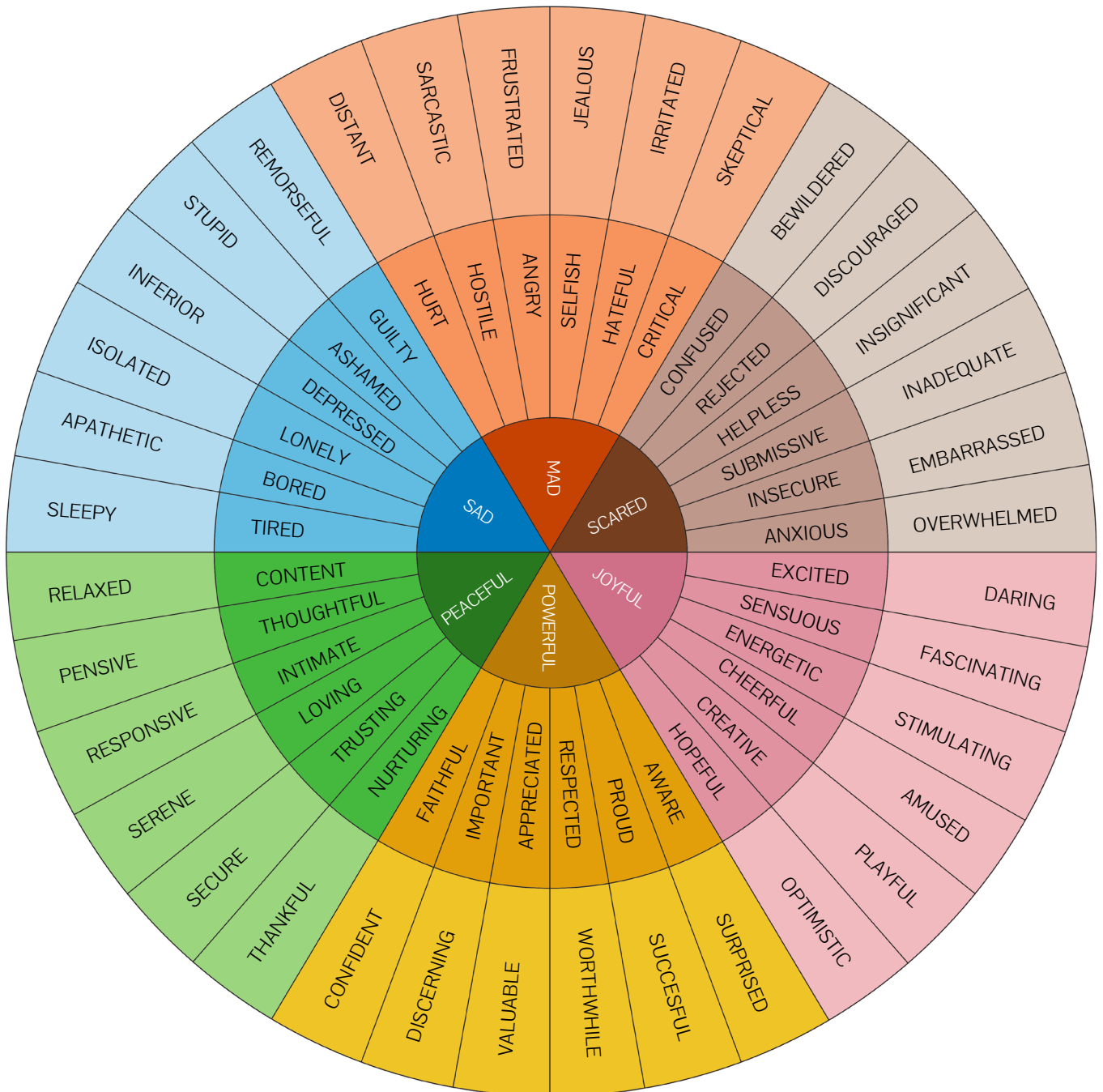
### **Daily reflection**

At the end of the day, take a moment to contemplate and look at the wheel. What did you experience today? Maybe, at some point during the day, you felt guilty. Once you find “guilty” on the middle band of the wheel, you can see that the associated core feeling (nearer the centre) is “sad”, and the more specific, nuanced feeling (on the outer band) is “remorseful”.

### **Long-term reflection**

The wheel can also be used to explore deeper and longer-term emotions that may be impacting you. For instance, maybe you have been feeling scared over the last several months, since the time you lost your job. By going to the core feeling “scared” on the inner band of the wheel, you can look at the two outer bands for feelings associated with “scared” to try to unveil the more detailed, nuanced emotions you are experiencing. You might conclude that you are more specifically feeling rejected and insecure. This can be an important insight that can help you to take specific actions towards a desired goal.

The Feeling Wheel



## ■ THE EMOTION METER

Characteristically, an emotionally intelligent person has an extensive emotional vocabulary, which facilitates his ability to accurately label his emotional experience. He is also able to discern the intensity of his emotions and to distinguish between different complex emotional experiences.

A strong emotional vocabulary enhances emotion regulation skills and emotional communication. Clients who have difficulty identifying and labeling their emotions may consequently lack the ability to become aware of emotional states that need regulation in everyday life. Furthermore, clients who lack the language required to communicate the nuances of what they are feeling to others are less likely to receive suitable emotional support. In this exercise, clients are asked to reflect on their current energy levels and the pleasantness of their current state. Using this information, the exercise offers a description of the emotion that corresponds with this state, helping clients to expand their emotional vocabulary.

### ► ADVICE

- This exercise can be used to help the client track his or her emotions throughout the day (e.g., when they wake up, at meals, after class), week and month. For regular emotion checking, help the client set reminders (e.g., phone alarms, sticky notes).
- Developing emotional self-awareness takes practice. Over time, this exercise can become an intuitive, powerful tool for clients to acknowledge emotional states.
- There is also an app of this tool available: <http://moodmeterapp.com/>. This app may facilitate daily reflection.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

This exercise is designed to help you build your emotional intelligence. Specifically, this exercise develops the skills of recognizing and labeling your emotions, so that you may live a healthier, more productive, and fulfilling life.

#### **Step 1. Connect to emotion**

Take a moment to connect to your current emotional experience. Sitting comfortably, gently close your eyes, and tune in to your body's emotional charge. Focus all of your attention on the physical sensations that are here now. There might be feelings of tingling or agitation, or anger, or sadness. Allow yourself to remain in this state for a moment and observe it carefully.





## ■ READING FACIAL EXPRESIONS OF EMOTIONS

The goal of this exercise is to help clients develop the important life skill of reading the emotions of others by deciphering facial expressions.

### ► ADVICE

- In Step 2, advise Expressers to express the emotion as realistically as possible—as if they were alone and experiencing this emotion in real life. They should not exaggerate their facial expressions or body language to make the emotion more obvious than it would typically be.
- A complicating factor in learning to read the emotions of other people is that we've been taught from a young age to conceal our emotions. We are taught that we shouldn't talk about them, display them, or feel them. Reading humans is a lot trickier than any other species because we can conceal, pretend, and confuse.
- This exercise can be confronting, as many people tend to refrain from expressing their emotions in public/group settings. This exercise thus requires participants to be vulnerable, and psychologically undefended. Remind participants to maintain firm but gentle eye contact; not the eye contact of a salesperson or an interviewer, but that of a curious child who remains relaxed and open to a new experience. Participants should not try to “stare down” their partners, but rather observe and enter into his or her inner experience.
- Practitioners should print out as many copies of the Emotion Cards (see p. 23) as needed for the group—one card per participant, or multiple cards per participant if the practitioner wishes them to practice expressing and perceiving numerous emotional states.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

This exercise is designed to help you develop the important life skill of reading the emotions of others.

#### **Step 1. Find a partner**

Instruct the group to find a partner and take a seat in pairs about a meter apart. Hand out emotion cards to each person (1 card per person). Have each pair decide who will be the Expresser (the person expressing an emotion) and who is the Perceiver (the person reading the emotion in the other).

#### **Step 2. Express emotion nonverbally**

Instruct the Expressers to read the emotion on their card to themselves, and think

of a time when they experienced this emotion strongly. The card will read: “Think of a time when you felt really [angry/happy/sad/anxious]. Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.” Invite Expressers to allow themselves to express this emotion in their face and body language, without speaking or otherwise verbally expressing it. They may choose to have their eyes open or closed, whatever is most comfortable for them.

### **Step 3. Study facial expression of emotion**

Instruct Perceivers to study their partners’ faces for the subtle changes that accompany their recall of the emotional experience. See Appendix B for some examples of facial cues related to the eyes, eyebrows, forehead, and mouth. Perceivers may like to write down their observations on a notepad. For instance, her bottom lip is trembling, which may indicate she is about to cry.

### **Step 4. Switch and repeat**

After a few minutes, invite pairs to shift roles and repeat the exercise. So the Perceivers are now the Expressers and will bring the emotion on their card to mind and express it nonverbally using facial expression and body language.

### **Step 5. Share and reflect**

Have pairs take turns to share their observations and impressions with their partner. The following questions may help to guide this discussion:

What emotion did your partner bring to mind?

How could you tell? What did you detect in your partner’s facial expression that suggested to you they felt this emotion?

## Emotion cards

Think of a time when you felt really <b>angry</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.	Think of a time when you felt really <b>happy</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.
Think of a time when you felt really <b>sad</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.	Think of a time when you felt really <b>anxious</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.
Think of a time when you felt really <b>angry</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.	Think of a time when you felt really <b>happy</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.
Think of a time when you felt really <b>sad</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.	Think of a time when you felt really <b>anxious</b> . Bring this situation to mind, and remember the experience as vividly as possible.

## ■ BUILDING EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

Noticing and understanding emotions in oneself is considered one of the four key ingredients of emotional intelligence. The goal of this exercise is to help clients develop their emotional awareness through mindfulness meditation.

### ► ADVICE

- Rather than giving clients instructions to apply acceptance at home, it is very important to first practice with a practitioner. In this way, the practitioner can help the client address questions and accept difficult experiences that emerge as a result of the practice. In addition, after clients have a taste of what it means to become aware of emotions, it is easier for them to practice and explore the concept more deeply on their own.
- If at any point your client realizes that the meditation is too much, inform him/her that he/she has the option to open his/her eyes at any time and stop.
- While other mindfulness practices for emotions typically include ‘acceptance’ instructions (e.g., direct the breath toward the feeling in the body, allow the feeling to be there, sit with the feeling until it reduces or changes) to allow clients to experience the transient nature of difficult or painful emotions (see the Acceptance of Emotions Meditation tool), this exercise focuses on emotional awareness only, and as such does not guide people through the process of emotional acceptance. Clients are invited to simply notice and connect with an emotional state. The goal is not to regulate or tolerate emotions, but to help clients to become gradually more familiar with their emotions. As such, it is advisable that clients choose to connect with positive or neutral emotions in this exercise, rather than difficult or distressing emotions.
- Clients who have a low level of emotional awareness may struggle to find words to describe their emotions or find it hard to describe edges, colors, and any other characteristics of the emotion. The practitioner should instruct these clients to adopt a curious attitude while completing this exercise.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

This exercise invites you to become aware of your emotions. It’s your chance to really get to know your emotions. By practicing emotional awareness in this way, you can build your emotional intelligence.

#### **Step 1. Emotional awareness meditation script**

1. Find a comfortable seated position. Either sitting on a cushion on the floor, or in a chair. Allow your spine to be straight and long, and let your shoulders

- drop. Gently close your eyes, or, if you'd prefer, gaze down in front of you with a soft focus.
2. Notice where your body is making contact: feet touching the floor, back on the ground, sit bones on a chair, etc.
  3. Notice your breath. For the next five or so breaths, follow each inhale and exhale, feeling or imagining the breath flowing into and out of the body.
  4. Now, shift your awareness from your breath to your body, and begin to scan through the body slowly from head to toe, observing any feelings or emotions that are present.
  5. You might detect numerous feelings or emotions throughout the body. For the purpose of this exercise, choose one feeling or emotion to focus on for now.
  6. Notice where in your body this emotion located... what part of the body is holding this feeling?
  7. How big or small is the feeling?
  8. Where are its edges? Are these edges sharp or soft?
  9. Does the feeling have a color? If so, is the color changing or remaining the same?
  10. Is the feeling heavy, or light?
  11. Is the feeling moving, or still?
  12. Is the feeling hard or soft? Is it rough or smooth? If I could touch this feeling with my hand, what would its texture be like?
  13. Now, if you were to give a name to this feeling or emotion, what would it be? Can you identify it?
  14. If a name for this feeling doesn't come to mind, that's OK. Be kind to yourself, and continue to observe the feeling in the body with curiosity and without judgment, until the nature of this emotion becomes clearer to you.
  15. Continue to get to know this emotion for another five or so minutes. When you feel that you have reached a level of comfort with and understanding of this feeling, gently open your eyes and bring your attention back to the room you are in.

### **Step 2. Reflection**

In the space below, write about your experience in Step 1 in as much detail as possible. Writing about your experience of this emotion will enhance your understanding and familiarity with it.

## ■ ACCEPTANCE OF EMOTIONS

One cannot become aware of emotions if one is unwilling to allow emotions to be present. Rather than avoiding emotions, mindfulness involves the willingness to allow them to be present. Emotions are approached with curiosity and acceptance. The basic stance is: “it is ok for me to experience whatever I experience.” In this exercise, clients explore the acceptance of emotions.

### **Caution**

It is important to realize that developing the ability to allow emotions to be present may take time and require caution. Welcoming difficult emotions can be very challenging, especially for clients who have long used avoidance-based coping strategies, like suppression, as a default strategy for dealing with negative affect. The mere thought of allowing these emotions to be present can trigger fear. This fear is often related to the belief that they will not be able to handle the consequences after giving room for emotions. Being “flooded” with negativity is a commonly used reason for blocking emotions. Moreover, with depression and borderline personality disorder, focusing on and staying with negative emotions can overwhelm the client and trigger strong avoidance and disengagement, the most serious forms of which are self-harm and suicide.

When applying mindfulness meditation to coaching or clinical practice, it is of primary importance for the practitioner to carefully assess clients’ abilities to allow negative emotions to be present. In addition, for many clients, it can be helpful to adopt a step-by-step approach. By allowing emotions to be present, they can experience that it is possible to experience and observe emotions, without being carried away by them. This can strengthen the client’s self-efficacy and the belief that he is able to deal with emotions by turning toward rather than turning away from them.

Only use this exercise if you are a skilled professional and never outside the boundaries of your professional expertise. For instance, if you are a certified clinician, you may use this exercise within your field of expertise (clinical psychology) but not with other populations. Positive Psychology Program B.V. is not responsible for unauthorized usage of this exercise.

**► ADVICE**

- Rather than giving clients instructions to apply acceptance at home, it is very important to first practice with a practitioner. In this way, the practitioner can help the client address questions and accept difficult experiences that emerge as a result of the practice. In addition, after clients have a taste of what acceptance means and how it feels, it is easier for them to practice and explore the concept more deeply on their own.
- If at any point your client realizes that the meditation is too much, inform him that he/she has the option to open his/her eyes at any time and stop.
- When practicing the meditation for the first time, some clients may find it difficult or impossible to experience emotions while visualising a scenario. Even if a client is not able to elicit an emotion to work with, doing the meditation together can still be valuable; doing rather than talking about acceptance makes it more concrete and understandable.
- In some cases, after clients have successfully learned to accept difficult emotions they start to notice that by allowing emotions to be present, the painful emotions actually fade away relatively quickly. As this happens, a new challenge is introduced. Some clients may start to apply acceptance as a way to get rid of emotions. In this case, acceptance is not true acceptance anymore: true acceptance means allowing every experience to be present, even if one does not start to feel better. By introducing a goal to acceptance (i.e. feeling better), the focus is not on the present moment anymore and the acceptance has become “conditional” acceptance; “I will allow these emotions to be present, but they must go away”. In fact, this is the same process as avoidance, where one is not truly willing to experience reality as it unfolds. It is important to explain this to clients.

**► INSTRUCTIONS**

The pre-meditation instructions can be used for practicing purposes. For instance, when introducing acceptance for the first time to a client. Clients who wish to use the meditation when they encounter difficult emotions in real time may skip 2, 3 and 4 and end with step 12.

**Pre-Meditation**

Try to think of something that is bothering you. It may be a scenario that you are or have been worrying about. It can be a scenario that has happened in the past or something that may happen in the future. Try to think of a scenario that elicits an emotional reaction. In this meditation, you will imagine yourself in your chosen scenario.

If at any point you feel that the meditation is too much, you have the option to open your eyes and/or wiggle your fingers and toes which will help reground you in the present. You can also try bringing the focus of your attention back to your breath. If this does not help and you do not wish to continue the meditation, then respect yourself by stopping. You may always choose to do this exercise again later and improve your emotional acceptance through smaller steps.

### **The Meditation**

- Begin by closing your eyes if that feels comfortable for you. If you choose to leave your eyes open, then focus your attention on your feet and let your gaze softly rest and remain there for the duration of the meditation.
- Start to notice your breath, each inhale and exhale. After at least five breaths, notice where your body is making contact: feet touching the floor, back on the ground, sit bones on a chair, etc.
- Now, bring the challenging scenario you've chosen to the forefront of your mind. Really imagine yourself in the scenario; what happened or may happen? As vividly as possible, imagine the situation.
- As a result of this scenario that you have brought to mind, you may notice that certain emotions arise. [You can ask your client to raise his/her hand if he/she experiences an emotion. If not, you may give your client more time or continue anyway.]
- What emotions are you experiencing? What thoughts are going through your mind?
- Now focus on your body. Often, emotions are represented in our body. What feelings arise in your body? Simply observe what you feel in your body. Maybe you feel tension or other sensations. Perhaps you experience a tightness in your stomach, around your heart or neck. Whatever you experience, try to stay with the sensations and be gentle on yourself.
- Use your breath as a vehicle to stay with those sensations and be gentle on yourself. Direct your awareness to the part of the body where those sensations are strongest. 'Breathe into' that part of the body on the inbreath.
- Rather than pushing this experience away, try to let it be. In silence, you can say to the feeling: "it is ok, you are allowed to be here". "Whatever it is, it's OK. Let me feel it". See what happens if you allow yourself to experience whatever you experience in this moment. Just stay with the awareness of these bodily sensations and your relationship to them, breathing with them, accepting them, letting them be. You can repeat "It's OK. Whatever it is, it's OK".
- Perhaps you notice that the feeling gets more intense. Maybe the feeling remains the same or reduces. It may also move in your body. Whatever happens, it is OK. Simply allow it to be. Observe what happens. Remember to stay with the experience with curiosity and kindness. You are experiencing sensations without reacting.

- Often, thoughts can distract us from the present moment experience. Maybe there are thoughts about the scenario or about this exercise. That's ok. Simply notice when your attention is focused on thoughts and then kindly direct your attention back to your experience in the present moment.
- Continue to discover what happens within your body and mind without tightening or resisting it. Try holding both the sensations in your body and the sense of your breath together, being aware of both — breathing with the sensations. When you notice that your bodily sensations are no longer pulling for your attention, simply return 100% to your breath and continue with that as your primary object of attention.
- If, in the next few minutes, no powerful sensations in your body arise, try this exercise with any bodily sensations that you experience.
- Now, slowly let your chosen scenario leave the focus of your attention. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Now slowly open your eyes and come back with your attention to the present room.

## ■ AWARENESS OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS

In this exercise, you will help another person to connect to a very positive experience and pay attention to the thoughts, bodily reactions and action tendencies present when visualising this experience. Read the following transcript aloud.

### ► STEP 1

First, I would like you to close your eyes and focus on the breathing for a minute or so. Simply breathe in, breathe out, and relax.

- pause -

Now, try to visualize a very positive experience. This may be something that happened in the past, or something that you are looking forward to. Whatever it is, try to really connect to this experience, try to live or re-live it as vividly as possible, include all the details.

- pause -

While you are connecting to this experience, pay attention to your body. What do you notice in your body? Are there sensations or other bodily experiences present? Where do you feel these sensations in your body?

- pause -

Now, let's pay attention to your thoughts. What kind of thoughts come up when you connect to this positive experience? Simply observe the thoughts that are associated with this positive experience.

- pause -

Finally, is there an urge or tendency to do something right now? When you are connecting to this positive experience, is there anything you want to do? Notice what kind of action you are most drawn to.

- pause -

Now slowly open your eyes, and come back with your attention to this room again.

**► STEP 2**

Evaluate the exercise. You may ask the other person to reflect on the following questions:

What was your experience during this exercise?

Was it possible for you to observe your thoughts, bodily reactions and action tendencies? If so, could you tell me a bit more about your observations?

## ■ BELIEFS ABOUT EMOTIONS SCALE

Please tick the column that best describes how you think.

	Totally disagree	Disagree very much	Disagree slightly	Neutral	Agree slightly	Agree very much	Totally agree
1. It is a sign of weakness if I have miserable thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. If I have difficulties I should not admit them to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If I lose control of my emotions in front of others, they will think less of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I should be able to control my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I am having difficulties it is important to put on a brave face.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If I show signs of weakness then others will reject me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I should not let myself give in to negative feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I should be able to cope with difficulties on my own without turning to others for support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. To be acceptable to others, I must keep any difficulties or negative feelings to myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. It is stupid to have miserable thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. It would be a sign of weakness to show my emotions in public.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Others expect me to always be in control of my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Total Score:

Average Score (Total Score /12):

## ■ BELIEFS ABOUT EMOTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the following four statements, please circle the number that best represents how much you agree with the statement:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i>	<i>Disagree Slightly</i>	<i>Agree Slightly</i>	<i>Agree Somewhat</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. Everyone can learn to control their emotions	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. If they want to, people can change the emotions that they have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. No matter how hard they try, people can't really change the emotions that they have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The truth is, people have very little control over their emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Scoring this questionnaire involves reversing the scores for questions 3 and 4. Reverse scoring means that the numerical scoring scale runs in the opposite direction. So, a score of 6 would be 1, a score of 5 becomes 2, etc.

After reversing the scores, higher scores on the questionnaire reflect greater belief that emotions are 'malleable' and under our control.

Total Score:

Average Score (Total Score /4):

## ■ IDENTIFYING FALSE BELIEFS ABOUT EMOTIONS

The way in which we deal with our emotions stems from our core beliefs about them. Our core beliefs reflect what different emotions mean to us, what it means to express emotions, and what would happen if we allowed ourselves to feel particular emotions. When people hold dysfunctional core beliefs about emotions, they tend to have difficulty identifying, regulating and expressing emotions healthily and adaptively. This exercise is designed to help clients uncover dysfunctional or false beliefs about emotions.

### ► ADVICE

- Gently remind clients that they should not blame anyone for the false beliefs they have about emotions. Advise them that parents, grandparents, siblings, and teachers were likely told the very same dysfunctional messages.
- This exercise can be completed numerous times with different emotions, as people can hold different beliefs about different emotional states. The client may benefit from completing the exercise with each of his or her main problematic emotional states, to gain an in-depth understanding of the core beliefs and consequences associated with each emotion. It may also be interesting to complete the exercise with a positive emotion; it is likely that the client holds adaptive core beliefs about positive emotional states, which leads to adaptive outcomes.
- An example of a completed worksheet is presented on p. 38. This may be helpful for clients who have difficulty understanding the exercise.
- The Core Beliefs About Emotions worksheet is intended to be printed out and brought into the session, so clients can fill it in themselves. This helps to increase client engagement in the activity as well as autonomy and empowerment.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

In this exercise, we will examine your basic assumptions about emotions; that is, what emotions mean to you, what it means to express them, and what would happen if you allowed yourself to feel particular emotions. The purpose of this is to uncover any false or misleading beliefs that you have which may be having a negative impact on your wellbeing.

#### **Step 1. Choose a difficult emotion**

For the purpose of this exercise, choose one particular difficult emotion to work with. Perhaps choose an emotional state you are struggling with at the moment; for instance, you might be feeling anxious about an upcoming event, or regretful

about a recent transgression. Write down the emotion you have chosen to work with in the center of the person outlined in the Core Beliefs About Emotions worksheet (p. 37).

### **Step 2. Uncover false core beliefs about emotion**

Read through the below list of common false beliefs about emotions and see which resonate most with you. Place a check mark next to those statements that ring true for you. Pay particular attention to those that sound familiar, as these may be thoughts that exist outside your awareness. Please add any personal beliefs that are not listed at the end. Then, write down your core beliefs about emotions in the thought bubbles outlined in the Core Beliefs About Emotions worksheet (p. 37).

- If I lose control of my emotions in front of others, they will think less of me.
- I should be able to control my emotions.
- If I let myself feel this emotion, I will become overwhelmed by it.
- If I tell others how I feel, they will use it against me.
- If I tell others how I feel, they will think I am weak.
- Other people don't feel this way. There must be something wrong with me.
- Only an immature person would get so emotional.
- I should be able to cope with difficulties on my own without turning to others for support.
- To be acceptable to others, I must keep any difficulties or negative feelings to myself.
- This emotional state is not a normal response; I have to get rid of it.
- A happy person would not feel this way.
- That person responded differently than I did, therefore my emotional reaction is wrong.
- If I let myself feel this pain, it will kill me.
- Letting myself feel bad would mean falling to pieces, being a total mess, or wallowing in self-pity.
- If I show signs of weakness then others will reject me.
- Being an adult means not getting carried away by emotion; I'm supposed to be rational!
- Showing my emotions to others makes me look like a "drama queen."
- I'm stupid for feeling this way. I should just suck it up!
- I should not let myself give in to these feelings.
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:

**Step 3. Explore the consequences of holding these beliefs**

Now let's look at what happens as a consequence of holding these beliefs about emotions. What impact do these beliefs have on how you feel, behave, and talk to yourself when faced with this emotion? Write down as many outcomes (positive and negative) as you can think of in the Consequences section of the Core Beliefs About Emotions worksheet (p. 37).

**Step 4. Evaluation**

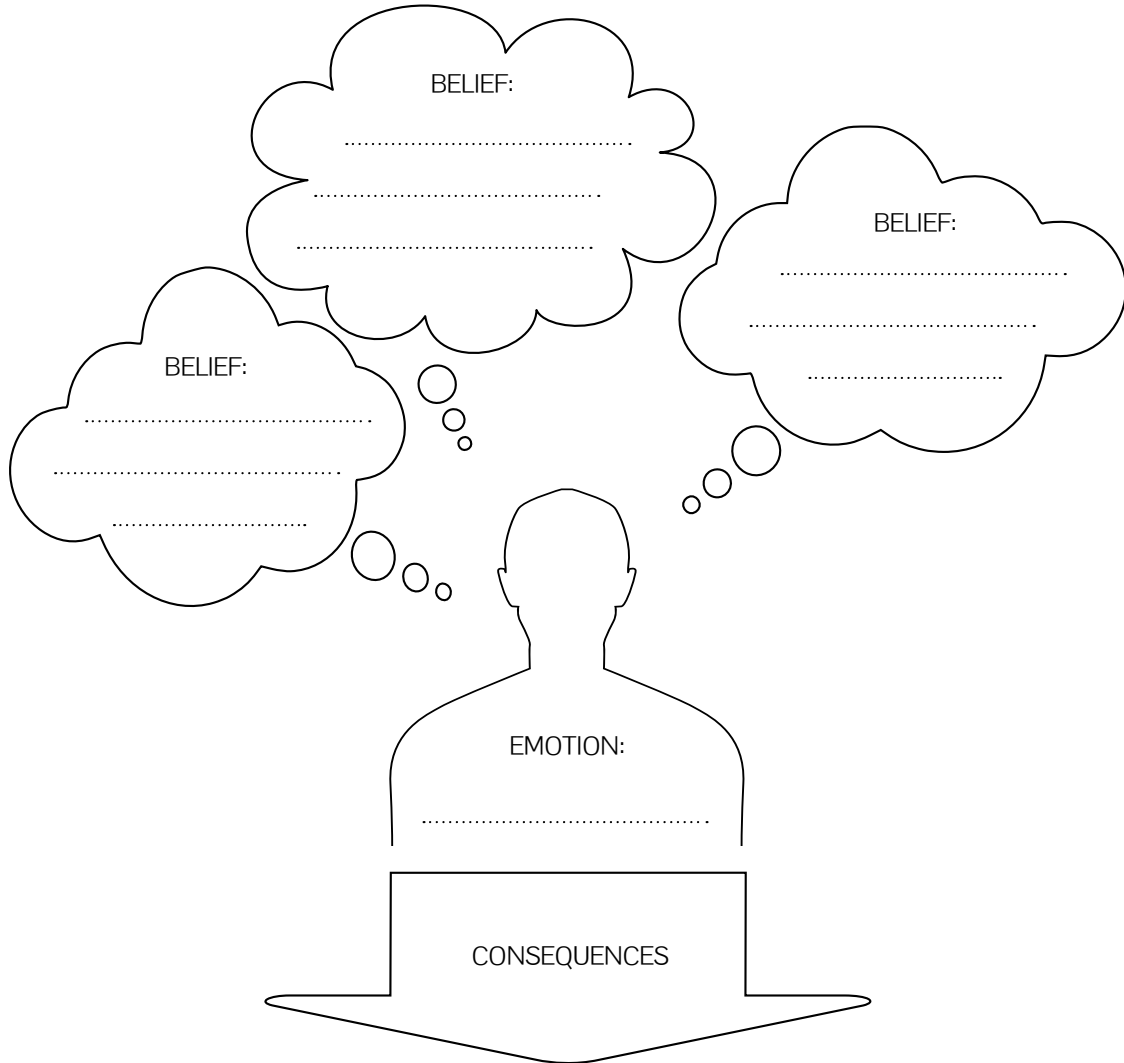
How was it to do this exercise?

Looking at the consequences part of the exercise, how adaptive is it for you to hold such beliefs about your emotions?

What was easy or difficult about the exercise?

What insights have you gained about your beliefs about emotions?

The Core Beliefs About Emotions worksheet



.....

.....

.....

.....

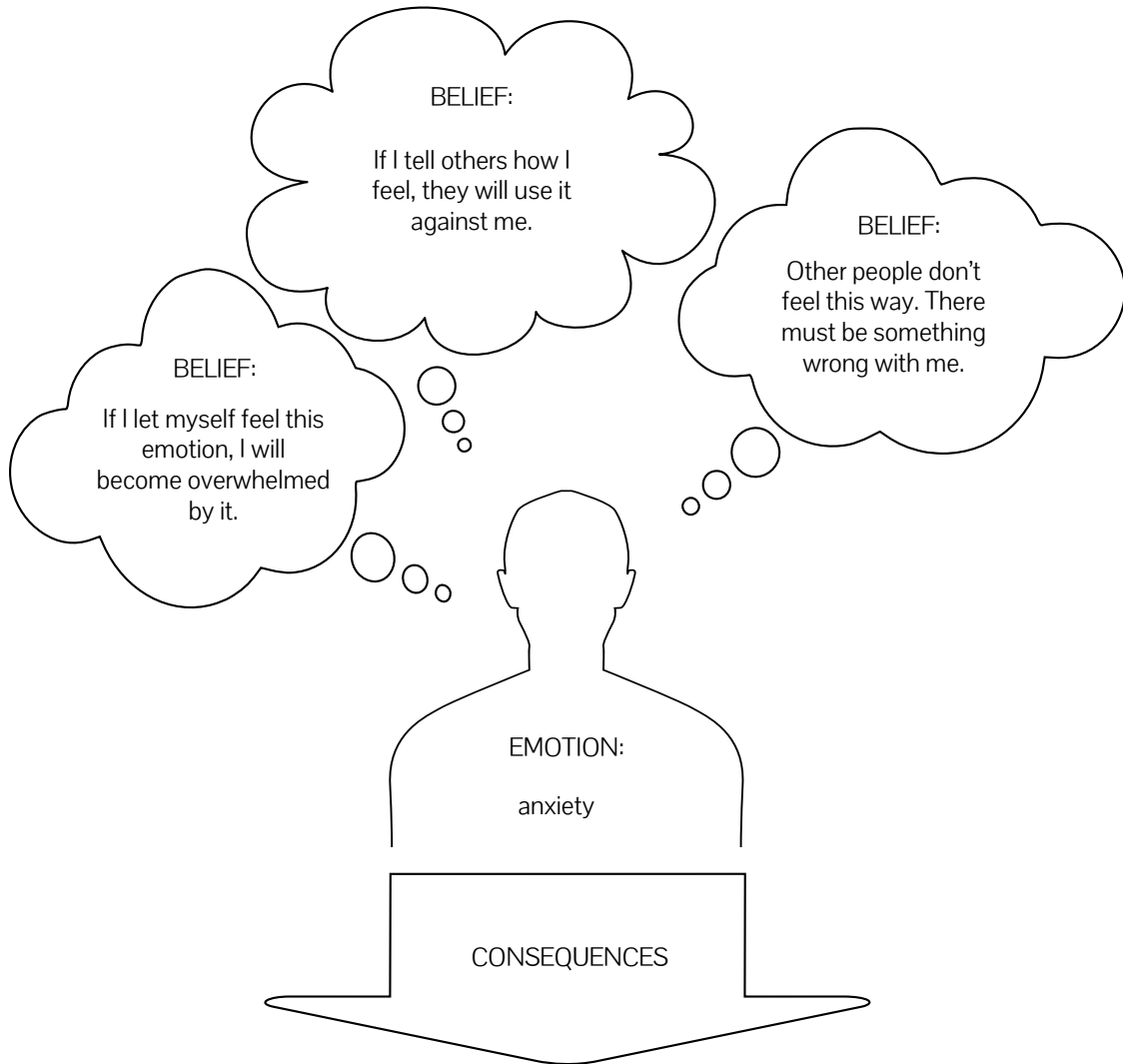
.....

.....

.....

.....

Example of completed worksheet



I withdraw and isolate myself so that others don't find out how I feel prevents me from their emotional support

I am harsh and self-critical towards myself

## ■ ACTING OPPOSITE TO URGES

Over time, we develop particular ways of responding to the experiences in our life. When we feel angry with someone, we might yell, cry, storm out, or become quiet. When we feel tired, we might lay around the house, take a nap, or exercise to increase our energy levels. We may choose different behaviors at different times, but we tend to develop a typical way of responding that becomes our first impulse. And this typical response may be doing us more harm than good. This exercise invites you to become aware of your usual way of responding to difficult emotions and examine how effective these responses are in helping you live a happy and meaningful life.

### ► ADVICE

- It is important to clarify that clients should only choose to act opposite to an urge if the action brings positive results. It might be helpful to have the client write down the following prompt on a card that they can keep in their pocket/wallet, something along the lines of, Will choosing the opposite action bring positive results?
- If time is limited, the therapist may leave Step 1 out and begin at Step 2. If this option is taken, the therapist is advised to provide the client with this condensed version of Step 1: Common urges to painful emotions include: withdrawing from people and isolating oneself when feeling sad; avoiding anxiety-provoking situations by leaving them and avoiding similar situations in the future; and, withdrawing or hiding from others when feeling guilt or shame. To act opposite to these urges would be to, respectively: approach people and ask for support when feeling sad; remain in anxiety-provoking situations and actively seeking similar situations in the future; and, approaching other people and, when shame or guilt is not justified, to continue the activity that triggers those feelings.
- Note that this tool relates to urges associated with negative emotions only, as acting on urges related to positive emotions is not usually problematic.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

#### **Step 1: Understand usual and opposite responses to emotions**

Here's a list of common responses to emotions and ways to choose the opposite response. As you read through the different ways to respond, consider how you typically respond to these emotions. Remember that in a given situation, it is important to consider both responses, and choose the opposite only if that is the best course of action. To do this, you may ask yourself: Will choosing the

opposite action bring positive results? Remember, different actions bring different outcomes! Choosing the opposite response to an emotion may lead you to a whole new way of life.

<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Usual response</i>	<i>Opposite response</i>
Guilt or shame	ruminates (i.e., dwell on the situation) and think critical or negative thoughts about yourself	observe your thinking from a distance, seeing your thoughts as thoughts, and reflect on your role in the situation
	engage in maladaptive coping such as addictive or compulsive behaviors	engage in self-soothing and compassionate coping
	avoid the source of the feeling (i.e., a person, situation, or higher power).	apologize for your act of wrongdoing.
	cease working towards good things in your life, like health and happiness, because you have decided you don't deserve it	learn from your mistake. Cultivate a growth mindset to remind yourself that life is a learning process; you don't need to be perfect. Forgive yourself and move forward. Strive for good things and continue to grow
Depression or sadness	withdraw and isolate yourself; avoid family and friends, and do not attend social gatherings	agree to spend time with friends or family members, even if you don't feel like it
	cease engaging in activities you typically enjoy, because they are less enjoyable now	try 'stopping by' social gatherings, even if only for a few minutes; showing up shows people you care about them, and broadens your repertoire for positive experiences
	stay inside all day watching TV or sleeping	go outside, to exercise, or even just to sit out in the fresh air
	eat poorly (i.e., too much, too little, or unhealthily).	eat nutritiously

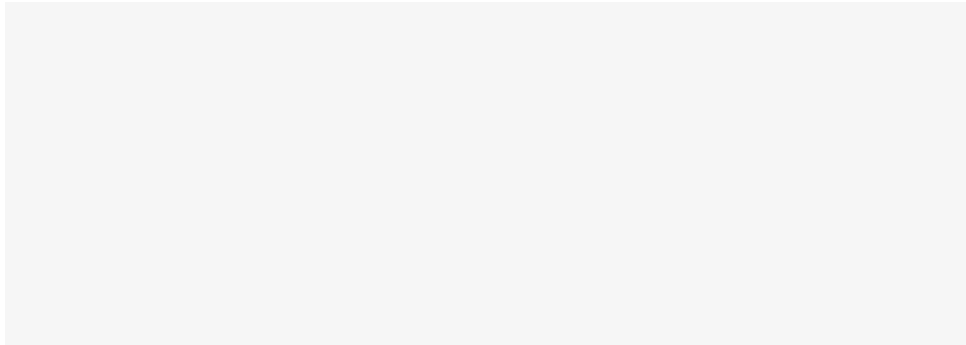
<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Usual response</i>	<i>Opposite response</i>
Anger or frustration	continual attempts to convince someone that you are right	look at the situation from the other person's perspective; for a moment, adopt his side of the argument, and see if you can make meaning out of anything
	ruminate about your own side of the argument and why the other person is wrong or bad	accept that your mind will be busy for the next little while with thoughts about the situation. Reorient your attention to healthy and adaptive activities
	yell out, shout, strikeout, scream, throw things.	accept the situation as it is right now, even though you don't like it, and engage in deep, slow breathing
	be passive aggressive, avoid the person, storm out, leave.	centre yourself and connect to your values, and respond in a way that you will respect yourself for
Fear	avoid or escape the situation; stay away from the things that make you anxious.	willingly approach the things that make you anxious with curiosity
	stay within your comfort zone; don't try new things, go to new places, share things with others, or get close to anyone	step outside your comfort zone while practicing accepting the anxious thoughts and feelings that show up. Start with small steps; learn that you can tolerate these feelings by repeatedly exposing yourself to the anxiety-provoking situation. Try new things, introduce yourself to new people, risk getting rejected.
	believe in what your mind is telling you about the anxiety-provoking situation	step back from you thinking and see your thoughts as simply thoughts
	numb the feeling of fear or anxiety with substances	embrace the feeling of fear or anxiety fully and without judgment of it as good or bad

**Step 2 consider the opposite response**

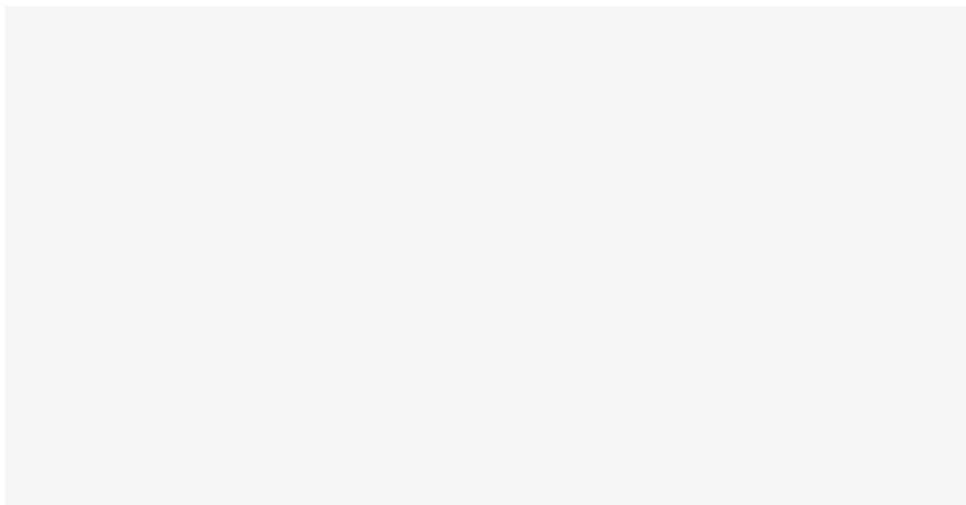
Now, reflect on five situations in your life where your usual response didn't help you move towards the person you want to be. These could be related to work, or a personal relationship, or small things that seem to distract you from your goals (e.g., binge watching a new television show). Focus on areas of your life that don't seem to be running smoothly, perhaps feeling slightly more chaotic or messy or sticky. In the table on p. 43, bring five situations to mind, and reflect on the emotions they brought about, the results of your usual behavior, and the likely results of the opposite behavior. Use the information provided in Step 1 to inspire possible opposite responses.

**Step 3. evaluate**

What insights have you gained, and what can you take away from this exercise?



Going forward, in which areas/situations in your life would you choose the opposite to usual response?



## ■ NEEDS AND VALUES ANALYSIS

In pairs, discuss a situation which caused you to experience intense emotions (positive or negative). Together, analyse the underlying needs that were signaled by the emotion(s). An overview of possible needs is displayed on the following page.

Needs:

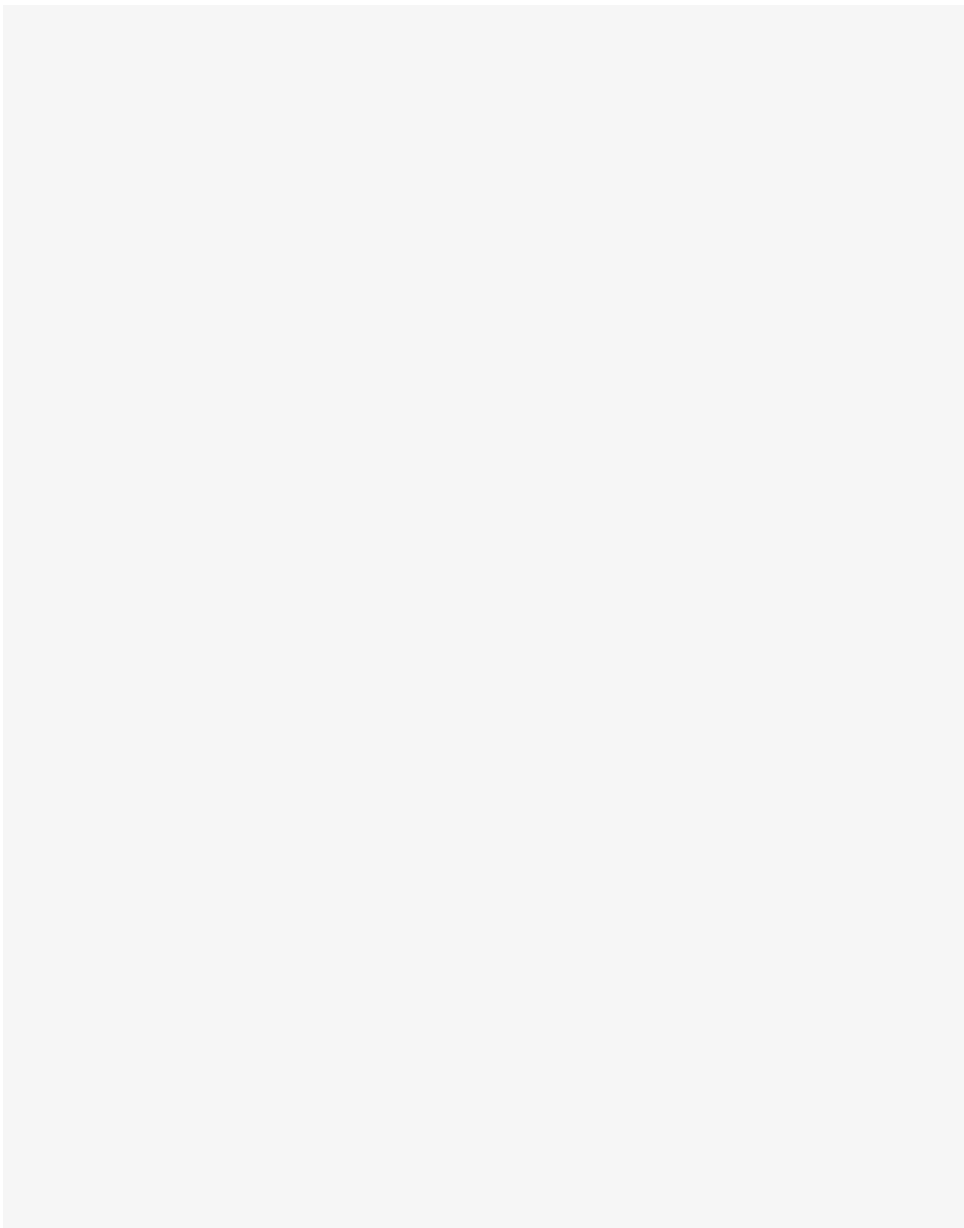


Table 1. Overview of the most common needs

<i>Connection</i>	<i>Connection</i>	<i>Peace</i>	<i>Honesty</i>
acceptance	trust	beauty	authenticity
affection	warmth	communion	integrity
appreciation		ease	presence
belonging	<i>Meaning</i>	equality	
cooperation	awareness	harmony	<i>Play</i>
communication	celebration of life	inspiration	joy
closeness	challenge	order	humour
community	clarity		
companionship	competence	<i>Autonomy</i>	
compassion	consciousness	choice	
consideration	contribution	freedom	
consistency	creativity	independence	
empathy	discovery	space	
inclusion	efficacy	spontaneity	
intimacy	effectiveness		
love	growth	<i>Physical well-being</i>	
mutuality	hope	air	
nurturing	learning	food	
respect/ self-respect	mourning	movement/exercise	
safety	participation	rest/sleep	
security	purpose	sexual expression	
stability	self-expression	safety	
support	stimulation	shelter	
to know and be known	to matter	touch	
to see and be seen	understanding	water	

## ■ HEALING THROUGH WRITING

This exercise introduces writing as a means of expressing one's emotions.

### ► ADVICE

- Clients should be aware that the benefits of expressive writing only emerge over time. Expressive writing is not a quick fix. In fact, directly after expressing, participants typically report feeling worse and are more physiologically aroused.
- Clients should be encouraged to write about the emotional aspects of an emotional event rather than the factual aspects.
- If clients want to share what is written, encourage them to talk about it rather than read it. This is especially relevant for group settings, as talking about it gives them the freedom to alter the story slightly so as not to hurt others' feelings, or to address other issues that may be more relevant in the current context of therapy.
- Encourage clients to take extreme care in the storage of their writings at home. If found by family members or friends, deeply personal writings can be devastating.
- Be careful that writing does not turn into another form of rumination. If clients have not found the task helpful after three writing occasions, try something else.
- Many clients are hesitant to write for fear of others discovering and reading their journal. You can inform clients to feel free to dispose of their writings after they have written the day's entry. No one need ever see they have written. The process of self-expression is beneficial even if the text is immediately destroyed.
- Typically, this exercise is done in four consecutive days. However, a client may wish to proceed for a longer period of time. In any case, it is important to reflect on the experience. You can ask your client to reflect privately or/and during the coaching sessions.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

This exercise is intended to have you focus on an emotional life experience. Let your ideas flow fluidly as you recount the past, the present, or the future. As you write, explore the emotions. Patiently believe in yourself and your process. Take as long as you need.

### Key Points

- Choose something that deeply affected you and that is personal.
- Feel free to use the same topic or a different topic each day.
- Keep your writing in a secure place to avoid feeling intimidated or limited while writing due to the fear of someone else reading it. If helpful, communicate with family members what you are doing and respectfully ask for privacy.
- While this exercise may be a challenge, be gentle on yourself. Keep in mind that you are working on your personal development that will lead to beneficial effects including clarity on life.
- If you feel overwhelmed while writing, it is okay to take a small break. Try not to get out of your writing flow. Sometimes we resist what is painful, preventing us from moving forward by feeling the emotions.
- It is normal to feel vulnerable. Using your social support to provide comfort.
- Choose a time that will make you feel the most comfortable. I.e. You may choose to write in the evening or early in the morning.

### Instructions (Adapted from Pennebaker, 1999):

Each time you write in your journal, express your deepest thoughts and feelings about some important emotional event or issue that has affected you. In your writing, let go and explore your deepest emotions and thoughts. You might tie your topic to your relationships with others, including parents, lovers, friends, or relatives; to your past, your present, or your future; or to who you have been, who you would like to be, or who you are now. You may write about the same general issues or experiences on all days of writing or on different topics each day. All of your writing will be completely confidential. Do not worry about spelling, sentence structure, or grammar. Journaling is most effective if you write whenever you notice that you are thinking or worrying about something too much. Set a length of time comfortable for yourself, anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes. Then continue writing until the time is up. You do not need to write every day. Instead, think of expressive writing as a way to clarify your thoughts and emotions. This method is particularly powerful in helping you to get through emotional upheavals.

### Post Four Days-Reflection

How was it to express your emotions in words?

What was the most challenging aspect of writing?

Did the process of writing help to decrease the avoidance you may have felt?

Do you see the emotional event differently post completion of the exercise?

What was your greatest insight?

## ■ USING MUSIC TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS

The goal of this exercise is to facilitate clients in communicating their feelings and concerns by using music as a medium to “translate” personal experiences. Because this intervention requires clients to identify and describe their own emotions, it may help to increase their emotional awareness.

### ► ADVICE

- The practitioner may introduce this exercise by playing a song that captures his current feelings or by playing a song that generates strong emotions in general. After playing the song, the practitioner may discuss his feelings and experiences when listening to the song. Although this requires some degree of vulnerability of the practitioner, it may pave the way for the client to share his own experiences with more ease.
- The practitioner may listen to the songs together with the client, and discuss for each song why the client chose this song, what the client feels, and how it is related to his/her current situation.
- It is important for practitioners to remember that a client can perceive any emotion in a piece of music. In other words, the emotional resonance of a song is a highly subjective matter and it is therefore inappropriate to claim that the listener is “wrong”. Whatever the client perceives in the music is what the music is expressing—for the client at least. Practitioner should therefore refrain from offering any review or critique of the music.
- For some clients, this exercise is perceived as a playful way to get more in touch with personal experiences. Searching for music can be both a joyful and interesting activity, and despite its playful character can yield interesting results. It can be a valuable tool for clients who have a strong connection with music, taking advantage of their intrinsic interest in music.
- This can be a potentially helpful tool for clients who find verbal communication challenging or when multiple challenges present simultaneously.

### ► INSTRUCTIONS

At times, it is difficult to express what we feel in words only. In these cases, music seems to be expressing exactly how we are feeling.

This exercise is a homework assignment. Take the sheet below home with you and between now and the next time we meet, please find three songs. Try to find three songs that describe how you are feeling about your situation right now.

Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong ways to choose a song, only what makes the most sense to you. After choosing your songs, please take a few moments to respond to the questions below. If possible please bring your worksheet and the songs to our next session for discussion.

**Song 1**

What is the title of this song?

When you hear this song, what comes to your mind?

How does this song make you feel?

Which part of the song is the most important to you?

**Song 2**

What is the title of this song?

When you hear this song, what comes to your mind?

How does this song make you feel?

Which part of the song is the most important to you?

**Song 3**

What is the title of this song?

When you hear this song, what comes to your mind?

How does this song make you feel?

Which part of the song is the most important to you?