



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK: EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND THE NAMING OF EMOTIONS

Psychologist Robert Plutchik states that there are 8 basic emotions: joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, anticipation, anger, and disgust.

His wheel of emotions illustrates these 8 basic emotions and the various ways they relate to one another, including which ones are opposites and which ones can easily turn into another one. This framework helps bring clarity to emotions, which can sometimes feel mysterious and overwhelming.



Interpreting the Wheel of Emotions

Primary: The eight sectors are designed to indicate that there are eight primary emotions: anger, anticipation, joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness and disgust.

Opposites: Each primary emotion has a polar opposite, so that:

- Joy is the opposite of sadness.
- Fear is the opposite of anger.
- Anticipation is the opposite of surprise.
- Disgust is the opposite of trust.

Combinations: The emotions with no colour represent an emotion that is a mix of the 2 primary emotions. For example, anticipation and joy combine to be optimism. Joy and trust combine to be love. Emotions are often complex, and being able to recognise when a feeling is actually a combination of two or more distinct feelings is a helpful skill.

Intensity: Emotions intensify as they move from the outside to the centre of the wheel, which is also indicated by the colour: The darker the shade, the more intense the emotion. For example, anger at its least level of intensity is annoyance. At its highest level of intensity, anger becomes rage. Or, a feeling of boredom can intensify to loathing if left unchecked, which is dark purple.

This is an important rule about emotions to be aware of in relationships: **If left unchecked, emotions can intensify.** Herein lies the wisdom of enhancing your emotional vocabulary: it's the bedrock of effectively navigating emotions.

Check out this [list](#) of words that will help you describe your emotions even more effectively