What Are Emotions?

People can experience and express a wide range of feelings. In fact, all of your life experiences go hand in hand with some kind of feeling, or emotion. Emotions are feelings such as love, joy, or fear. Your emotions affect all sides of your health triangle.

It's normal to experience many different emotions, sometimes in a short period of time. Mood swings, frequent changes in emotional state, are common in teens. These happen mainly because of physical changes in the body, such as changes in hormone levels, worries over the future, and concerns over relationships. Mood swings are a normal part of growing up.

Emotions are not always easy to recognize. You might not always know exactly what you’re feeling or why. If you can identify your emotions, however, you can think of healthy strategies for dealing with them. The way you manage your emotions affects your mental and emotional health. How you manage your emotions also can affect those around you. Remember, emotions themselves are not positive or negative. It's how you cope with them that matters.

Quick Write

Write a few sentences describing an emotion that you think teens might have difficulty dealing with.

Quick Check

Define What are mood swings?
Types of Emotions

Common emotions include happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and grief. Everyone experiences these emotions.

**Happiness** makes people feel good. People often feel happy when their needs are met. People who feel happy tend to smile more often. They want to share this emotion with others.

**Sadness** is another basic emotion. You might feel sad when you lose something you care about or when you don’t succeed at an activity you want to do. Sad feelings don’t usually last very long, however, in people who are mentally and emotionally healthy.

**Anger** is a natural reaction to feeling threatened. It can be a warning signal. Anger can also help release tension. Sometimes, anger can make people act impulsively. This means that they act without thinking, which can make things worse. The key is to let anger pass.

**Fear**, like anger, can serve to protect us. However, it can also be unhealthy. It can make it difficult for you to take an active part in life. It is important to deal with fear healthfully so that it does not last too long.

**Grief** is a normal, healthy reaction to a loss. You might think it applies only to death, but you can also feel grief over other losses, such as the loss of a relationship.

There are five common stages of grief: **denial, anger, bargaining, depression,** and **acceptance**. Suppose your grandparent dies. At first, you may feel shock. You may even deny that the loss is real. Then you might feel angry. It’s okay to be angry that the person you loved is no longer with you. You may try to make a “deal” to change things, saying, “I would give anything to have Grandma back.” This brings sadness. Finally, you understand and accept that nothing will bring your grandmother back. This process allows you to start recovering from the loss.

**Reading Check** Identify What emotions are healthy reactions to losing someone you care about?

Managing Your Emotions in Healthful Ways

Managing your emotions in healthful ways will help you avoid impulsive behavior. Suppose, for example, that you are angry with someone. Don’t act impulsively by yelling or fighting. To deal with your anger in a healthful way, take time to cool down and think about what you want to say. Discuss the situation with someone you trust who is not involved. Then, calmly tell the person how you feel without placing blame.
To cope with other strong feelings like sadness or fear, try writing in a journal, listening to music, or engaging in a hobby that you enjoy. Talk to a friend or trusted adult about how you feel.

Physical activity can also help you focus your energy so that you feel more capable of dealing with your feelings. Imagine a time and place when you felt safe and comfortable. Think about those positive feelings while you close your eyes and breathe deeply. Take time out to return to that safe and comfortable place whenever you need to cope with strong feelings.

**Reading Check**

Identify What are some healthful ways to avoid impulsive behavior?

▲ There are many healthful ways to cope with strong feelings. How is this teen dealing with her feelings?

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**Lesson 3 Review**

**After You Read**

Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

**What I Learned**

1. **Vocabulary** What are emotions?

2. **List** Which two emotions can serve to protect us?

3. **Explain** What are the stages of grief that most people experience?

4. **Analyze** How can physical activity help you deal with strong emotions?

**Thinking Critically**

5. **Apply** What strategies for dealing with anger do you think would work best for you? Why?

6. **Infer** How might expressing your feelings affect your social health?

**Applying Health Skills**

7. **Analyzing Influences** How do you think advertisements use people's emotions to sell products?

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For more Lesson Review Activities, go to glencoe.com.