

Emotions

Recognizing the intensity with which we experience different emotions is a valuable skill. We experience different emotions in different situations, and depending on the situation, we may experience a different amount of emotional energy.

Emotional energy is the amount of power, or energy, with which we experience a certain emotion. For example, if you have ever had a strong emotional experience like being scared, it may leave you feeling tired after. That situation would have taken a lot of emotional energy to experience. Oftentimes when we have experiences that take different amounts of emotional energy, we may not be experiencing the same feeling. It can be very challenging to identify the feeling that describes the emotional state we just experienced.

Emotional literacy: the ability to identify, understand, and manage more complex emotional states (Rhoads, 2021).

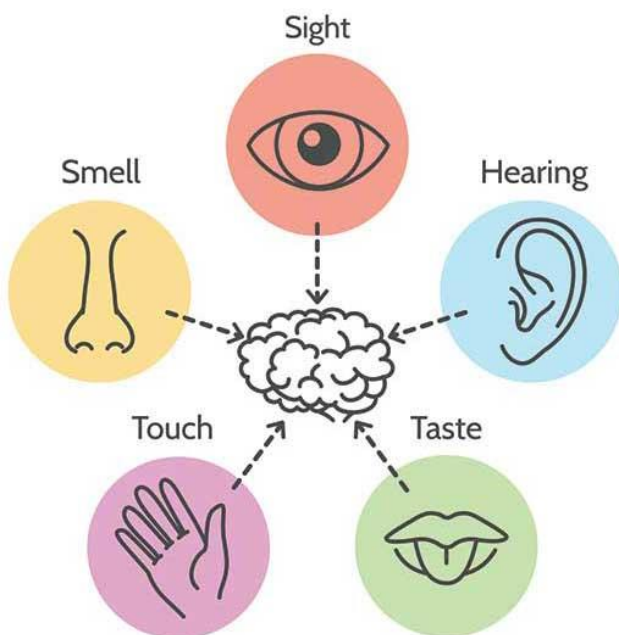
Emotional intelligence: a person's overall ability to deal with their emotions (Atkins, 2017).

The purpose of this poster is to help you identify different emotions based on the amount of emotional energy they take to experience. Learning how to identify these emotions, describe them, how they affect you, and describe them to other people will help you improve your emotional literacy and intelligence.

You may find it helpful to utilize tools related to your five senses - **touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound** - to return to a desired state of being



<https://ercare24.com/five-senses/>



Handout by Juliette Levchenko

How much power do the feelings have?

- **Low power** = least intense; the lowest amount of emotional energy spent
- **Moderate power** = a middle amount of emotional energy in this level
- **High power** = most intense; the highest amount of emotional energy spent

Happiness

- **Low power: sensory pleasure** 😊
 - On this level, you may experience good feelings derived from any of your five senses: touch, taste, smell, sound, sight.
 - Example: touching a very soft blanket may bring this low power level of pleasure.
 - As you experience this level of happiness that does not require much emotional energy, you may not need tools to handle the emotion.
 - But to build a better understanding of your emotions, ask yourself: How do you know you are experiencing pleasure? What is going on in your body?
- **Moderate power: contentment** 😊 😊
 - You may feel a sense of peace and satisfaction when you experience this level of happiness.
 - Ask yourself - what brings you contentment?
 - Tools: note when you experience this emotion, who you are with, what you are doing, and write it down. This can develop your emotional literacy.
- **High power: Ecstasy** 😊 😊 😊
 - This is the most intense state of pleasure and can be almost overwhelming.
 - Example: Maybe you have won a race you worked really hard for. You might feel ecstatic!
 - If you are feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of this feeling, even though it is a positive one, you may want to use some tools to recenter yourself.
 - Tools: deep breathing, hugging yourself, sharing the news with a friend,

Sadness

- **Low power: disappointment** 😞
 - Feeling disappointed often occurs if you feel your expectations are not being met.
 - Example: you have made plans but at the last minute, you are unable to go.
 - Tools: confide in a friend or loved one, journal, make a plan for next time,
- **Moderate power: hopelessness** 😞 😞
 - Feeling hopeless means you feel nothing will change or get better.
 - Example: you feel hopeless about making new friends.
 - Tools: make a list of things about the situation that you can control and things you cannot, talk with a loved one or your therapist,
- **High power: anguish** 😞 😞 😞
 - Feeling a sense of anguish includes deep and intense suffering.
 - Example: if you have suffered a loss, you may feel many ranges of sadness, including the high-power feeling of anguish.
 - Letting yourself feel your emotions, and not shutting them out, can be productive in developing your emotional literacy. But not getting stuck in that place of anguish is important. What tools can you use when you are feeling such intense sadness?
 - Tools: try putting a time limit on it - for example, after an hour of letting yourself feel this emotion, engage in an activity that is the opposite, such as listening to happy music, or watching your favorite movie.

Fear

- **Low power: trepidation** 😬
 - Feeling trepidation means having a slight anticipation of the possibility of danger
 - Example: feeling a little hesitant about being in a new environment, such as walking around a new or unfamiliar place
 - Knowing if there is a valid possibility of danger is important. If so, how do you keep yourself safe?
 - If there is not a valid possibility, but you feel afraid regardless, what can you do?
 - Tools: focus on the reasons you are safe, call or video chat a friend, prepare beforehand (review maps, bus routes, etc.)
- **Moderate power: anxiety** 😬 😬
 - A feeling that is more than slight worry about danger and less than sheer terror, is that of anxiety. When you are anxious, you may worry about what is going to happen and how you will be able to deal with it.
 - Note - what does anxiety feel like for you, in your body? How does your breathing or heart rate change? When do you experience anxiety?
 - Tools: journaling, writing down what you notice that makes your anxiety worse or better, preparing before the anxiety-inducing situation, plan for self-care after the situation such as taking a nap or hugging your pet,
- **High power: terror** 😬 😬 😬
 - Feeling terrified means feeling extreme fear.
 - Example: Maybe you are terrified of the dentist.
 - When terrified, you may respond in a few ways.
 - What do you feel terrified about? Do you know where this fear comes from? How do you keep yourself safe? Ask yourself, what is the reality of this situation?
 - Tools: gather as much information as you can to focus on the reality, distract yourself (listen to music you enjoy),

Disgust

- **Low power: dislike** 🤢
 - Dislike is when you have a preference against something.
 - Example: you might dislike several things in your life - think about how it feels for you. You might avoid interacting with things you dislike. If you dislike dogs, you might try to avoid places that have dogs.
 - If you encounter a situation in which you experience disliking something or someone, what can you do?
 - Tools: deep breathing, remove yourself from the situation if possible, engage in an activity you do like,
- **Moderate power: aversion** 🤢 🤢
 - This is a stronger feeling of dislike.
 - Ask yourself, on a typical day, are there things you have to do or people you have to see that you really dislike? How do you deal with it? What can you control, and what is out of your control?
 - Tools: write a letter to the person you dislike but do not send it; if you have to do something you don't like such as go to the doctor, plan an activity to do after that you do like!
- **High power: loathing** 🤢 🤢 🤢
 - Loathing is like hatred, and is the most intense level of disgust
 - Example: Maybe you absolutely loathe doing homework, or exercising,
 - What can you control? How can you improve the situation?
 - Tools: take breaks, debrief with a friend or your therapist afterwards,

Anger

- **Low power: Annoyance** 😞
 - Annoyance is when you feel slightly angry or irritated.
 - Example: you have your hand raised in class, but the teacher calls on someone else. You might feel annoyed that you are being skipped over.
 - In this example, you might decide that communicating your feelings with your teacher at a later point might be helpful for you.
 - Tools: check in with a friend, debrief by yourself, journal, engage in an activity that brings you joy,
- **Moderate power: Exasperation** 😡 😡
 - Feeling exasperated means feeling very frustrated and angry, but not to the point of rage or fury. A moderate amount of emotional energy is being spent.
 - Example: you may feel exasperated if you are talking with someone and they seem to continually misunderstand you.
 - How can you manage this feeling?
 - Tools: pause and breathe, write down what you are feeling before engaging in a response out loud or online,
- **High power: Fury** 😡 😡 😡
 - Fury is when you experience extreme anger.
 - This emotion can have a lot of power. The tools you can utilize for low-power experiences of anger, like annoyance, may not be easily accessed when we are feeling fury.
 - Example: You might feel fury if you feel disrespected or attacked.
 - Because feeling fury means expending an intense amount of emotional energy, you might feel exhaustion afterwards. How do you practice self-care after this?
 - Taking a bath, playing calming music, smelling your favorite scent, utilizing sensory pleasures like touching a soft blanket,

You might feel like causing harm when you are feeling furious. To learn more about destructive vs. pro-social tools, visit JMR Counseling's blog. <http://www.jmrlcswc.com/>

In summary...

The examples provided are just that-examples! Think about what may be true or not so true for you and for your own emotional experiences.

Happiness, disgust, fear, sadness, and anger exist on a wide spectrum. Each emotion can be experienced in several different ways. This resource explored the emotions that require the least, most, and the moderate amount of emotional energy. There are many other levels in between that you can experience as well.

Resources:

- Rhoads, J. (n.d.). JMR Counseling. Retrieved January 19, 2021, from <http://www.jmrlcswc.com/>
- The Ekman's Atlas of Emotion. (n.d.). Retrieved January 19, 2021, from <http://atlasofemotions.org/#continents/>
- Atkins, S. (2017, September 15). Helping children develop emotional literacy. Retrieved January 19, 2021, from <https://www.parentkind.org.uk/blog/8719/Helping-children-develop-emotional-literacy#:~:text='Emotional%20intelligence'%20is%20a%20person's,and%20read%20them%20in%20others.>