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Dealing with Other People's Negative Emotions & Reactions

SUMMARY: The skills in this area are designed to help you to deal with other people's negative emotions and reactions.

These skills can help you strengthen the following abilities:

- 1. Understanding Other People's Emotions:** Recognizing and understanding the meaning, function and motivation behind other people's emotions and feelings. Engaging in non-judgmental, active and reflective listening to better understand what a worker is trying to communicate and why. Effectively expressing empathy, respect and appreciation, both verbally and non-verbally.
- 2. Managing Others Who are Distressed:** Responding effectively to workers who are distressed, or, at minimum, avoiding reactions that make a situation worse.
- 3. Being Flexible & Adaptable:** Using approaches that consider workers' age, sex, health (including mental health), and other differences. Being aware of individual differences when acknowledging and addressing workers' emotions and feelings.
- 4. Overcoming Barriers to Action:** Understanding common barriers to responding effectively to emotionally distressed workers (e.g., uncertainty about what to say or do, lack of clarity about appropriate role, lack of organizational support).

Individuals with strengths in this area are:

- Excellent listeners
- Understanding and empathetic
- Non-judgmental
- Respectful and appreciative
- Comfortable discussing workers' emotions
- Confident in knowing what to say and do when a worker is distressed
- Calm, even in challenging situations
- Someone workers seek out for support
- Understanding of individual workers' needs
- Effective communicators who can tailor their approach to meet the needs of individual workers
- Proactive in providing support to workers

See Also

[COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY](#)

The ability to engage effectively in verbal and non-verbal behaviours that demonstrate respectful, supportive and non-judgmental communication at both the individual and group levels.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR REACTIONS

The ability to recognize and understand factors that impact your reactions to negative emotions in the workplace.

MANAGING YOUR REACTIONS

The ability to effectively and appropriately manage your reactions, whether alone or with distressed workers.

[Download entire resource package in one PDF](#) [PDF]

EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

[Linking Emotions Thoughts and Behaviours](#) [PDF]

Understanding the link can be a useful tool for dealing with negative emotions in the workplace.

[Listening without Interrupting](#) [PDF]

Pausing and listening to others can be helpful for gathering information and building a connection with workers.

[Recognizing and Replicating Support](#) [PDF]

Replicating the most useful types of support when dealing with others.

[Acknowledging Differences](#) [PDF]

Understanding workers' individual characteristics related to emotions and emotional reactions.

[Asking Open-Ended Questions](#) [PDF]

Asking open-ended rather than closed questions may help to elicit useful information.

[Awareness of Other People's Emotions](#) [PDF]

Being attentive to the non-verbal emotional messages being communicated.

[Building Empathy through Mirroring](#) [PDF]

Becoming more empathetic by mirroring the body positions, posture, tone, and facial expressions of others.

[Distinguishing Acknowledgment from Agreement](#) [PDF]

Acknowledging that someone's feelings are valid, can allow them to feel heard and therefore better able to listen.

[Eliciting Feedback](#) [PDF]

Offering and accepting feedback can help create strong relationships in the workplace.

[Eliciting Opinions](#) [PDF]

Asking someone who is distressed, "What could I do that would be helpful to you?"

[Evaluating Judgments](#) [PDF]

Learning not to automatically assume the worst in other's behaviour.

[Listening to Understand](#) [PDF]

Trying to understand not just what people say, but also what they really mean.

[Matching Intent and Behaviour](#) [PDF]

Changing external behaviour to better reflect intention.

[Practicing Non-Judgmental Interpretations](#) [PDF]

Avoiding making simplistic and judgmental interpretations.

[Understanding Personal Barriers](#) [PDF]

Understanding barriers is a first step toward being comfortable and effective when dealing with negative emotions in the workplace.

[Using Different Means to the Same End](#) [PDF]

Approaching the same situation in multiple ways, all working toward the same desired end.

[Using Self-Talk to Overcome Barriers](#) [PDF]

Using positive self-talk to remember past successes in challenging situations.

ARTICLES

[Building Reflective Listening Skills](#) [PDF]

An effective communication method that involves listening to and understanding, and reflecting and paraphrasing.

[Addressing a Worker's Anger](#) [PDF]

Using tips to address workers who regularly or intensely express anger.

[Different Approaches for Different Emotions](#) [PDF]

Tailoring different approaches to individual workers and situations, based on their different emotion states.

[Emotions and their Functions](#) [PDF]

Examining exactly what an emotional response may be communicating.

[Responding to Emotionally Distressed Workers](#) [PDF]

Being "present" and calm when responding to a distressed worker.

[The Power of Empathic Questions](#) [PDF]

Asking respectful, open-ended questions can help obtain information about a worker's emotional reactions.

[Understanding Empathy and Sympathy](#) [PDF]

Knowing the differences of the terms and why empathy is important when dealing with distressed workers.

[Verbal vs. Non-Verbal Communication](#) [PDF]

Understanding that gestures, tone and eye contact are non-verbal ways of communicating that impact the messages our words are sending.

[Dealing with Unreasonable Requests](#) [PDF]

Finding ways to meet the fundamental need or needs upon which the request was based.

[Coaching Up: Help Your Supervisor Support You Though Your Mental Illness](#) [PDF]

[Empathy in the Workplace: A Tool for effective Leadership](#)  [PDF]



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