WORKSHEET 76 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

What are my emotions for?

Understanding the message of each emotion

AIM

Present the functions of emotions (communicating, preparing for action, giving information about oneself) to reduce judgement of them and encourage listening to them.

WHO IT IS FOR

People who judge or fear their emotions, or believe they are useless.

DURATION

15 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Introduce three functions: emotions communicate to others, prepare us to act and tell us what matters.
2. For a few emotions (fear, anger, sadness, shame, joy), look for their message together.
3. Apply it to a recent emotion of the person's.
4. Distinguish listening to the message from obeying the urge.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Listening to an emotion doesn't mean its message is always correct: worksheet 84 (checking the facts) complements this one.

REFERENCES

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT Skills Training Manual (2nd ed.). Guilford.

Barlow, D. H., Sauer-Zavala, S., Farchione, T. J. et al. (2018). Unified Protocol for Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders: Therapist Guide (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 76 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

What are my emotions for?

Emotions are not enemies. They have functions: alerting others, preparing us to act, telling us what matters. Understanding their message helps you fight them less.

1. Fear protects from a danger; anger defends a limit; sadness signals a loss; joy shows what does you good.
2. Choose a recent emotion.
3. What was its message?
4. Was that message correct? What do I want to do with it?

Emotion	Its message	Correct? (yes/no/partly)	What I do with it

Which emotion do I find hardest to accept, and what does it tell me?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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