

Substance Institute presents



Module 5

Therapy of Counseling - Psychoanalytic Therapy

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Emotional Section

In order to better understand what emotions are, let's focus on their three key elements, known as the subjective experience, the physiological response, and the behavioral response.

Subjective Experience

While experts believe that there are a number of basic universal emotions that are experienced by people all over the world regardless of background or culture, researchers also believe that experiencing emotion can be highly subjective.⁵

Consider anger, for example. Is all anger the same? Your own experience might range from mild annoyance to blinding rage.

While we have broad labels for emotions such as "angry," "sad," or "happy," your own experience of these emotions may be much more multi-dimensional, hence subjective.

We also don't always experience pure forms of each emotion. Mixed emotions over different events or situations in our lives are common. When faced with starting a new job, you might feel both excited and nervous.

Getting married or having a child might be marked by a wide variety of emotions ranging from joy to anxiety. These emotions might occur simultaneously, or you might feel them one after another.

Physiological Response

If you've ever felt your stomach lurch from anxiety or your heart palpate with fear, then you realize that emotions also cause strong physiological reactions.

Many of the physiological responses you experience during an emotion, such as sweaty palms or a racing heartbeat, are regulated by the sympathetic nervous system, a branch of the autonomic nervous system.

The autonomic nervous system controls involuntary body responses, such as blood flow and digestion. The sympathetic nervous system is charged with controlling the body's fight-or-flight reactions. When facing a threat, these responses automatically prepare your body to flee from danger or face the threat head-on.

While early studies of the physiology of emotion tended to focus on these autonomic responses, more recent research has targeted the brain's role in emotions. Brain scans have shown that the amygdala, part of the limbic system, plays an important role in emotion and fear in particular.⁶

The amygdala itself is a tiny, almond-shaped structure that has been linked to motivational states such as hunger and thirst as well as memory and emotion.

Researchers have used brain imaging to show that when people are shown threatening images, the amygdala becomes activated. Damage to the amygdala has also been shown to impair the fear response.⁷

Behavioral Response

The final component is perhaps one that you are most familiar with - the actual expression of emotion. We spend a significant amount of time interpreting the emotional expressions of the people around us.

Our ability to accurately understand these expressions is tied to what psychologists call emotional intelligence, and these expressions play a major part in our overall body language.

Research suggests that many expressions are universal, such as a smile to indicate happiness or a frown to indicate sadness.

Sociocultural norms also play a role in how we express and interpret emotions.

In Japan, for example, people tend to mask displays of fear or disgust when an authority figure is present. Similarly, Western cultures like the United States are more likely to express what people refer to as "negative" emotions both alone and in the presence of others, while eastern cultures like Japan are more likely to do so while alone.⁸

Theories of Emotion

Charles Darwin proposed the evolutionary theory of emotion, which suggests that emotions are adaptive to our environment and improve our chances of survival.

For example, emotions like love are adaptive because they promote mating and reproduction. Emotions like fear keep us safe from predators.⁹

The James-Lange theory maintains that our physical responses are responsible for emotion.¹⁰ If someone sneaks up on you and shouts, for instance, your heart rate increases. Your heart rate increase is what causes you to feel fear.

The facial-feedback theory elaborates on the James-Lange theory.

The facial-feedback theory suggests that physical activity influences emotion—for instance, if you force a smile, you will feel happier than you would if you didn't smile at all.¹¹

The Cannon-Bard theory refutes the James-Lange theory, asserting that people experience emotional and physical responses at the same time.¹²

The Schachter-Singer theory is a cognitive theory of emotion that suggests our thoughts are actually responsible for emotions.¹³

Similar to this theory is the cognitive appraisal theory. It posits that someone must first think before experiencing an emotion.

For instance, your brain judges a situation as threatening, and as a result, you experience fear.¹⁴

Types of Emotions

There are various theories as to how many types of emotions humans experience.

As mentioned, psychologist Paul Eckman established the following six universal emotions:

- **Happiness:** Many people strive for happiness as it is a pleasant emotion where people feel a greater sense of well-being and satisfaction.
- **Sadness:** All of us experience sadness every now and then. Someone might express sadness by crying, being quiet, and/or withdrawing from others.¹⁶ Types of sadness include grief, hopelessness, and disappointment.
- **Fear:** Fear can increase your heart rate, cause racing thoughts, or trigger the fight-or-flight response. It can be a reaction to actual threats or perceived threats (something we *think* is threatening, but is actually not).
- **Disgust:** Disgust can be triggered by a physical thing, such as rotting food, blood, or poor hygiene.

- **Anger:** Anger can be expressed with facial expressions like frowning, yelling, or violent behavior.
- **Surprise:** Surprise can be pleasant or unpleasant. You might open your mouth or gasp when you're surprised.²⁰ Surprise, like fear, can trigger the fight-or-flight response.

Emotions, Feelings, and Moods

In everyday language, people often use the terms emotions, feelings, and moods interchangeably, but these terms actually mean different things. An emotion is normally quite short-lived, but intense. Emotions are also likely to have a definite and identifiable cause. For example, after disagreeing with a friend over politics, you might experience anger.

Emotions are reactions to stimuli, but feelings are what we experience as a result of emotions. Feelings are influenced by our perception of the situation, which is why the same emotion can trigger different feelings among people experiencing it.²¹

Take the example of disagreeing with your friend over politics. You might both walk away from the conversation having experienced the emotion of anger. Your anger might feel like frustration because you feel that your friend never listens to you when you speak.

Your friend's anger, on the other hand, might feel like jealousy because they feel you know much more about the topic than you do. Both of you have the same emotion, but your feelings are different based on your separate interpretations.

A mood can be described as a temporary emotional state. Sometimes moods are caused by clear reasons—you might feel everything is going your way this week, so you're in a happy mood. But in many cases, it can be difficult to identify the specific cause of a mood. For example, you might find yourself feeling gloomy for several days without any clear, identifiable reason.²²

If you've been struggling with low mood or difficult emotions, talk to a doctor or a mental health professional about your concerns.

Most of us experience a wide variety of emotions.

The feelings that stem from these emotions can feel overwhelming at times, but a helpful first step can simply be to label the emotion.

Understand that it's OK to experience any type of emotion - even emotions that can be difficult to cope with like sadness or anger.

If you are having trouble coping with your emotions or feelings, you might consider talking to a mental healthcare professional who can help you address your concerns.

Questions & Answers

What are the primary emotions?

Primary emotions are the emotions that humans experience universally.

There are different theories as to what these specific emotions are, but they often include:

- happiness,
- sadness,
- fear,
- disgust,
- anger, and
- surprise.²³

What are negative emotions?

All emotions can be positive or negative, but the emotions people usually call negative are the ones that can be unpleasant to experience and can cause disruption to daily life.

Negative emotions include

- envy,
- anger,
- sadness, and
- fear.²⁴

What are some ways emotions affecting your health?

Research has shown chronic fear can lead to anxiety, which is linked with inflammation and lowered immunity.²⁵

Happiness is linked with a longer lifespan, whereas chronic sadness is linked with poorer physical health.²⁶

Anger is linked with illnesses like heart disease and behaviors like smoking.²⁷

It's healthy to experience all kinds of emotions, but try to develop productive ways of expressing them so they don't take a negative toll on your health.

What are secondary emotions?

Secondary emotions stem from - and are variations of - primary emotions.

Sometimes, we have secondary emotions in response to our primary emotions (i.e., "I'm frustrated that I'm so sad").²⁸

Secondary emotions may include

- frustration,
- pride,
- envy, and
- jealousy.

Learn More: Characteristics Understanding Jealousy

While it's typically perceived as a negative emotion, it is natural to experience jealousy in a close relationship. You may feel suspicious jealousy or reactive jealousy.

The former is based on perception and is often tied to low self-esteem and insecurity and the latter is based on situations that actually threaten the relationship, and is often tied to actions or situations that lead to or cause the betrayal of trust.²

Jealousy can lead to other emotions or feelings. Psychiatrist Nereida Gonzalez-Berrios, MD, explains how jealousy can manifest in relationships:

- Criticizing
- Fault finding
- Blaming
- Feeling distrust
- Being overprotective or suspicious
- Acting obsessive
- Experiencing a quick temper
- Verbally abusing

The 6 Types of Basic Emotions and Their Effect on Human Behavior

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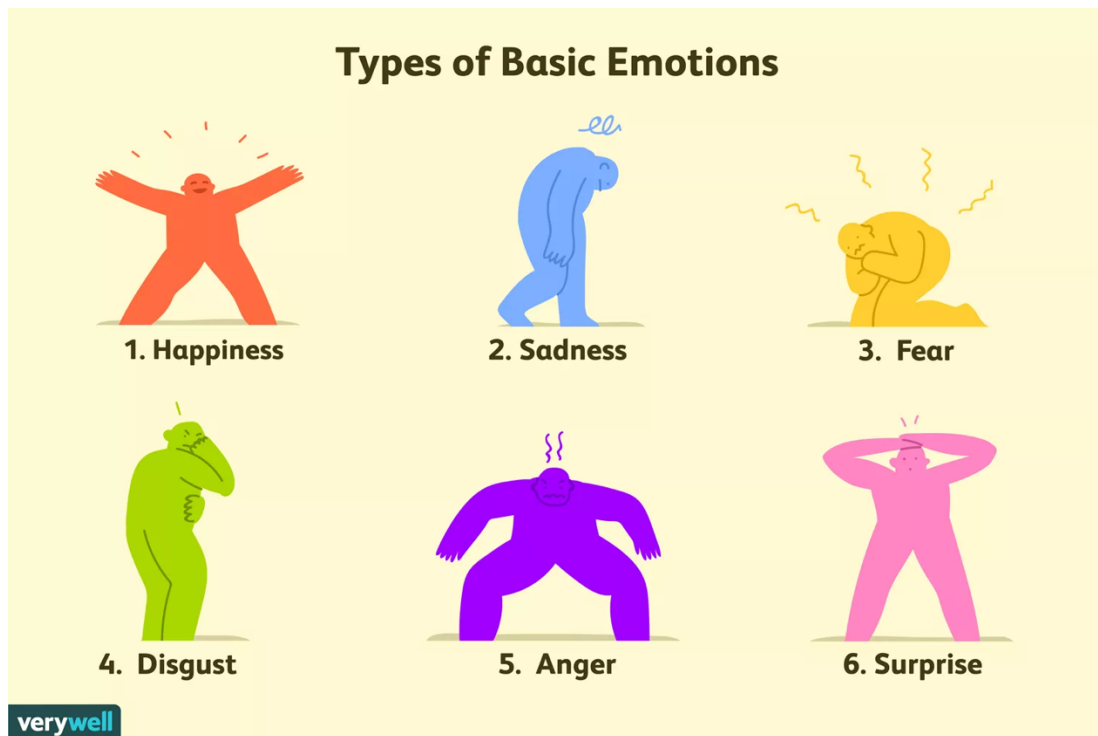
There are many different types of emotions that have an influence on how we live and interact with others. At times, it may seem like we are ruled by these emotions. The choices we make, the actions we take, and the perceptions we have are all influenced by the emotions we are experiencing at any given moment.

Psychologists have also tried to identify the different types of emotions that people experience. A few different theories have emerged to categorize and explain the emotions that people feel.

Basic Emotions

During the 1970s, psychologist Paul Eckman identified six basic emotions that he suggested were universally experienced in all human cultures.

The emotions he identified were happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise, and anger. He later expanded his list of basic emotions to include such things as pride, shame, embarrassment, and excitement.



Psychologist Robert Plutchik put forth a "wheel of emotions" that worked something like the color wheel.

Emotions can be combined to form different feelings, much like colors can be mixed to create other shades.

According to this theory, the more basic emotions act something like building blocks. More complex, sometimes mixed emotions are blendings of these more basic ones. For example, basic emotions such as joy and trust can be combined to create love.

A 2017 study suggests that there are far more basic emotions than previously believed.¹ In the study published in *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences*, researchers identified 27 different categories of emotion.

Rather than being entirely distinct, however, the researchers found that people experience these emotions along a gradient.¹ Let's take a closer look at some of the basic types of emotions and explore the impact they have on human behavior.

Happiness

Of all the different types of emotions, happiness tends to be the one that people strive for the most. Happiness is often defined as a pleasant emotional state that is characterized by feelings of contentment, joy, gratification, satisfaction, and well-being.

Research on happiness has increased significantly since the 1960s within a number of disciplines, including the branch of psychology known as positive psychology.

This type of emotion is sometimes expressed through:

- **Facial expressions:** such as smiling
- **Body language:** such as a relaxed stance
- **Tone of voice:** an upbeat, pleasant way of speaking

While happiness is considered one of the basic human emotions, the things we *think* will create happiness tend to be heavily influenced by culture.

For example, pop culture influences tend to emphasize that attaining certain things such as buying a home or having a high-paying job will result in happiness.

The realities of what actually contributes to happiness are often much more complex and more highly individualized.²

People have long believed that happiness and health were connected, and research has supported the idea that happiness can play a role in both physical and mental health.

Happiness has been linked to a variety of outcomes including increased longevity and increased marital satisfaction.³ Conversely, unhappiness has been linked to a variety of poor health outcomes.

Stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness, for example, have been linked to things such as lowered immunity, increased inflammation, and decreased life expectancy.⁴

Sadness

Sadness is another type of emotion often defined as a transient emotional state characterized by feelings of disappointment, grief, hopelessness, disinterest, and dampened mood.

Like other emotions, sadness is something that all people experience from time to time. In some cases, people can experience prolonged and severe periods of sadness that can turn into depression.

Sadness can be expressed in a number of ways including:

- Crying
- Dampened mood
- Lethargy
- Quietness
- Withdrawal from others

The type and severity of sadness can vary depending upon the root cause, and how people cope with such feelings can also differ.

Sadness can often lead people to engage in coping mechanisms such as avoiding other people, self-medicating, and ruminating on negative thoughts.

Such behaviors can actually exacerbate feelings of sadness and prolong the duration of the emotion.

Fear

Fear is a powerful emotion that can also play an important role in survival. When you face some sort of danger and experience fear, you go through what is known as the fight or flight response.

Your muscles become tense, your heart rate and respiration increase, and your mind becomes more alert, priming your body to either run from the danger or stand and fight.⁵

This response helps ensure that you are prepared to effectively deal with threats in your environment.

Expressions of this type of emotion can include:

- **Facial expressions:** such as widening the eyes and pulling back the chin
- **Body language:** attempts to hide or flee from the threat
- **Physiological reactions:** such as rapid breathing and heartbeat

Of course, not everyone experiences fear in the same way. Some people may be more sensitive to fear and certain situations, or objects may be more likely to trigger this emotion.

Fear is the emotional response to an immediate threat. We can also develop a similar reaction to anticipated threats or even our thoughts about potential dangers, and this is what we generally think of as anxiety.

Social anxiety, for example, involves an anticipated fear of social situations.

Some people, on the other hand, actually seek out fear-provoking situations. Extreme sports and other thrills can be fear-inducing, but some people seem to thrive and even enjoy such feelings.

Repeated exposure to a fear object or situation can lead to familiarity and acclimation, which can reduce feelings of fear and anxiety.⁶

This is the idea behind exposure therapy, in which people are gradually exposed to the things that frighten them in a controlled and safe manner. Eventually, feelings of fear begin to decrease.

Disgust

Disgust is another of the original six basic emotions described by Eckman.

Disgust can be displayed in a number of ways including:

- **Body language:** turning away from the object of disgust
- **Physical reactions:** such as vomiting or retching
- **Facial expressions:** such as wrinkling the nose and curling the upper lip

This sense of revulsion can originate from a number of things, including an unpleasant taste, sight, or smell. Researchers believe that this emotion evolved as a reaction to foods that might be harmful or fatal. When people smell or taste foods that have gone bad, for example, disgust is a typical reaction.

Poor hygiene, infection, blood, rot, and death can also trigger a disgust response. This may be the body's way of avoiding things that may carry transmittable diseases.⁷

People can also experience moral disgust when they observe others engaging in behaviors that they find distasteful, immoral, or evil.

Anger

Anger can be a particularly powerful emotion characterized by feelings of hostility, agitation, frustration, and antagonism towards others.

Like fear, anger can play a part in your body's fight or flight response.

When a threat generates feelings of anger, you may be inclined to fend off the danger and protect yourself. Anger is often displayed through:

- **Facial expressions:** such as frowning or glaring
- **Body language:** such as taking a strong stance or turning away
- **Tone of voice:** such as speaking gruffly or yelling
- **Physiological responses:** such as sweating or turning red
- **Aggressive behaviors:** such as hitting, kicking, or throwing objects

While anger is often thought of as a negative emotion, it can sometimes be a good thing. It can be constructive in helping clarify your needs in a relationship, and it can also motivate you to take action and find solutions to things that are bothering you.

Anger can become a problem, however, when it is excessive or expressed in ways that are unhealthy, dangerous, or harmful to others. Uncontrolled anger can quickly turn to aggression, abuse, or violence.

This type of emotion can have both mental and physical consequences. Unchecked anger can make it difficult to make rational decisions and can even have an impact on your physical health.⁸

Anger has been linked to coronary heart diseases and diabetes. It has also been linked to behaviors that pose health risks such as aggressive driving, alcohol consumption, and smoking.

Surprise

Surprise is another one of the six basic types of human emotions originally described by Eckman. Surprise is usually quite brief and is characterized by a physiological startle response following something unexpected.

This type of emotion can be positive, negative, or neutral. An unpleasant surprise, for example, might involve someone jumping out from behind a tree and scaring you as you walk to your car at night.

An example of a pleasant surprise would be arriving home to find that your closest friends have gathered to celebrate your birthday. Surprise is often characterized by:

- **Facial expressions:** such as raising the brows, widening the eyes, and opening the mouth
- **Physical responses:** such as jumping back
- **Verbal reactions:** such as yelling, screaming, or gasping

Surprise is another type of emotion that can trigger the fight or flight response. When startled, people may experience a burst of adrenaline that helps prepare the body to either fight or flee.⁹

Surprise can have important effects on human behavior. For example, research has shown that people tend to disproportionately notice surprising events.

This is why surprising and unusual events in the news tend to stand out in memory more than others. Research has also found that people tend to be more swayed by surprising arguments and learn more from surprising information.

Other Types of Emotions

The six basic emotions described by Eckman are just a portion of the many different types of emotions that people are capable of experiencing. Eckman's theory suggests that these core emotions are universal throughout cultures all over the world.

However, other theories and new research continue to explore the many different types of emotions and how they are classified. Eckman later added a number of other emotions to his list but suggested that unlike his original six emotions, not all of these could necessarily be encoded through facial expressions. Some of the emotions he later identified included:

- Amusement
- Contempt
- Contentment
- Embarrassment
- Excitement
- Guilt
- Pride in achievement
- Relief
- Satisfaction
- Shame

Other Theories of Emotion

As with many concepts in psychology, not all theorists agree on how to classify emotions or what the basic emotions actually are.

While Eckman's theory is one of the best known, other theorists have proposed their own ideas about what emotions make up the core of the human experience.¹⁰

For example, some researchers have suggested that there are only two or three basic emotions.

Others have suggested that emotions exist in something of a hierarchy.

Primary emotions such as love, joy, surprise, anger, and sadness can then be further broken down into secondary emotions. Love, for example, consists of secondary emotions, such as affection and longing.

These secondary emotions might then be broken down still further into what are known as tertiary emotions.

The secondary emotion of affection includes tertiary emotions, such as liking, caring, compassion, and tenderness.

A more recent study suggests that there are at least 27 distinct emotions, all of which are highly interconnected.¹¹

After analyzing the responses of more than 800 men to more than 2,000 video clips, researchers created an interactive map to demonstrate how these emotions are related to one another.

“We found that 27 distinct dimensions, not six, were necessary to account for the way hundreds of people reliably reported feeling in response to each video,” explained the senior researcher Dacher Keltner, faculty director of the Greater Good Science Center.

In other words, emotions are not states that occur in isolation. Instead, the study suggests that there are gradients of emotion and that these different feelings are deeply inter-related.

Alan Cowen, the study's lead author and doctoral student in neuroscience at UC Berkeley, suggests that better clarifying the nature of our emotions can play an important role in helping scientists, psychologists, and physicians learn more about how emotions underlie brain activity, behavior, and mood.

By building a better understanding of these states, he hopes that researchers can develop improved treatments for psychiatric conditions.

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