

Emotional Intelligence Activities

These Emotional Intelligence Activities are designed to bring some excitement, movement, and practical understanding to your Emotional Intelligence Workshops.

Body Language

Purpose

This exercise helps us to identify body language and its impact on our understanding of emotions.

What You Need

A space in the room to allow presentation of Body Language
Body Language Prompts

Setup

Assign a Body Language Prompt to each person. They will demonstrate the Body Language in an appropriate manner, and the rest of the room will guess what is being demonstrated. This should be a mostly silent activity.

Then, the group will explore potential causes for the body language expression.

Body Language Prompts:

Happy	Exhausted	Relaxed	Startled	Miserable
Sad	Proud	Frustrated	Amazed	Excited
Angry	Determined	Overwhelmed	Joyful	Content
Scared	Ashamed	Hopeful	Annoyed	Disgusted
Confused	Thrilled	Shocked	Panicked	Loved

For example - Bored

Body Language: Sitting with arms crossed, neutral look on face, not engaged, looking around the room

Causes for boredom: disinterested, wishing to be somewhere else, tired, etc.

Timing

Explaining the Exercise: 2 minutes

Activity: 1 min per person

Group Discussion: 5-10 minutes

Discussion

What was easy about this process? What was difficult?

Which Body Language expressions were easy to identify?

Which Body Language expressions were more difficult to identify?

How many causes were there for different expressions?

What were some of the most common causes for these kinds of expressions?

What emotions were driving these body language expressions?

What does this have to do with Emotional Intelligence?

HINT- Often without saying a word, we communicate a great deal about our emotions and our responses to our environment, situation or relationships. How can we be intentional with our own body language, AND how can we be more aware of the body language of others to be sure we are responding and interacting appropriately?

It's Not What You Say, It's How You Say It

Purpose

This exercise helps us to identify emotional expression in our verbal/vocal expression.

What You Need

A space in the room to allow vocal presentation
Emotional Expression Prompts

Setup

Break room into 5 groups.

Assign an Emotional Expression Prompt to each group. Using the prompts, have the table think of as many ways as they can (at least 5) to say the same words with different meanings, including one completely neutral way to express it. Have each group present their prompt in all the ways they can, while the room identifies the emotion of what is being demonstrated and what an effective response to each emotional expression would be. Be sure to talk about why and what makes the response appropriate.

Emotional Expression Prompts:

- The file is in the blue cabinet.
- I don't know what to do.
- Why did you answer the question like that?
- How do you expect this to get done?
- What can I do for you?

Timing

Explaining the Exercise: 2 minutes

Activity: 5 min for table work, 20 minutes for presentation and conversation

Group Discussion: 5 minutes

Discussion

What was easy about this process? What was difficult?
Which Emotional Expressions were easy to identify?
Which Emotional expressions were more difficult to identify?
What is difficult when knowing how to respond effectively to some of these emotions?
What does this have to do with Emotional Intelligence?

HINT- It's not always what we say, but how we say it. Depending on how we say it, even simple statements can have significant impact. How can we be intentional with our own expression, AND how can we be more aware of the expression of others to be sure we are responding and interacting appropriately?

Making Eye Contact

Purpose

This exercise helps us to understand and appreciate the power of eye contact and how it can affect emotional connection and emotional states. It is ideal in teaching emotional intelligence, body language and communication skills.

You can get the most from this exercise with the follow up discussions so make sure you allocate enough time for this.

What You Need

A room where people can easily walk around.

Blank cards that are easy to write notes on while standing.

Setup

Distribute a blank card to each person and have them spread around the room. Explain that they need to stay as silent through this process as possible (and that will be tough!)

Stage 1:

Ask individuals to roam around the room as if they are in a public space while not making eye contact with anyone else. They should act as if they are in a museum or art gallery or other place where engagement is not always necessary.

Allow one minute for this part.

Stop everyone and ask them to make a note of their feelings AND experience on their cards.

Stage 2:

For this round, ask individuals to seek out eye contact as they go around the room. However, as soon as they have made eye contact, they should break it and look away. Repeat with other people until time runs out.

Allow one minute for this part.

Stop everyone and ask them to record their feelings AND experience on their cards.

Stage 3:

In this round, ask individuals to seek out eye contact and as soon as they have made eye contact with someone they should pair up with that person. They should stand face to face, focusing only on that person (maintaining eye contact as much as possible), and do not establish eye contact with anyone else. Allocate one minute for this part.

Stop everyone and ask them to record their feelings AND experience on their cards.

Bring everyone back together and follow with a discussion.

Timing

Explaining the Exercise: 2 minutes

Activity: 1 min Stage 1 + 1 min Stage 2 + 1 min Stage 3 = 3 minutes

Group Feedback: 10 minutes

Discussion

How did it feel wandering around without connecting at all?

How did it feel when you were making eye contact and you had to break it right away?

How did it feel when you made eye contact and approached the person to pair up?

If you were slow to pair up with someone, how did it feel to go about finding someone you could make eye contact with? How easy was it to make eye contact with someone?

When you began making eye contact, what happened? As time continued, what did you notice about your experience? When maintaining eye contact with just that person, how did it feel?

What is the difference in our ability to connect when we look into each other's eyes? What happens to our level of vulnerability and discomfort as we become more connected? What was difficult about this process? What was easy?

What does this have to do with Emotional Intelligence?

HINT - We are literally faced with our own emotions and the emotions of others, and this can be really difficult and uncomfortable, especially if we are not sure how to respond.

Shifting Emotions

Purpose

This exercise helps us to begin to identify and connect with emotions, and consider how to be intentional when our emotional response isn't effective or needs to be shifted.

What You Need

3x5 index cards or blank paper cut into approximately 3x5 rectangles

Setup

Break into small groups of 4-6 people.

- Instruct the group to think of as many emotions as they can and write one on each card (at least different 2 emotions for each person in the group is required). Spread the cards around on a table to help the group avoid creating duplicates.

Trainer collect all cards, mix them and put them upside on the table, again 2 cards per person at the table (6 people = 12 cards)

Ask each person to pick two cards at random, then take turns revealing their cards to the table to brainstorm what it would take to get from one emotion to the other until all emotional combinations have been shared.

Timing

Explaining the Exercise: 2 minutes

Activity: 15 minutes

Group Discussion: 5 minutes

Discussion

What was easy about this process? What was difficult?

What does it take to shift our emotions?

What emotions were the most difficult to determine a shift for? Why?

What does this have to do with Emotional Intelligence?

HINT- It's all about being intentional and mindful!