








Emotions and their Functions

	Objective: To match emotions with their basic/core function.
	Time Requirements: a. Preparation: 5 minutes b. Activity: 5-10 minutes
	Items: a. What Functions do Emotions Serve? Handout
	Learning Outcomes: a. Increased awareness, understanding and recognition of some emotions and their functions (EI Subskill 1: Understanding Own Emotions).
	Key Learning Point: Emotions help us adapt and respond to situations. They are functional.
Self-Disclosure: *	
Difficulty: Basic	

Instructions

- Prior to the start of the activity, ask participants why they think we experience emotions (i.e. “Why do you think we have emotions?”). You can present this simple question as an ice-breaker to get participants to warm up to you. You can also ask participants why they experience a certain emotion (i.e. “Why do we feel happiness? Why do we feel sadness?”). Before giving them the following handout, tell participants that often times, we know what an emotion may feel like, but may not necessary understand the function, or purpose of that particular emotion. This opening discussion should take about 5 minutes.
- Give the participants the ‘What Functions Do Emotions Serve?’ handout. Tell the participants that they are to match the emotions they see in Column A with their function in Column B. Participants can either work in pairs or individually for this exercise. Give the participants 10 minutes for this activity.
- After ten minutes, discuss the answers with the participants. Answers to this activity are provided in the ‘What Functions Do Emotions Serve?’ Answer Scheme. Get participants to reflect on the last time they felt each of these emotions, and explain that the emotions they’ve experienced served an important function during that incident or event. For instance, you can tell participants that they may have experienced sadness as a response to loss, and as a motivator to call for help. Likewise, you can also tell participants that pride is experienced when they accomplish something and feel recognized for their success.

	Reflection Questions: a. Do you think emotions are important to us? Why, or why not? b. Why do you think we feel (emotion x)?
	Further Reading and References: a. Ekman, P. (1992). An argument for basic emotions. <i>Cognition and Emotion</i> , 6(3-4), 169-200. doi: 10.1080/02699939208411068 b. Keltner, D., & Gross, J. J. (1999). Functional accounts of emotions. <i>Cognition and Emotion</i> , 13(5), 467-480. doi: 10.1080/026999399379140