

# EMOTION CARDS INSTRUCTIONS



The emotions cards are a great tool to perceive and identify emotions as well as a valid technique for managing emotions.



Please note the cards are colour coded on the backs. They are coded according to where research suggests they fit - some of them may be debatable.

The orange ones are considered generally positive; the blue ones are generally considered negative; and the purple ones neutral (these often cause most debate and often they can go either way depending on the blend of emotion and situation).

Each exercise above can be done with just the positive emotions if you are running a positive psychology / strength based programme, or with negative if you choose.

## LEGEND

-  **Orange** = positive
-  **Purple** = neutral
-  **Blue** = negative

## AS AN EXERCISE:

The cards can be used in various exercises, depending on the topic of the training. This exercise will highlight emotional self-awareness.

Preparation prior to exercise: Lay out the emotions card on a table with enough space that people can get around the table and all cards are visible. Option to cover them so no one takes a sneaky peak if you lay them out early. Remember to uncover during the reflective time in step 1.

### STEP 1

Ask participants to grab a pen and paper and note down all the emotions they have felt over a 24-hour period (if you are working with our Leading with EI programme, there is a page in the workbook for this exercise). Remind them of the time in order to contain their focus. Give them a few minutes to write only calling time once participants pens have stopped moving. Debrief before moving to step 2.

#### Debrief:

Ask participants to total up the number of emotions they wrote down. Facilitate a short discussion to help individuals increase their self-awareness based on what they have written. Some ideas below:

- How many do you have? You may choose to start with a show of hands if you have a large group or a quiet group, ie. Who has 5 or less, who has 5 to 10, etc.
- What is the ratio of positive to negative? Or ratio of positive | neutral | negative?
- Ask them to think about - is this a normal day for you? If you spent a lot of time in the negative emotions is this normal? Or vice versa?
- What did you learn from writing these down?

This is just a short debrief. before step 2.

### STEP 2

Invite participants to take their pen and paper and go to the table of cards you have prepared and still thinking about the last 24 hours ask them to note any additional emotions they may not have already captured. Assure them there is no right or wrong - they may not add any, they may have lots to add. Encourage them to move around the table, just focusing on the last 24 hours. Again allow a few minutes to enable everyone to read all the words.

#### Debrief:

Once again ask participants to add up the number of emotions they have listed in the additional list, as well as noting any positive | negative bias. In the debrief you may choose to ask one or two participants directly, or keep it open, depending on the size of the group and their openness.

- How many words compared to the last list?
- Tell us what you noticed about the positive | negative bias? - Overall? And in the two lists separately?
- What do you notice about the words themselves?
- What have you learnt from your lists?
- Again - does this represent a normal day for you?
- How do these emotions show in our behaviour and how might that impact those around us?

The purpose of this exercise is to help people recognise their range of emotions and their ability to articulate them. It is common for people to double their list of words (or more) in step 2, simply because the words act as prompts to emotions that they have felt and forgotten about.

#### Possible responses:

The second list doubles. The bias changes - this could tell them something about their general bias and emotional state. Their vocabulary may be limited. We have an emotional rollercoaster even in a relatively short period. There are often too many emotions happening to notice them all.

The discussion may take you into territory around the intensity and duration of emotions. For instance, someone may indicate that one of the first words they wrote down was particularly strong and although it didn't last long it coloured their day (most common for negative emotions). Then when they did step 2 they realised there were lots of positive emotions that had been overshadowed by the negative - so it was a good reminder. Or you might have someone indicate that they allowed a negative emotion to continue a long time when really it didn't need to and there were lots of positives they could have drawn on. Please note in the back of your mind some of the things that come out of the debrief as it is a great tool to revisit when you start talking about managing emotions and | or emotional expression.

This is the starting point to recognising our emotions. There are various techniques for improvement, including the mood meter and physiology activities - for more information on these please contact us.

## Linking emotion to body and brain

This can help us notice how we display our emotions on the outside. We are assessed on our behaviour, how do we behave with certain emotions. This one is great to use with teams that know each other to give people an insight to their colleagues' behaviour. This helps establish a bond, highlights how we can improve our emotional awareness of others and helps us notice our emotional link to behaviour.

### Preparation prior to exercise:

Preparation may differ depending on the chosen option. If using Option 1, you may like to have all the emotions laid out as the previous exercise. With option 2 you may like to have the cards handy and 'deal' them out.

### OPTION 1

Ask participants to choose three emotions, with the intention of describing their behaviour when they are feeling the chosen emotion. Either explain to the group or turn to a partner and describe what how you behave when experiencing this emotion.

### OPTION 2

Give each person a card and ask him or her to think about how they behave when feeling this emotion. What do we see from the outside? What is going on inside? Turn to a partner or share with the group. As a facilitator you could use a mixture of both for those that are happy to share.

### Debrief:

- What do they notice?
- Is it easy for other to see?
- How is their body reacting? What happens to their mind?

### Possible responses:

They are not conscious of their behaviour. It is different with certain people. Why is that? Some words are harder to explain and feel and it may be something outside their usual vocabulary. Their behaviour can be so obvious even though they may not even realise they are doing it.

The purpose of this activity is to encourage participants to link their emotions to their behaviour and subsequently understand how their behaviour impacts those around this. This is a great activity to include on a leadership programme as a simple lead into to discussions around leading people.



# As a role-play - guess the emotion

The aim here is to show us how you behave - this can be linked with the previous exercise (Linking emotion to body and brain).

## Preparation prior to exercise:

Preparation may differ depending on the chosen option. If using Option 1, you may like to have all the emotions laid out as the previous exercise. With option 2 you may like to have the cards handy and 'deal' them out.

### OPTION 1

Ask participants to choose three emotion cards individually, with the intention of feeling the chosen emotion. Ask the group to pair up and Person A go first to really feel the emotion on the card (do not show the card to their partner). They feel the emotion and hold it (this is a silent exercise). Person B has to guess the emotion based purely on the physiological response of Person A.

### OPTION 2

This can be done in pairs, small groups or as one group. Give people a card and ask the participant to feel that particular emotion - ask them to really get into the emotion, again really feel it, focus on it and hold it. Ask the pair or the group to guess the emotion.

## Debrief:

- What did they learn from the activity?
- Is it easy for other to see? What did they notice?
- How is their body reacting? What happens to their mind?
- What do we see from the outside?
- What is going on inside?

## Possible responses:

Participants may indicate they have never thought consciously about how their emotions impact their behaviour and I or physiology. Some may find it difficult to feel an emotion on command (this will link to their ability to manage emotions too). Some people may find it easy to pick up the emotions in others, which may mean their awareness I perception of others is good. Other people may find it hard. This is not a pass I fail - ensure all participants that found it hard know this is something that can be learnt. Depending on the programme you are running (ie. Leadership, sales) you may choose to highlight I discuss the importance of being able to accurately perceive emotions in others, as well as how this exercise may link to their ability to manage emotions. The answer is that if I can feel an emotion on command I am more likely to be able to change an emotion on command. Very powerful. A limited vocabulary may reduce the chances of guessing the less expressed emotions.



## As an exercise around shifting emotions

The aim here is to recognise how quickly we can change or shift our emotions. How we use our emotions (MSCEIT) and how we manage them (Genos).

### THE EXERCISE:

Give each person three cards and allow them to consider their body and brain when they have experienced these emotions. Aim to give them a mix of positive and negative. Give them a few minutes to prepare, as they will be 'acting out' or 'doing' these emotions in a sequence they choose. Encourage them to do them in an order that challenges the positive | negative and the energy levels - ie, sadness, anger, excitement, etc.

This is purely a personal exercise and no one has to guess anything. The idea is to explore your ability to shift your emotions and notice the impact on physiology (body) and thoughts (brain).

### Debrief:

- What do they notice?
- What was their emotional journey?
- Were some easier to change into or from than others? Were some harder to sit with than others?
- How did they feel going back into these emotions?
- Were they comfortable 'doing' anger (for instance) as they find themselves angry often?
- What emotions could they not 'do'?
- What other emotions came up naturally due to possible discomfort? How does this relate to real life?

### Possible responses:

They may have an insight into which emotions are easier to deal with, which shift easily or feel more natural, which are in their comfort zone. It may give them some insight into what emotions they use regularly and how hard | easy it is to shift their emotions at will. Often people who can adapt their emotions at will have more capacity to shift them when they are 'in the moment' with the emotion in real life.

## As an exercise around emotional intensity

The aim is to help participants understand emotions better - their complexity and the energy behind emotions with the intensity levels.

### THE EXERCISE:

Divide the group into small groups and provide a selection of the cards to each group. This is where it can be useful to split the cards into positive | neutral | negative. Give two groups a selection of negative emotions and two groups a selection of positive emotions (the colour codes are explained at the end of these suggestions).

Ask the group to put the cards into a ladder of intensity from least intense to most intense. This can be fun and generate a lot of discussion. After each group has finished you can invite them to look at the ladders of other groups to see if they agree | disagree.

### Debrief:

- What did you notice as you did the exercise?
- Which emotions were more challenging?
- Which caused the most discussion? Why?
- What can you learn from this exercise?
- Think about the words you use regularly vs. the ones you don't personally.

### Possible responses:

There is often a great deal of discussion about this and part of the debrief will be acknowledging that semantics are a big part of it. Each person has words they use regularly and to each individual there may be slightly different meanings. Remind participants the purpose of the exercise is to increase their emotional vocabulary and get them to explore differences.

It is also great if you are doing work in your programme about perception and good to refer back to. If you want emotional intensity cards with 'correct' ladders please contact us or find our intensity cards on the product section of our website.

# As an exercise linking to the neuroscience of emotions

## Can be a great help for facilitators

The aim here is to use what we know about neuroscience to dispel any potentially negative emotions that your participants may be feeling as a result of being on the programme. As much as we don't like to admit it, sometimes participants are on our programmes because they have been told to be, rather than through choice and they come to the training with negative thoughts and emotions. This is a great exercise, backed up by research, which can remove some of those emotions, or at least reduce the intensity.

### THE EXERCISE:

As a first exercise when you are ready to start if you know there have been negative emotions about attending, lay out the cards on a table. Invite participants to move around the table and choose (they can pick them up) two or three cards that represent how they feel right now. Advise them there is no right or wrong, whatever they are feeling, just identify it and choose the cards accordingly. No more than three. Once everyone has chosen ask them to share their cards with the group. Go around with each person just sharing their cards, they don't need to justify (although some will), you are just asking them to acknowledge how they feel.

### Debrief:

If you are doing this to dispel negative emotions there is very little debrief here, you can just say thank you and invite them to sit down. If you are doing an EI programme, you may like to share with them why you did it - when you are discussing managing emotions.

A few questions you may choose to ask:

- What similarities did you notice?
- How have your emotions changed since you came in?

You can use this activity at any point during a programme to find out how your participants feel and it also helps expand their emotional vocabulary, which will help their ability to perceive, understand and express emotions. It is not only useful when trying to dispel negative emotions.

### Reasoning / neuroscience:

This is a wonderful exercise for reducing the negative emotions in the room with a group who don't really want to be there. The science behind it is that negative emotions often trigger the amygdala in the brain. Close to this area of the brain is the right ventro- lateral pre-frontal cortex (RVLPCF), which is responsible for articulating emotions, or 'labelling'.

What happens is the RVLPCF acts as a see-saw effect against the amygdala and by activating the RVLPCF it reduces the activity in the amygdala, hence reducing the intensity of the negative emotion (it does not have the same effect on positive emotions thankfully).

You will actually notice this in action as you watch your participants - you can often visibly see the negative emotions reducing in intensity as they peruse the emotion cards on the table and by the time they choose their cards and share them with the group the number of negative emotion words you here will be greatly diminished. A clever tool and invaluable as a facilitator.

If you want to know more about neuroscience and the energy behind emotions please contact us.



## As an exercise around expressing emotion:

### Good for coaches; this is a standard EIW coaching practice

Emotional expression will be hampered if individuals do not have the words to express how they feel. Increasing emotional vocabulary has also been shown to increase emotional perception ability and may help individuals understand emotional complexity better as rarely do we feel just one pure emotion, it is often a blend of emotions.

#### THE EXERCISE:

When you are coaching someone, ask them how they feel. If they are low on emotional perception, or emotional expression, this is a great exercise to do at the beginning and end of every coaching session.

If they struggle to articulate how they feel provide the pack of cards and ask them to flick through until they identify some words that express how they are feeling in that moment. Keep your pack of emotion cards with you at all times and whip them out whenever you have a client who needs assistance with labelling their emotions.

#### Debrief:

This is not strictly an exercise, more an ongoing tool you can use to assist people when coaching them around emotions. You can build on the task for a number of reasons:

- What behaviours would we see when you are feeling this emotions?
- How does your behaviour impact those around you when you are experiencing this emotion?
- What sensations do you feel in your body / physiology when you experience this emotion? (Either right now, or at other times)
- How often do you feel this way?
- If negative - would you like to change how often you feel this way? How can you do this?
- How is that emotion helping you right now?

#### Possible responses:

Many people struggle to articulate emotions; they may have one or two words they use regularly (like good, not bad, fine). They may struggle initially, which is why it is a great exercise to start each coaching session with, plus it helps you as the coach understand where they are. As they say with coaching, meet them where they are - this is a great tool to do that! Another possible response is they ask you if they can buy a pack of cards for themselves.

#### A FUN EXERCISE FOR FAMILIES:

##### See the previous exercise (Expressing emotion)

This is a great fun activity to do as a family before or after dinner. Spread out the cards on the table, or give everyone part of the pack, share all the cards around. Each person chooses a key emotion they have felt during the day. Go around the table with each person sharing the emotion they have chosen and the reason behind it. This is not the time to ruminate on any negative emotion, or a time for the family to try to fix any negative events that happened.

The purpose of the activity is to increase family time and sharing; to label any negative emotions that may have lingered around the person during their day, without judgement; and to revel in the positive emotions that may be shared, which may help those with negative emotions to feel uplifted.

Any opportunity to identify emotions can be useful and teaching children this at an early age - to identify without judgement - will help them perceive emotions, understand emotions and express emotions more effectively as they grow up. It will be more natural to them.

#### Possible responses:

Each family you meet may want to purchase a pack of cards. It is fun and brings a family together. Plus it is great as children get to those teenage years when they stop communicating with their parents!

