Exercise 2 – Understanding emotions

Activity type/method: case study, awareness

Learning Goal:

The exercise aims at assisting participants through real life scenarios to recognize how the clients are feeling. In several cases, what a client describes may hide more than one emotion. Apart from the obvious emotion, there are also some underlying emotions. So, given different scenarios, the participants have the opportunity to put themselves into the role of a counsellor having to deal with different cases and in each of them to try to find out which are the underlying emotions.

Specificities: The activity can be done individually, but works better in groups when it comes to the reflection part.

Duration: 45 minutes

Materials needed: Scenarios & List of emotions **& Click the right answer on Toolkit**

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PROJECT ID: 2019-1-RO01-KA202-063198

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Instructions:

Read the following vignettes and match them with the emotions described or about to be triggered each time.

The list of emotions among which you have to select are:

Anger, Fear, Disgust, Sadness, Jealousy, Surprise, Contempt, Betrayal

Scenarios

1. Alberto is an unemployed job seeker attending a personal meeting showing signs of alcoholism. Alberto and José, the career practitioner, know each other from various contexts and occasions. When José asks Alberto for his identity card, Alberto starts yelling at José and suggests that it is José's fault that he does not have a job yet.

2. In a career counselling session with Augusta (a teenage girl) and her mother, the latter suddenly realizes that her high standards concerning the learning and behaviour of her daughter were emotionally abusive and she had no idea of this. Her daughter claimed that her mother had ruined her life.

3. In a career counselling session, Augusta (a teenage girl) said that her mother's high standards concerning the learning and perfect behaviour of her daughter were emotionally abusive. Her mother was always unhappy with the results of the girl and with her behaviours, relationships, spare time activities, and hobbies. Everything she has done was wrong for her. Augusta also complains that her mother's boyfriend behaved inappropriately by groping Augusta and making jokes with sexual content and she doesn't want even to see his face.

4. Julia works as a Human Resources Manager for a large international organization. She is becoming more and more stressed at work as the company is constantly changing and needs to keep up with changes otherwise she'll lose her job. She is working twelve-hour days, six days a week and has no personal time. She has started yelling at staff members when they ask her questions and when making small mistakes in their work.

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5. Marc is 58 years old and inherited the family home five years ago on the death of his mother. It is a substantial property in a desirable waterfront location and the will stated that it would be split equally between Marc and his brother Frank. When Frank faced financial difficulties, Marc understood that the property would need to be sold to meet Franc's financial needs. Though, whenever the issue of selling "mother's home" arose, Marc used to abruptly leave the room or avoid the topic, but did not understand why, as he was a practical and logical person and the brothers had always been very close.

6. Thomas was married 4 years ago to Helen. They are experiencing recurring problems in their partnership and he feels that the main problem is the interference of Helen's family. Helen has had a close relationship with her mother and father, but neither of them approve of her relationship with Thomas, since their first meeting. Eventually, they got married and had a child. Helen's parents are expecting to be visited on a weekly basis. Thomas feels this is draining because they openly ignore him or they keep saying that their daughter deserved a better husband.

7. Bill, a 16-year-old boy, is an excellent student. Despite his hard efforts, he never receives any approval from his parents, especially not from his mother. He feels that they are never satisfied with his work and achievements, while they show great admiration for his little brother. He claims that they don't pay attention to his needs and they don't even spend some time doing things together. Now, in Olivia's career counselling session, Bill is not interested in discussing his personal career-related needs and interests. His primary interest is to make a choice that will upset his parents and make them pay attention to him instead of his little brother.

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Questions for reflection:

1. Was it easy to recognise the emotions in the given scenarios?
2. How did you feel about this activity?
3. Any other information you need to share with the group?

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