

CLIENT HANDOUT:

EMOTION RECOGNITION: ANGER

Ekman's research demonstrates that producing the emotions' corresponding facial movements triggers changes in physiology in the body and brain. The idea is to become familiar with emotions and their external environmental signals. People differ in how they experience anger, knowing your own process and how it may differ from those you care about may help you better understand some of the miscommunications and misinterpretations that may occur or may have occurred in your life.

Angry sensations include feelings of strain, pressure, and heat. You may feel your heart and respiratory rate increase. As your blood pressure rises, you may feel and see your face redden. Notice your inclination to bite down hard, upper against lower teeth, and to push your chin forward. You may also notice an impulse to move forward. These are the sensations that most people feel.

Caution: Experiencing the facial muscle movement exercises, most people will experience anger. Know how much anger is manageable for you and stop if you become overwhelmed at any time.

Instructions: You will be watching your reflection in a mirror, as you replicate the facial movements that accompany the primary emotion of anger. Once you begin to "feel" the emotion, if bearable, let it expand. After thirty seconds or so have passed, relax and consider what you felt.

Replicating the facial movements of anger:

1. Pull your eyebrows down and together: make certain that the inner corners go down toward your nose.
2. While holding your eyebrows down, attempt to open your eyes real wide (your upper eyelids are pushing against your lowered eyebrows.)
3. Stare intensely.
4. Once you are certain that you are making the correct eyebrow and eyelid movements, relax the upper part of your face.
5. Concentrating on the lower part of your face, begin to press your lips together tightly and tense up both your lips; don't pucker, just press the lips together.
6. Once you are certain that you are making the correct lower-face movements, add in the upper face, lowering your eyebrows, pulling them together, and raising your upper eyelids to stare intensely.

EMOTION RECOGNITION: ANGER, CONT.

If you were able to safely experience anger, try repeating it before answering the following questions. Concentrate on what those facial movements feel like, paying particular attention to your own process as you first begin to experience the feelings:

1. How does the feeling register?
2. How does it change your awareness and perception of your internal environment?
3. How does it change your awareness and perception of your external environment?
4. What changes do you notice in your body?

Head: _____

Neck: _____

Face: _____

Throat: _____

Area in your chest surrounding your heart: _____

Shoulders: _____

Upper back: _____

Lower back: _____

Arms: _____

Stomach: _____

Legs: _____

5. As you let the feeling expand, what sensations or changes in sensations do notice in your:

Head: _____

Neck: _____

Face: _____

Throat: _____

Area in your chest surrounding your heart: _____

Shoulders: _____

Upper back: _____

Lower back: _____

Arms: _____

Stomach: _____

Legs: _____