

TO FEEL IS TO BE HUMAN

We are all capable of feeling emotions. But do we always know how to cope with them?

Have you ever felt confused or disoriented because of your feelings? Our emotional experiences can resemble a vast and powerful sea that we have to navigate. Sometimes the sea is calm. Other times, we get lost in the swells, we capsize, and we get dragged down and run out of breath before coming back up to the surface.

Today, how would you describe your sea of emotions? Would you say you feel like a captain? Do you feel like you need the help of a crew?

Feel free to ask yourself these questions again later today, tomorrow, next week...

Did you know?

We spend 90% of our waking time just feeling & experiencing emotions¹. For our well-being, we have to learn to tame them and to coexist harmoniously with them.

HAVING AN EMOTIONAL LIFE IS TO BE ALIVE

Did you know?

Our emotions are not simply black or white, good or bad. Sometimes they are positive and pleasant. Other times they can be heavy and hurtful. But they are always valid. We can feel one or more at a time. We can feel them with varying levels of intensity or nuance. It is the situation we find ourselves in that triggers the emotions that can be positive or negative, not the emotions themselves. For example, anger can be considered a positive emotion if it helps you overcome an obstacle, while joy can be negative if you're taking pleasure in someone else's pain.

In this pamphlet, we use the term *emotion* to mean this vast emotional life unique to each individual. We offer you several examples and exercises and invite you to choose the ones that speak to you the most!

Certain emotions make up a universal language. In the 1960s, psychologist Paul Ekman² carried out a survey across numerous groups of peoples. He observed that the same facial muscles are activated in all human beings to express what he called the six "basic" emotions: anger, disgust, joy, fear, surprise, and sadness. **How we experience and express these emotions, however, depends on many factors including culture, education, and work environment.**

Oftentimes, we lack the words to describe what we feel. Here are some examples that can help:

I feel...

inspired	pained	shocked
tender	grieved	intrigued
amazed	lost	alert
dazzled	demoralized	confused
fit	helpless	grateful
enthusiastic	dejected	uncertain
excited	discouraged	astonished
fulfilled	disappointed	stupefied
hopeful	sad	speechless
motivated	indifferent	elated
angry	hesitant	repugnant
furious	on guard	disgusted
frustrated	troubled	mollified
irritated	nervous	repulsed
annoyed	overwhelmed	nauseated
tense	fearful	uncomfortable
bitter	worried	ashamed
disillusioned	panicked	offended
jealous	agitated	hurt
upset	embarrassed	blocked

An emotion, a message...

Our feelings and emotions send us messages. When you cut yourself, the sensation of pain causes you to react. **Feeling emotions, sensations, or pain is biological, natural, and normal.**

... A message, a need...

Becoming aware of the message our emotions send us means understanding that emotions are there to help us take in the world around us and act appropriately. Discarding the emotion without hearing the message or responding to the need is like removing the battery from the smoke detector without turning off the burner! "We can use our emotions to take better care of ourselves³" and others. For example, if I am stressed before an important event, I may need some peace and quiet or someone to talk to. Our emotions are "essential life companions"⁴!

Did you know?

We are not reduced to the emotions we experience. You can feel sad without being depressed or angry without being violent. We can feel joy in times of mourning. We can foster the emotions that make us feel good and take control over the ones that make us suffer.

SAYING WE INSTEAD OF ME

Feeling is also communicating with oneself and with others.

Recognizing our own emotions allows us to better understand those of others and to develop empathy. They allow us to evaluate our relationships. Emotions are inseparable from relationships, they go hand-in-hand. According to the World Economic Forum, emotional intelligence will be one of the ten most researched skills in 2020⁵.



We must listen to other people's emotions without passing judgment, without interpretation, without giving advice. "When I ask you to listen to me and you start asking me questions, arguing with me, trying to explain to me how I should feel or not feel, I feel like you're attacking me⁶."

Do you think that our emotional experience manifests itself the same way when we're 28 & 70 years old?

Take the time to think about it and then discuss with your loved ones of all ages.

Every community, every era, every society, every family has its myths, gender stereotypes, prejudices, and other beliefs that have an important influence on how we experience our emotions.

Can you think of any common beliefs that hinder the emotional experience?

1. MIKOLAJCZAK, Moira. «Améliorer son intelligence émotionnelle, pourquoi pas à l'école?», TEDx Talks, Louvain, 2016.
2. FRESNEL, Hélène. «Identifier nos émotions», *Psychologies.com*, 2013.
3. DESSEILLES, Martin et Moira MIKOLAJCZAK. *Vivre mieux avec ses émotions*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2016.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Forum économique mondial, Davos, 2017.
6. SALOMÉ, Jacques. «Quand je te demande d'être écouté», *L'autre Espace - La revue du RRASMQ*, Été 2019, vol. 10, n° 1.
7. Organisme L'Autrement Dit. «La Roue des Émotions», Belgique.



The Mouvement Santé mentale Québec (MSMQ) is a group devoted to creating, developing and strengthening mental health.

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A QUÉBEC-WIDE PRESENCE THROUGH THE MOUVEMENT AND THE REGIONAL MEMBERS:

- SMQ - Bas-Saint-Laurent
- SMQ - Chaudière-Appalaches
- SMQ - Côte-Nord
- SMQ - Haut-Richelieu
- SMQ - Lac-Saint-Jean
- SMQ - Rive-Sud
- SMQ - Pierre-De Saurel
- ACSM - Filiale de Québec
- ACSM - Filiale Saguenay
- CAP Santé Outaouais
- Comité Prévention Suicide L-s-Q
- PCSM
- RAIDDAT

WE THANK:

Le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux



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4 STEPS TO FEELING

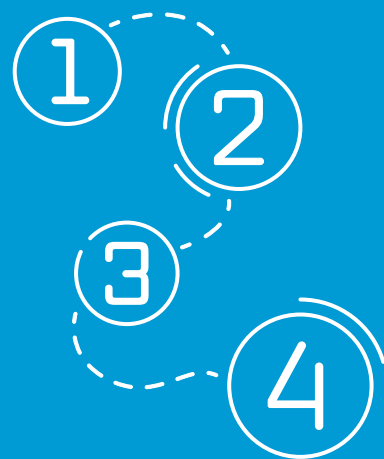
We all feel emotions. No matter your age or occupation. No matter where you live or what time of day it is.

Emotions are all around us all the time, and recognizing and accepting them allows us to live more freely.

In order to manage your emotions, you must first and foremost become aware of them. In our fast moving society we are often requested to pick up the pace. But we need time to feel and process our emotions.

The following 4 steps are useful pointers that can be used at any time.

Start by picking a specific situation that led to a certain emotional experience.



1 Observe without judging what took place inside you, in your body, in your heart and in your mind.

Simply describe the physical sensations and thoughts that went through you. For example: I felt big, crushed, cramped, butterflies in my stomach, light.

2 Embrace your emotions by seeking to clarify them. You can feel one or more at a time. Make room for them instead of fighting them. Sometimes we can set our emotions aside for a while and come back to them later if we have to help someone else, take care of a child or answer the phone at work. *Embracing* an emotion does not automatically mean *expressing* it.

What emotions did you experience? If you need help finding words to express what you felt, look back at the list under "Having an emotional life is to be alive."

3 Identify the need or needs related to the emotions you felt. Just like the gas light on the dashboard that reminds us it's time to fuel up, our emotions tell us that there is a need to be met.

What are your need or needs? Consider things like confidence, time to cool off, fun, inspiration, clarification, sharing, comfort, rest.

4 Choose to meet your needs by listening to what is important to you and being aware of your power to act. For example, give yourself time, take a break from your sadness, make a decision, identify an injustice.

What do you choose?

"Emotional skills provide access to greater self-confidence and reduced stress, as emotions are no longer perceived as invasive and uncomfortable."



Mental health is the intricate balance of all the various aspects of our life. It intertwines our social, physical, spiritual, economic, emotional and mental behaviours. **It allows us to act**, to realize our potential, to face the difficulties of everyday life and to contribute to society. Mental health is influenced by our living conditions, our shared collective values, and our own unique personal values.

Good mental health allows us to enjoy life.

7 USEFUL TIPS TO USE ALWAYS!

The Mouvement Santé mentale Québec will focus on one of the 7 tips to recharge your batteries every year until 2025. The 7 tips create a solid foundation to help us maintain good individual and collective mental health. For the period 2020-2021, we invite you to *Feel*.

To learn more about this tip or explore our tools visit etrebiendanssatete.ca.



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FEEL THE MOMENT Get the Message

FEAR
ANGER
SADNESS
JOY
SURPRISE
DISGUST
CALMNESS
LOVE
PRIDE
JEALOUSY

David Goudreault
Spokesperson



Promouvoir. Soutenir. Outiller.

TOOL FOR ADULTS AGED 18 TO 128