

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS

Hello everyone,

Thank you for joining me. My name is Sadaf and I'm a predoctoral intern at the UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services or otherwise known as CAPS. I know that these are really challenging times on so many different levels. I hope you know that you're not alone in this. We're putting these videos together as a brief introduction to hopefully longer conversations. In this first video, I hope to convey to you that our emotions are an important part of everyday living and so let's get to know them better to then see what can be helpful for us knowing that they are a real part of life.

So, even though we all have our unique emotional experiences and hardships, we also now know that there are 6 universal or basic emotions that in one way or another we all experience...no matter where in the world we are, what our culture is, and what our personal experiences have been like. And these include happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, and disgust.

It turns out that all of our emotions can give us important information about our environment ("how is my environment making me feel"?). If we are noticing that we are anxious, or sad, or angry, it might signal to us that there is something really stressful about our environment. Also, we use emotions to communicate with each other. In other words, they help us build and inform us about our relationships. And they are adaptive in that they can help us understand what we need. For example, if I'm feeling sad about my relationship with someone, I can use this as a flag that something needs attention.

Sometimes it can be hard to know how/what we're feeling. Maybe because we have so many thoughts or are distracted. To get to know our feelings better, it helps to really slow down our thoughts. Maybe by focusing on the present moment, taking breaths in between our thoughts, creating less distracting environments, and overall being more mindful of what's really going on for us inside. And then start trusting and naming or labeling what you're noticing, it likely has something important to tell you. If you still find it difficult to identify your emotions, it might be easier or more helpful to refer back to the 6 universal emotions to begin with.

Also, here is the Feelings Wheel which is a tool that can help you identify your emotions and also notice that emotions can be nuanced and ever-changing. You can Google Feelings Wheel and you'll find many examples of it.

I really want to emphasize the fact that it really is normal to feel a range of emotions and that it is normal to feel some of the more difficult emotions like sadness, fear, and anger especially during difficult times. We're not always encouraged to allow ourselves to feel some of the more difficult emotions, but as I briefly mentioned, they're actually universal, adaptive, and useful in helping us with our environment.

You can use these affirmations to help remind you that ...You are not alone in this! Your needs are valid! And you have tools to help you!

And here, I've listed some tools that can help you in the moment and of course know that you have campus resources available for more support. Some of these include CAPS, RISE, or CARE. You can use these websites to get in touch. Thanks so much for showing up for yourself and take good care!