

# UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS & EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

Emotions are a huge part of your life, and the ways in which they influence you can be both positive and negative to your well-being. You can learn to recognise your emotions and enhance your mental health. **By beginning to identify your feelings, then gain knowledge about those feelings and their triggers.**

First things first: before we figure out what causes your unpleasant feelings, let's define what emotions are and how they work.

**Emotions are feelings you experience toward certain situations, thoughts, and behavior.** They can be pleasant, such as love and happiness, or discomfort, such as sadness and anger. And these emotions are often accompanied by physiological changes, such as an increased heart rate or tense muscles.



**Emotional triggers are specific situations that can act as a catalyst, prompting the emergence of emotions.** To understand this better, imagine that you're playing football. Think of the ball as your emotion and your kick as the trigger that moves the ball. Without your kick, (the trigger), the ball (your emotions) won't move, right? And just like your kicks in a game of football, some triggers are loud while some are soft.

And while we talk about triggers, it's important to remember that emotions may even move when there is no trigger. It is the body's way to respond anything that is happening internally or externally.

## Let's dive a little deeper to understand what emotional triggers are:

**Emotional triggers can be anything that reminds you of a past or present experience or even about something that you are anticipating in the future.**

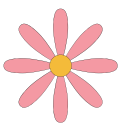
It may be a situation that evokes strong emotions in you. For example, let's say you had a bad experience with public speaking. So now, every time you're asked to speak in front of a group, you start feeling anxious and your heart starts racing. So, that makes your past experience with public speaking an emotional trigger that causes you to experience intense emotions.



Now, the question is, how can you recognise your feelings and the events that cause them?

Let us help you!

To better comprehend and name your feelings, it can be helpful to first break down your emotions into smaller pieces.

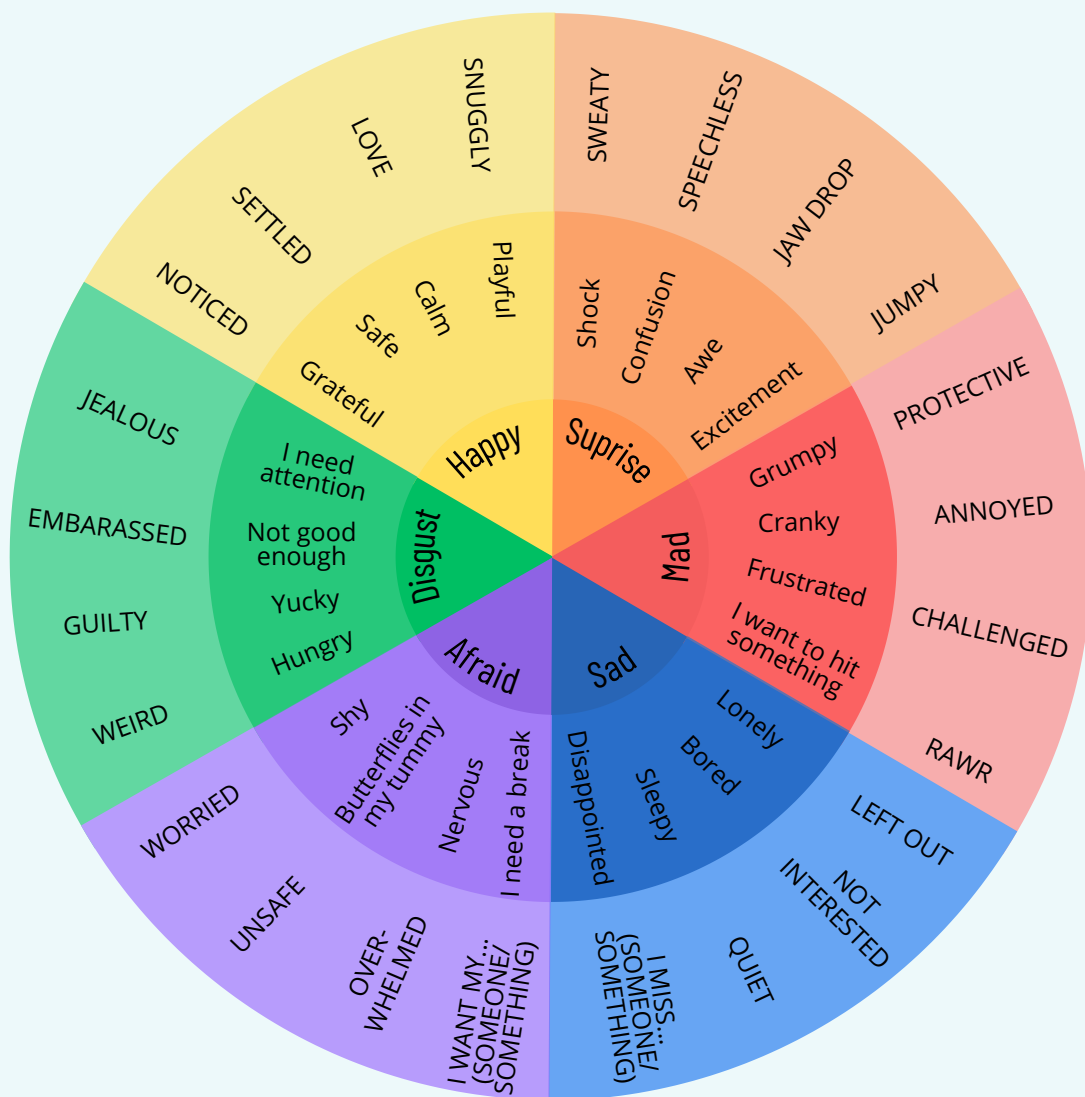


Here are some steps you can follow:

### Identify the emotions you're feeling

For example, if you're feeling anxious, acknowledge that feeling and write it below. This will help you become aware of your feelings and accept them. Feel free to refer to this emotions wheel that will help you identify your emotions, better.

PS: On days when you find it difficult to attach a word to how you are feeling, pick a shade that you feel most drawn toward.



### Take note of what you are thinking

Asking yourself "What am I thinking right now?" is a good place to start. Find any thoughts or beliefs that might be making you feel the way you do. For example, if you're worried about an upcoming test, you might be thinking, "What if I fail?" or "Will I be able to complete my portion?"

### What's on your mind? 📌

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Pay close attention to how you feel in your body

Write down any physical sensations you are having, such as tightness in your muscles or palpitations, and notice how you are reacting to them. These physical sensations can provide insight into how you're feeling emotionally.

### How are you feeling and where are you feeling it in your body? 📌

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Notice your behaviour

Identify any behaviours you engage in when you're feeling this emotion. For example, if you're feeling anxious, you might have a habit of talking less and avoiding certain situations or people.

**So, based on what you're feeling, what are some behaviours that you indulge in? 🙋**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Try to understand your emotional triggers

Think about situations or events that occurred and are triggering these emotions for you. Are there any patterns or themes? **Write down at least three emotional triggers.** Make an effort to get to the bottom of what sets off your emotions.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What kinds of coping mechanisms do you find helpful?

**Consider coping methods that you've used in the past that turned out to be effective for you.** For instance, do you find that exercising or practising mindfulness helps you better regulate your feelings? Or do you prefer ringing up a friend or a loved one when you feel overwhelmed? Write down at least three coping methods that have been effective for you in the past.

**If you've not actively used coping mechanisms in the past, feel free to look at this list below and choose any three mechanisms that you think, will work for you:**

 <p>Mindfulness meditation</p>	<p>Exercise and physical activity</p>	<p>Creative outlets like art, music, or writing</p> 
<p>Talking to friends or a therapist</p>	<p>Journaling</p>	<p>Deep breathing exercises</p>
 <p>Engaging in a hobby or activity you enjoy</p>	<p>Taking a break or time-out to recharge</p>	<p>Seeking support from a support group</p>
<p>Practicing self-care</p>	<p>Listening to music</p>	<p>Spending time alone</p> 

Remember, understanding your emotions and emotional triggers is an ongoing process. It takes practice and patience to develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

**By taking the time to reflect on your emotions and how you respond to them, you can learn to manage them better and improve your overall well-being.**



If you, or someone you know is looking to seek professional help, reach out to us at **The Mood Space** <https://www.themoodspace.com/getstarted> and our Care Team will get back to you within 24 hours.

Not looking for professional help just yet? We understand, keep browsing through our Care Space tools and explore our self-help handouts and worksheets to navigate mental health-related challenges in a better manner.

