

Emotion Regulation Handout 5

What Good are Emotions?

EMOTIONS COMMUNICATE TO (AND INFLUENCE) OTHERS

Facial expressions are a hard-wired part of emotions. In primitive societies and among animals, facial expressions communicate like words. Even in modern societies, facial expressions communicate faster than words.

When it is important to us to communicate with others, or send them a message, it can be very hard for us to change our emotions.

Whether we intend it or not, the communication of emotion influences others.

EMOTIONS ORGANIZE AND MOTIVATE ACTION

Emotions motivate our behavior. The action urge connected to specific emotions is often "hard-wired." Emotions prepare us for action.

Emotions save time in getting us to act in important situations. We don't have to think everything through.

Strong emotions help us overcome obstacles in our mind and in the environment.

EMOTIONS CAN BE SELF-VALIDATING

Our emotional reactions to other people and to events can give us information about the situation.

Emotions can be signals or alarms that something is happening.

When this is carried to an extreme, emotions are treated as facts. "If I feel competent, I am." "If I get depressed when left alone, I shouldn't be left alone." "If I feel right about something, it is right." "If I'm afraid, it is threatening." "I love him, so he must be OK".