How to:
Identify and express feelings

- An emotion represents how a person is feeling. For example: anger, fear, joy, disgust, surprise, and sadness. Emotions are neither negative nor positive. They are necessary and useful in identifying our needs.

- Identification and management of emotions comes from a small part of our brain's prefrontal cortex, located just above our eyes and called the Orbito-Frontal Cortex (OFC). The OFC being part of the limbic system, plays an essential role in our ability to be affectionate, empathic, and to develop our moral sense, but also to regulate our emotions. *The amygdala which is part of the limbic system, is involved in the recognition and evaluation of emotional valence.*

- The notion of ***Emotional Intelligence (EI)*** was developed by Daniel Goleman and refers to the ability to control one's emotional impulses, to perceive the innermost feelings of others and to maintain harmonious relationship. It has two dimensions:
  Personal competence: how to take charge of yourself, know your feelings and understand your abilities.
  Social competence: how you deal with your relationships with others, especially how you control your negative reactions, it is the ability to understand how others are feeling, and the ability to be flexible in delicate situations.

- EI is not fixed, you can improve it

- Having emotional competence allows you to be more empathic, that is, to understand how others are feeling. You are also more likely to help others and find ways to deal with difficult situations.

- Having emotional competence is likely to lead to academic success and to build positive relationships with others.

- Fear, anger, and joy, are some of the first emotions babies express.

- Around the age of 30 months, children begin to express emotions related to how they see themselves. They may feel embarrassed, guilty, or proud.

- Difficulty in dealing with emotions can lead to depression, irritability and/or anxiety.

- Recognizing our emotions builds self-esteem and self-confidence.

- Emotions are ephemeral but the feelings they provoke may last

What happens on the brain?

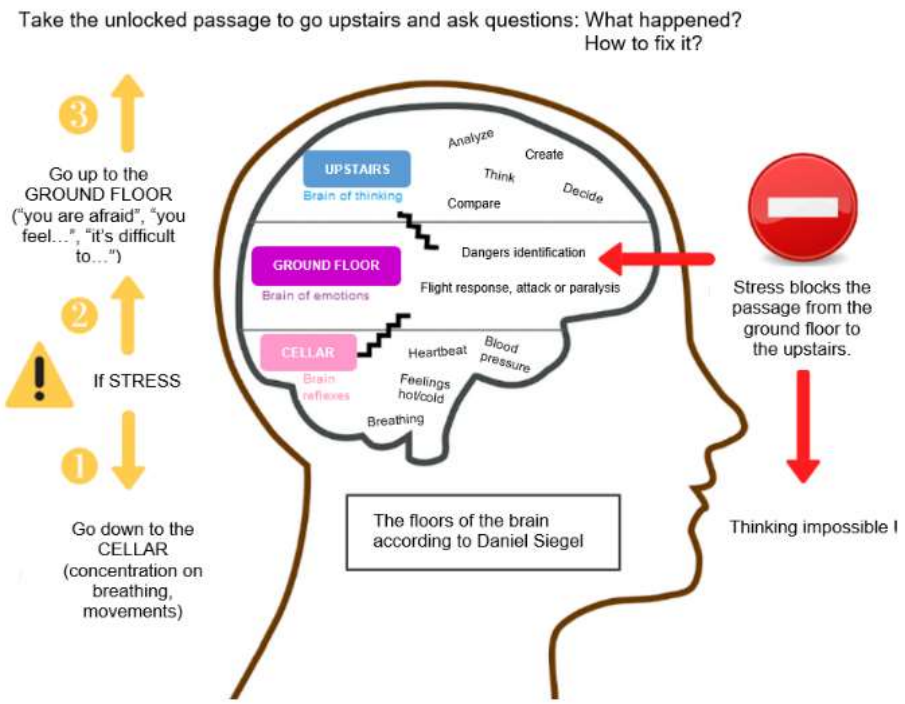
Our brain is constantly active, thanks to our senses it transforms external information into a nervous messages and sends back an emotional and/or physical response in order to generate behavior.

Eg. Situation > brain message > emotional + bodily reaction + behavior
ie. “I see a lion in front of me” = “I’m afraid”, “I’m running away”.

The brain can be broken down into 3 floors: the cellar = brain of reflexes, the ground floor = brain of emotions, and the top floor (upstairs) = brain of reflection.

When we experience an emotion (ground floor) in a situation, our body first reacts with a reaction from the cerebellum (seat of the body’s automatic functions: breathing blood pressure, blood sugar, etc.).

Thinking (moving from the ground floor to the first floor) is then interrupted and it becomes difficult to think, reason, and make decisions when the emotion is too strong. In order to facilitate the processing of information, it is important to regulate the reflexes of the brain (the cellar) through breathing and relaxation exercises, in order to produce an opposite reaction, that is to say, decrease of the reflex brain activity (also called the sympathetic nervous system).



Emotional management technique

The ability to relax well is an essential component in learning to regulate emotions and impulses.

Respiratory control/cardiac coherence

It is about paying attention to your breathing: its rhythm, its sensations, its location. Respiratory control consists of an inspiration phase, sometimes a blockage of breathing (optional step), then an expiration phase that is longer than the inspiration one. The breathing should not be forced nor painful.

Mental imagery relaxation

It is relaxation through mental visualization of images, sounds, smells, etc. The practitioner leads the person to imagine a scene.

Muscle relaxation

A relaxation exercise alternating tension and relaxation of different muscle groups, while focusing your attention on the sensations felt during the exercise.

These techniques, the main purpose of which is relaxation, have proven their effectiveness in the management of stress and anxiety. They reduce fatigue, the state of tension at the origin of somatic pain, increase concentration, and facilitate sleep.

Listening to your emotions provides essential information about what is happening to you. This will allow you to be better equipped to motivate yourself and act the way you want, rather than simply reacting to others, and to circumstances.

Uni – Psychological Support
Confidential and Free service
Online / In-person

Book an appointment
Registration for new visitors
Login for returning visitors