

Mixed Up Emotions

Developing self-awareness is an important aspect of personal growth, which can help you to rationalise your thoughts and maintain perspective in pressured leadership situations. This exercise will help you to reflect on a challenging situation you are currently facing. It is designed to help give you a clear sense of what you are feeling, why you might have such feelings and how you are coping. You can then take steps to manage your emotions and work towards a positive outcome.

This exercise will also help you with your responses to a range of different challenging situations in the future. A blank answer sheet has been provided for you in using the button at the top of this page.

It is recommended that you find a quiet time and place to do this exercise, preferably away from your desk. It is also important to remain as objective as possible when answering the questions.

Task

1. Think about a particularly challenging situation, event or change that is affecting you. For instance, it could be that:

- You are feeling under pressure as a result of new leadership responsibilities
- You are aware of large-scale changes on the horizon that will affect you and those you lead
- You find yourself in a conflict situation with a work colleague

Alternatively, you may also use this exercise to reflect on a change that is happening to you outside work. You may be moving house, or perhaps you feel you have reached a major crossroads in your life and need to take stock of your situation.

2. Use the questions and table provided to help you reflect on, and work through, your emotions and feelings about the situation. You will find a ready-to-use version using the button at the top of this page.

If you prefer, you may wish to express your responses to the questions visually, e.g. using pictures or a mind map.

3. Once you have completed the exercise, you may wish to keep a note of your answers in order to assess:

- How your self-awareness develops over time
- What works best for you in terms of managing your emotions in challenging situations

Questions

1. What emotions/feelings are you experiencing about the particular situation?

2. Which emotions are the strongest?

3. Which emotions recur/last longest?

4. Which emotions are fleeting?

5. What triggers can you identify for these different emotions? For example, do they occur when you are under pressure, feeling out of your depth, or where particular personalities are involved?

6. How do your emotions at home/work compare to those you are currently experiencing? For example, do you behave differently in a work setting? Is what is happening at work impacting on how you behave at home or vice versa?

7. Why do you think this is?

8. Which of your emotional responses do you feel are helping you to cope with/manage the situation successfully? For example, anticipating negative emotions and counteracting them – such as taking a deep breath before reacting.

9. Which of the emotions do you feel are preventing you from coping with/managing the situation successfully? Examples might be worry, anger, defeat.

10. What approaches/actions could you take to improve this situation? For example, you might think back to previous scenarios with positive outcomes and consider what positive actions you took.

11. Which of these approaches/actions could you apply to challenging situations in the future?