

YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

While we experience life through a wide range of emotions, it tends to be the quality and quantity of these emotions that impact our day-to-day experience and stress-levels the most.

Here are some lists of emotions, categorised under six basic human needs. The first group of emotions could be described as painful, while the second group contains more pleasurable emotions. Regardless of their quality, it is more helpful to think of our emotions in a neutral way, as a guidance system - simply a call to action.

To create some awareness about **the present quality and quantity of your emotions**, circle from the lists, any emotions you feel on a regular basis.

PAINFUL EMOTIONS

SELF-WORTH & RESPECT	LOVE & CONNECTION	SAFETY & SECURITY
Angry	Abandoned	Abused
Criticized	Brushed off	Afraid
Disliked	Confused	Attacked
Embarrassed	Disappointed	Defensive
Humiliated	Ignored	Frightened
Inferior	Insignificant	Insecure
Insulted	Invisible	Intimidated
Lectured to	Lonely	Over-protected
Mocked	Misunderstood	Scared
Offended	Neglected	Terrified
Put down	Rejected	Threatened
Resentful	Unimportant	Under-protected
Stereotyped	Unhappy	Unsafe
Teased	Unloved	Violated
Worthless	Unsupported	
FREEDOM & CONTROL	JUSTICE & TRUTH	TRUST & OPENESS
Controlled	Accused	Cynical
Imposed upon	Blamed	Guarded
Inhibited	Cheated	Sceptical
Irritated	Disbelieved	Suspicious
Frustrated	Falsely accused	Untrusted
Manipulated	Guilty	Untrusting
Obligated	Interrogated	
Over-controlled	Judged	
Powerless	Lied about	
Pressured	Lied to	
Suffocated	Misled	
Trapped	Punished	

PLEASURABLE EMOTIONS

SELF-WORTH & RESPECT

Admired
Assured
Confident
Content
Dignified
Happy
Impressed
Non-judgmental
Respected
Self-assured
Superior
Valued
Worthy

LOVE & CONNECTION

Appreciated
Accepted
Affectionate
Cared about
Committed
Encouraged
Important
Loved
Passionate
Significant
Supported
Understood
Wanted
Wonderful

SAFETY & SECURITY

Cared for
Curious
Playful
Protected
Ready
Safe
Secure
Strong

FREEDOM & CONTROL

Capable
Carefree
Courageous
Determined
Efficacious
Expansive
Expressive
In control
Influential
Uninhibited
Powerful
Relaxed
Strong
Well-organised

JUSTICE & TRUTH

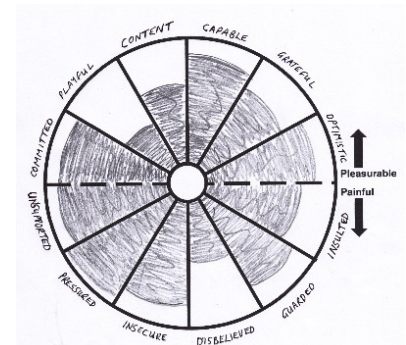
Believed
Certain
Faithful
Genuine
Grateful
Impartial
Informed
Loyal
Sincere
Thankful
Validated

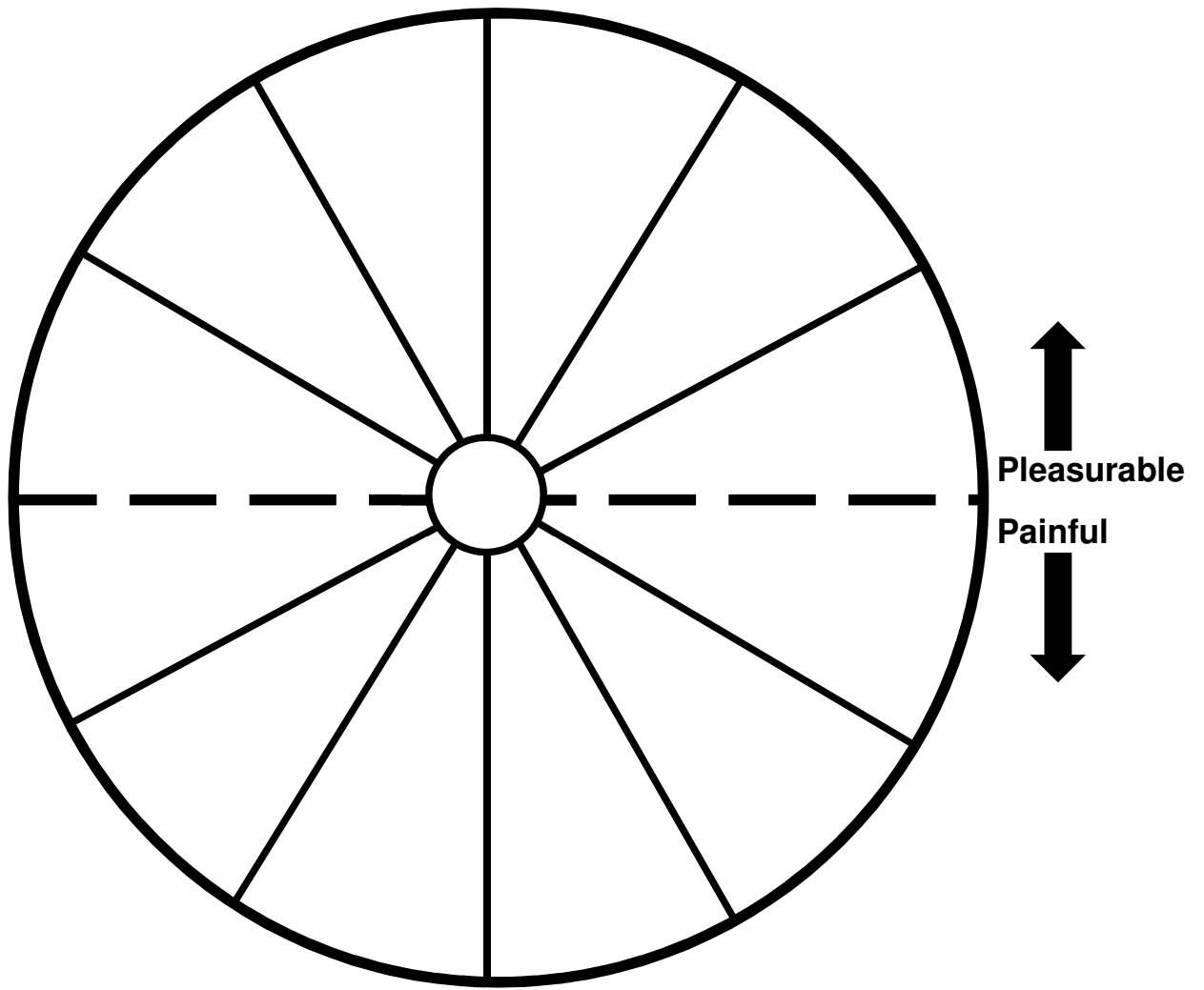
TRUST & OPENESS

Approving
Assured
Believing
Cheerful
Confident
Expecting
Faithful
Kind
Hopeful
Inspired
Moved
Optimistic
Open
Trusting

YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Choose the six strongest emotions that you feel on a regular basis from both the 'painful' and 'pleasurable' lists. Label the emotions on the balance wheel (next page), and shade out from the centre to illustrate **how often you feel them**. Put pleasurable emotions above the dash line and painful emotions below it. Here is an example.





List your **three most regular painful emotions** with the section heading they are found. Next, briefly describe the context(s) in your life where they occur.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

We will look at action steps to help reduce these emotions as we progress through this workshop.

MANAGING EMOTIONS

Strategies to Improve Your Experience of Life

There are at least three fundamental ideas that are useful to know about emotions and their effect on our stress and wellbeing in life.

1: It is the quality and quantity of your emotions that determines how we experience life. This means that the intensity of both painful and pleasurable emotions that you experience on a regular basis have a big impact on your general wellbeing and outlook on life.

2: Our thoughts, emotions and physiology all work together. If you are in an emotionally stressful situation (high resistance), for a long period of time, this will likely have an unhelpful effect on your thoughts and physiology as well. On the other-hand, you can improve your emotions by making positive interventions through your thoughts (e.g. reframing), and through your physical body (e.g. relaxation exercises).

3: Whatever emotions we resist, will persist. Emotions are a force that travels through your body in relation to what you are thinking. Resisting the expression of your emotions causes them to become stronger. The key to effectively managing highly emotional situations is to allow yourself the opportunity to express the emotions in appropriate ways at appropriate times.

With these three points in mind, here are a list of ways you can manage your emotions more effectively. Reflect and discuss with a partner, how you might try them out in real-life situations.

Become more aware of your dominant emotions and situational triggers. Greater awareness of your internal states: the nature and intensity of your thoughts, emotions, and physiology is an essential step to having the ability to make changes. Further, recognising the situations or triggers ahead of time will help you be more prepared for managing the emotions when they show up.

Reach for a better feeling thought. It is normally very difficult to go from one dominant emotion to its polar opposite immediately (unless you have a mental-health condition). Practise some cognitive tools that shift your focus, like thought-stoppers and reframing to reach for a better feeling thought that is helpful enough to give you that sense of relief. For example: acceptance.

Feeling Thought # 1: *I am so annoyed at Jenny right now!*

Feeling Thought # 2: *I'm annoyed, but really it's not entirely her fault!"*

Give yourself permission to feel the emotions. If you find yourself with high intensity emotions, create an appropriate private place and time to allow yourself the opportunity to surrender to them. For example, sit in the car and shout, scream, cry. Do whatever you need to release the emotional charge. Children are good examples for showing us how to *release the resistance and find relief*, even if their place and timing is not always the best!

Become the witness. In less intense emotional situations, it can be helpful to step back from identifying with the emotion as part of your experience in this moment, and just notice what you are experiencing from a third-person perspective. Make light of it, by having an internal conversation: "Oh [your name], you are feeling really annoyed at Jenny. That's ok."

Talk to supportive people. Counselling is fundamentally based on the idea that when people have an opportunity to voice their emotions, they feel better. You might not need to see a psychologist or counsellor – simply chatting to a supportive friend or colleague can make a big difference. It is important, however, that your friend does not join the conversation to fuel how difficult things are for you at the moment. The conversation is for you to release the resistant thoughts and emotions while your friend listens and supports you.

Get regular body/mind relaxation. Chronic mental and emotional stress is likely to create tension in the muscles and tendons of your body. Having a trained massage therapist, or similar professional, release the tension on a regular basis can help you maintain a relaxed body/mind. Try some yoga, like Trauma Yoga for example, Tai-chi or other therapy like the Emotional Freedom Technique.

Increase your level of exercise. There is a saying at the gym: *'break-ups build bodies.'* Emotional traumas, such as a broken relationship, can be released through vigorously working.

It doesn't have to be that extreme, however. The emotional charge from frustration, worry, anger, dislike and disappointment, commonly experienced at work, can be released by doing a little more exercise. Look for pockets of time during your day where you could release any emotional charge through exercise. Try taking the stairs, a quick walk down the corridor, a short jog outside at lunch.

Deliberately cultivate a positive mindset. A helpful way to counter-balance emotional stress is to deliberately look for opportunities in your experience to accentuate the pleasurable emotions in your life.

Some of the most helpful mindsets that allow the expression of positive emotions are forgiveness, kindness and gratitude.

- **Forgiveness:** One of the greatest exponents of forgiveness is the Dalai Lama. If you hold on to the pain from being wronged in the past, it will cause you more psychological and physiological pain (resistance), in the long-term. Forgiveness, is a mindset that helps release the hurt. Can you reframe the situation in a way that gives you a sense of *compassion* towards the person who has wronged you? Look at your power – control and value beliefs. If you value your own peace-of-mind, find a way to communicate forgiveness.
- **Kindness:** Being kind and concerned for the wellbeing of others, is discussed in many articles that are linked to human happiness. Kind behaviours can lead to a positive cascade of social consequences, improved emotions and brain chemistry. People perceive you as a likeable generous person – you in turn get to feel good about yourself and additionally, your brain releases endorphins and other pleasure-inducing chemicals. Look for ways to help those around you. Role-model your kind behaviours, not just with any people you help for your work, but in your daily interactions with your colleagues and the public. Find common-ground for connecting conversations. Make people laugh. Practice random acts of kindness. Be more generous with your time. Acknowledge others contributions.

Gratitude: The positive benefits of practicing a gratitude mindset are wide and varied. Many religions believe gratitude is the root cause of joy. Scientific studies have shown that practising gratitude for just five minutes a day will improve your personality, health, relationships, career *and* the quality of your emotions!

Regardless of how stressed you are, deliberately looking for and appreciating the best in a given situation is incredibly helpful for your psychological and physiological state.

You can also practice deliberately invoking feelings of gratitude in a wide variety of ways. For example:

- **Situational Gratitude:** Pause for a moment in any given situation. Notice your external environment and observe what is going on. What could you appreciate right now?
- **Nature Gratitude:** Practice feeling gratitude for living where you live. Do you ever pause to notice the seasons - the expanding and contracting cycles of nature? Do you ever take time to “smell the roses”? Do you stop to appreciate the abundance of wonderful foods that are available?
- **Self-Gratitude:** Practice feeling gratitude for yourself. How has the world caused you to become? Are you a ‘nice’ person or a grumpy old soul? Do you have gratitude for your appearance, or the state of your mind/body? Do you ever feel grateful for your ability to think without mental illness, or move your body without pain?
- **Social Gratitude:** Practice feeling gratitude for the important people in your life and the relationships that make your life meaningful. Think about your family members, friends, work colleagues, personal heroes and fill your mind/body with feelings of gratitude as you imagine how important they are to you.
- **Spiritual Gratitude:** Practice feeling gratitude for your faith (if you have one). Do you trust in your pathway to knowing God, a higher power or something greater than yourself?

Develop your power, control and value beliefs: When you modify your internal beliefs through deliberate positive self-talk, you also gain more control over your emotional reactions and behaviours. You may, or may not, have any influence to change the situation but you can change how you manage your emotions.

Focusing Question: What is the ONE THING you could commit to doing right now, to better manage your emotions, that would make the BIGGEST DIFFERENCE in your life? For example: practicing social gratitude for the smallest things that I notice in people at work.

(Note: You may see opportunities for doing more than one thing, but starting with one for now will strengthen your momentum for change when you experience how it can improve your wellbeing.)

My ONE THING to better manage my emotions and improve my life right now is:

Focusing Question: What inspires you to want to make this change? What is your big WHY?

Make a note in your action pages for ideas you want to use and share with others.