

Notable learnings from the Yale University course

‘Managing Stress and Anxiety in Times of Uncertainties’

Engaging in this learning process will assist you in constructing a nuanced emotional vocabulary, contributing to your overall health and wellness through evidence-based strategies. The endeavor aims to empower individuals to accurately identify and effectively manage their emotions. Upon completion, you'll not only gain valuable insights but also cultivate a personalized toolkit comprising tailored strategies and plans. This holistic approach fosters emotional intelligence, enhancing your ability to navigate various aspects of life with resilience and a heightened understanding of your emotional landscape. Ultimately, the acquired skills enable a more profound connection with oneself and others, fostering personal growth and well-being.

✚ What important elements of life do Emotions affect?

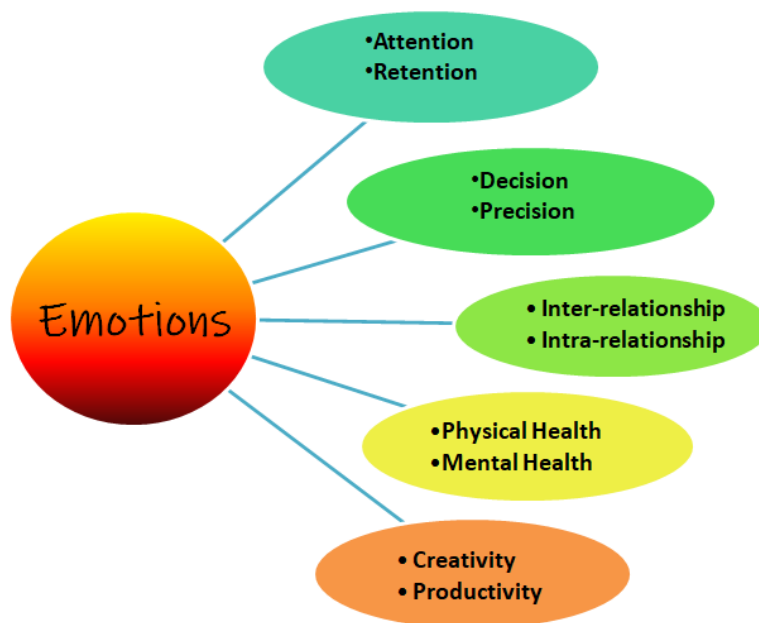


Fig 1. The Elements of Life Affected by Emotions

- ✚ Strong Emotions come from the events happening around us. They can make us feel:



Fig 2. Naming of the feelings

- ✚ Stress and Anxiety for long periods can harm two primary things :

- **Health**
- **Relationships (Personal and Professional)**

- ✚ **Why are Emotions important?**

Emotions are the strong feelings that arise due to the situations that we face in day-to-day life. Situations may or may not be under our control, but with this SEL (Social Emotional Intelligence) we can constructively leverage any strong emotion. When our body feels some strong unpleasant emotion, our brain goes into flight, fright, or freeze response and disconnects it from the ‘learning mode’.

“Emotions like inspiration and curiosity help us to thrive and survive”

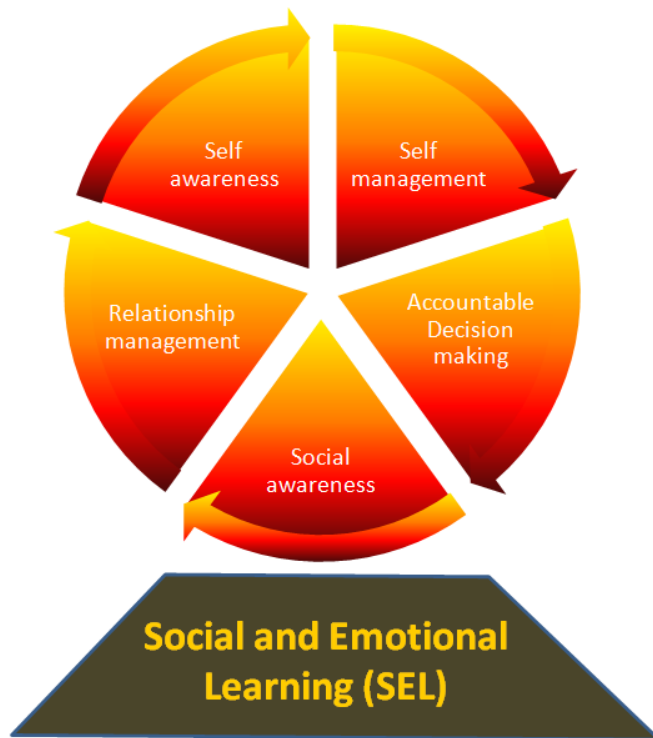
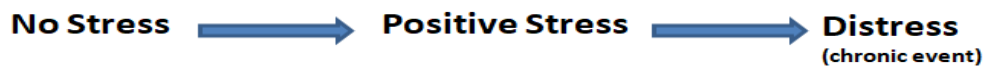


Fig 3. Components of SEL

Key Points of SEL:

1. Developing skill: create opportunities to experience inspiration and curiosity.
2. Our choices and judgments are influenced by what we feel.
3. Find the actual cause of feeling to have the least impact on the decision.
4. Observe people through their facial expressions, body language, and vocal tone.
5. When we observe someone, the first feeling that comes to our mind influences the way we interact with that person.
6. Find a way to have a greater balance of pleasant and unpleasant emotions.
7. When we manage our feelings, we are more likely to achieve our dreams and goals.
8. Just by controlling our response to the happenings around us, we can control what happens to us.
9. Positive stress is good for progress in life.



Q1. How do we want to feel?

Q2. What do we need to do to make everybody around to feel the same way?

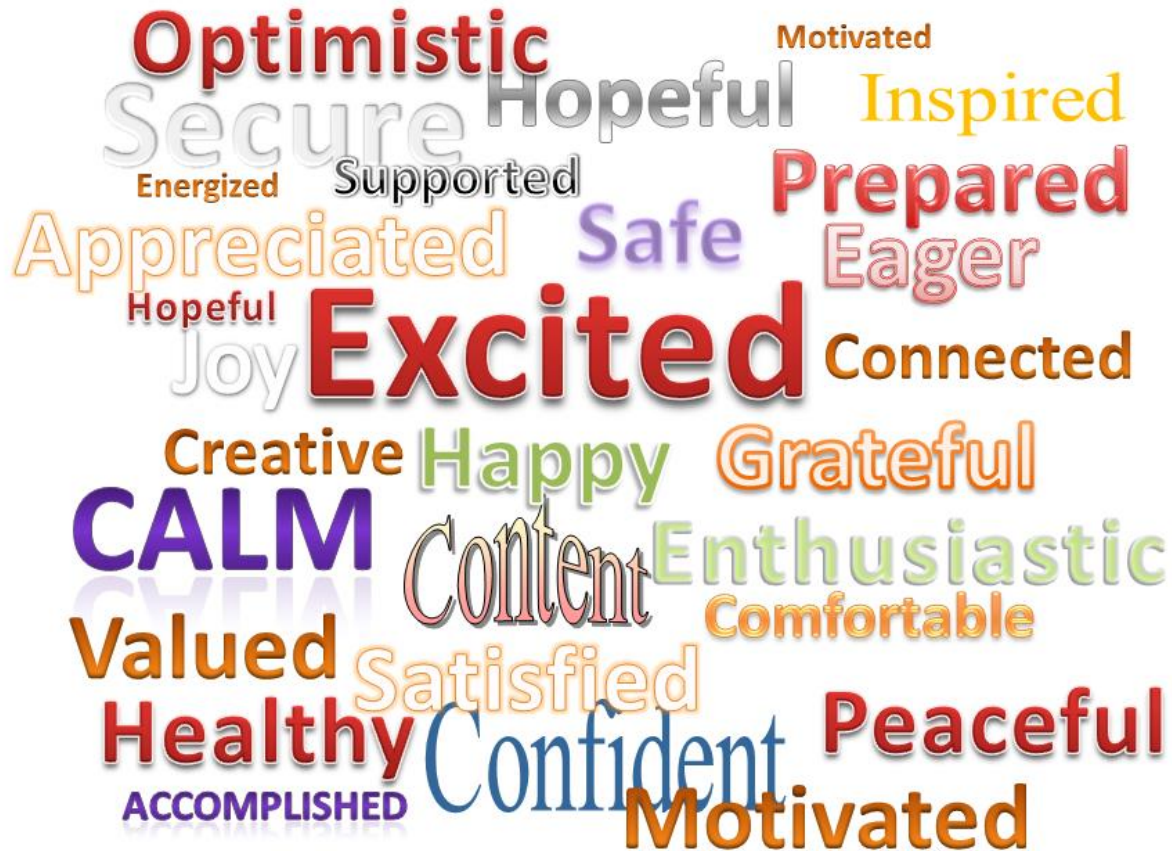


Fig 4. All We Want to Feel

- ✚ People today are more distracted, under a lot of pressure, and suffering from mental health issues more than ever before.

Fill in the blank:

How are you feeling right now? _____

(fill in the exact feeling learned from Fig 2 and Fig 4)

Preesha returned from the office but she feels irritated about her child's scattered toys all over the floor. She yelled at her child, and her child started crying all at once. But then she sat quietly, held the baby in her arms, and realized that the meeting didn't go well in the office and she wasn't praised for her hard work, and this feeling of dissatisfaction caused her to get

irritated. She immediately calmed down to forget about the office and forced her mind to be present at home with mindfulness techniques. She was better now!

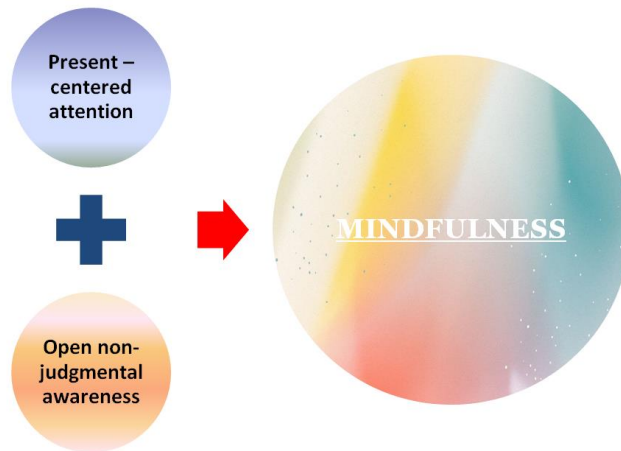


Fig 6. How to achieve Mindfulness

✚ The Mood Meter

It is the tool to help you build better self-awareness and language for your emotions. Which quadrant are you in right now, and what and how much effort do you need to make to be in the yellow quadrant? First, try to find the best possible word for your feelings. Naming the feelings precisely is the way to manage them effectively.

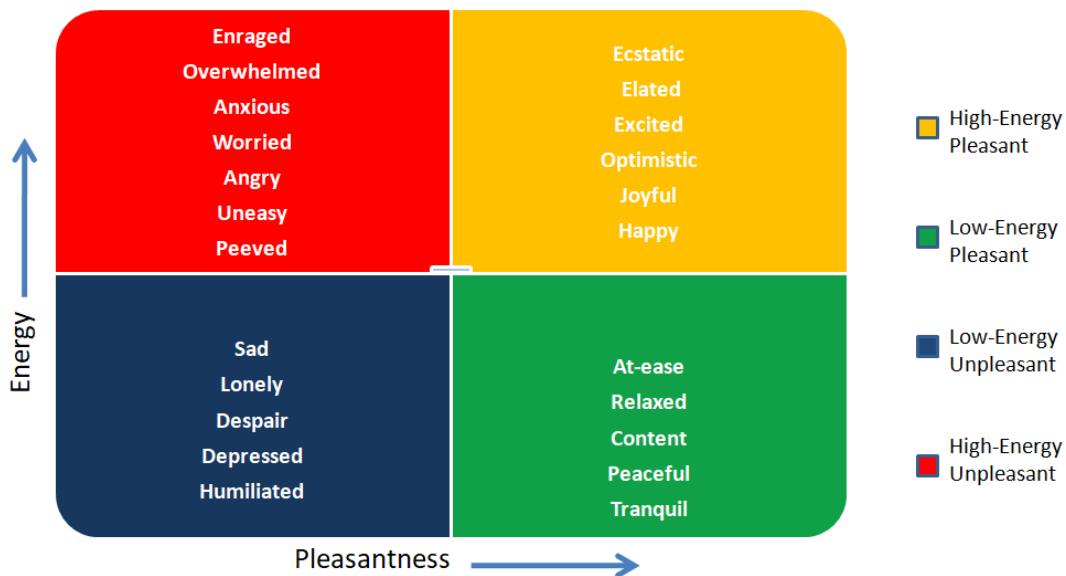


Fig 5. The Mood Meter

Just like science and mathematics have their terminologies, emotions also have their language. Like, you feel stressed, but is it due to someone's behavior or due to the overburden of work? Both types of stress need different treatments. The former type of stress can be treated with meditation, but the latter type needs delegation of work to get rid of it. So we need to know the root cause first. The goal is to spend 70 % of the time in the yellow and green quadrants and only 30 % in the red and blue ones. Because the fact is, this percentage is just the opposite.

✚ **Answer the following questions:**

Q1 What makes you angry?_____

(For me it is injustice, for some it can be disappointment)

Q2 What makes you feel anxiety?_____

(For me, anxiety is about some interview, it may be some uncertainty or a feeling of danger for someone)

Q3 What makes you satisfied?_____

(For me it is the completion of some important task, it can be going away from unpleasant feelings or feeling pleased with something or someone for other people)

The same is true for stress, pressure etc.

Our emotions are rooted in our life experiences. For example, one person may be happy when it rains, another person may feel fear about rain causing havoc through floods. Cultural norms, beliefs, and values also shape our emotions. But we assume that a feeling of sadness has the same cause across continents.

Think about an important person in your life, and think about what five things you like the most about this person. Now think, what are those five things that make you feel frustrated about that same person?

Now find the specific word and root cause of each emotion and also the energy level attached to that emotion from the mood meter. Try to plot the emotion on the meter for better self-awareness.

✚ Emotions affect our **Judgments, Perceptions, and interactions.**

Emotions are contagious, they can infect the person whom we deal with and we get infected by other person. Race, religion, culture, gender identity, and socio-economic status influence how people experience, feel, and express themselves in various situations.

When we feel stressed, the sensory system goes on full alert, that is eyes and ears are all focused on the threat. The limbic region sends messages to the adrenal glands to release adrenalin, activating the heart and lungs, and preparing for fight or flight response. The stress hormone cortisol is released, which breaks fats and proteins for energy. Immune response and digestion slow down as they aren't essential for responding to danger.

Repeated or prolonged stress eventually causes wear and tear of these functions causing immune disorders, high blood pressure, heart problems, and metabolic problems. So, too many unpleasant emotions have a negative effect on physical and mental health, relationships, and performance.

Why people usually feel stressed: because they are-

#Tired #Rushed #Overwhelmed #Exhausted #Challenged #Anxious #Demotivated #Underconfident #Over-busy #Annoyed #Unappreciated #Worried #Pressured #Fatigued #Unfulfilled #Nervous #Frustrated #Unhappy #Cheated #Unjustified #Unsupported #Dissatisfied #Concerned #Disappointed #Failed..., so, its important to find the root cause to get rid of stress.

Neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity is the brain's remarkable ability to reorganize and adapt, which underscores its constant potential for growth and change. This phenomenon emphasizes that through experiences and learning, neural connections can be reshaped, offering opportunities for cognitive development and recovery.

The Neural connections between the Limbic region and the Prefrontal cortex take 25 years to establish fully. This connection breaks during stress and we are unable to think clearly, pay attention, or learn since the prefrontal cortex (responsible for learning, attention, and making decisions) is slowed down.

Don'ts while being stressed:

Negative self-talk, complaining, procrastination, blaming self or others, suppression, denial, physical aggression, yelling, Psychological manipulation, substance abuse, ignoring the problem and emotion, worry, poor habits(sleeping, eating, exercise).

Do's while being stressed:

Mindful breathing, physical activity, doing what you like, having a plan, Positive self-talk, humor, positive reappraisal, social support, acceptance, modifying situation, professional help, constructive activity, healthy habits, problem-solving, short-term distraction, and visualization

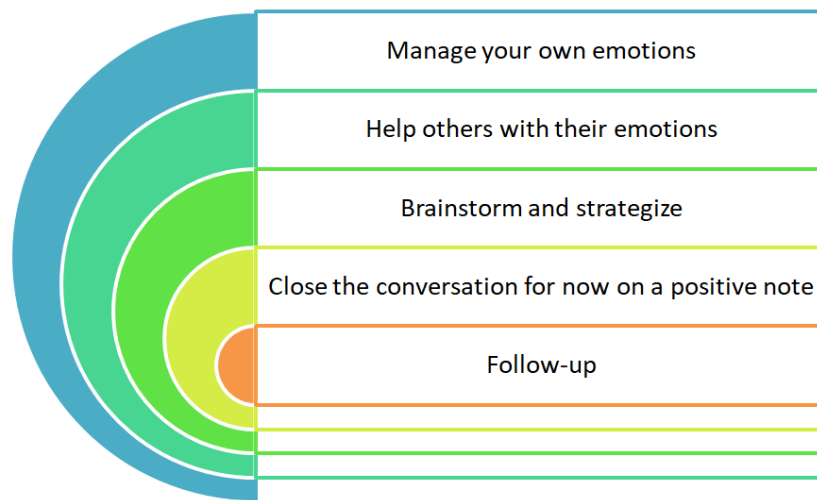
Q: Find out what you do and don't do while being stressed.

Self-care and shifting your thoughts can change your outlook.

Different ways of addressing a challenge: I am overwhelmed and can't give enough to my job and family. Rather say... 'I can do this, one task at a time. Do your best and forget the rest, prioritize and accomplish.' Have empathy for self. Find your purpose and passion! Recall the good times, events, and experiences.

✚ **Become an Emotion Scientist: Treat your own and other's emotions scientifically**

1. Non-judgmental
2. Keen listener
3. Be the bridge and not the barrier
4. Consider the difference between the intention of your words and their impact (using words wisely)
5. Acknowledge biases
6. Perspective is more important than empathy
7. Considering Diversity and Inclusion
8. Honor all Feelings



A Five-Step Guide to Managing Stressful Moments

Fig.7 Manage Stress

✚ **Behavior may not equal Emotion**

1. Yelling doesn't mean someone is angry
2. Laughter doesn't mean someone is happy
3. Crying doesn't mean someone is sad

Also, we are less accurate in reading the emotions of the people who are culturally or racially different from us. So there can be Ethnocentrism and Biases. Like, it's difficult to judge if someone is jealous or envious.

For example, Envy: Wanting what someone else has

Jealous: Feeling threatened about a possible loss because of someone else's achievement

+ Emotional Co-Regulation

An ongoing process between two people, where one person's emotions are influenced by the actions and emotional reactions of the other person. Even the color themes you apply daily to your clothes can change the way you think. So you can and should always focus on what you can change.

+ Barriers to accurately perceiving the emotions of others

1. The present moment can trigger a past memory
2. Sympathetic distress (when someone else's feeling becomes our own feeling)
3. New people, more mental effort to read them
4. Highly self-oriented or engrossed
5. Age factor
6. Temperament
7. Gender, culture, and power differences

+ Positive phrases lead to healthy conversation and trust-building with others

For example:

This must be difficult for you

I know this is hard

I am sorry this happened

I am here for you

You are safe here

We can figure this out together

Instead of 'What is wrong with you' say, 'What has happened to you, you weren't like this before.'

+ RULER

Ruler is the name of the systematic approach to SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) which is the acronym for the five skills of emotional intelligence. This RULER approach stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions. It provides a structured framework to enhance emotional intelligence and foster a supportive, emotionally literate environment for personal and social growth.

THE

R

Recognizing emotions in oneself and others

U

Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions

L

Labeling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary

E

Expressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context

R

Regulating emotions with helpful strategies

APPROACH

Fig 8. The Ruler

The RULER approach holds significance by equipping individuals with skills to foster a more emotionally intelligent and empathetic community. It cultivates a positive, inclusive environment where emotional well-being is prioritized, enhancing overall personal and social interactions.

Hope you got profound insights on how to manage uncertainties. Here I wish more power to you and your endeavours.

Love and Power,

Khushboo Sharma!