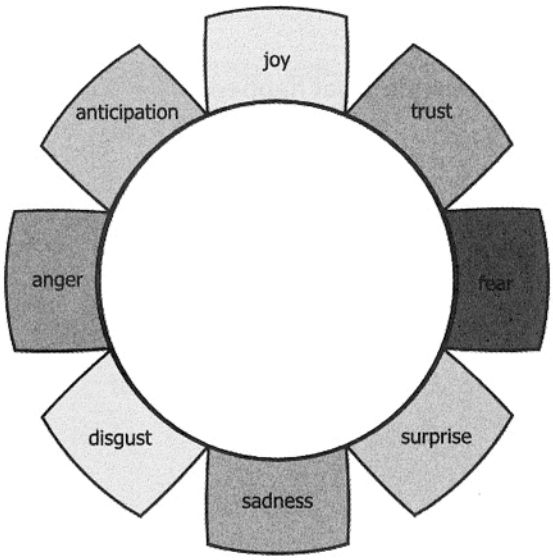
dealing with emotions 1

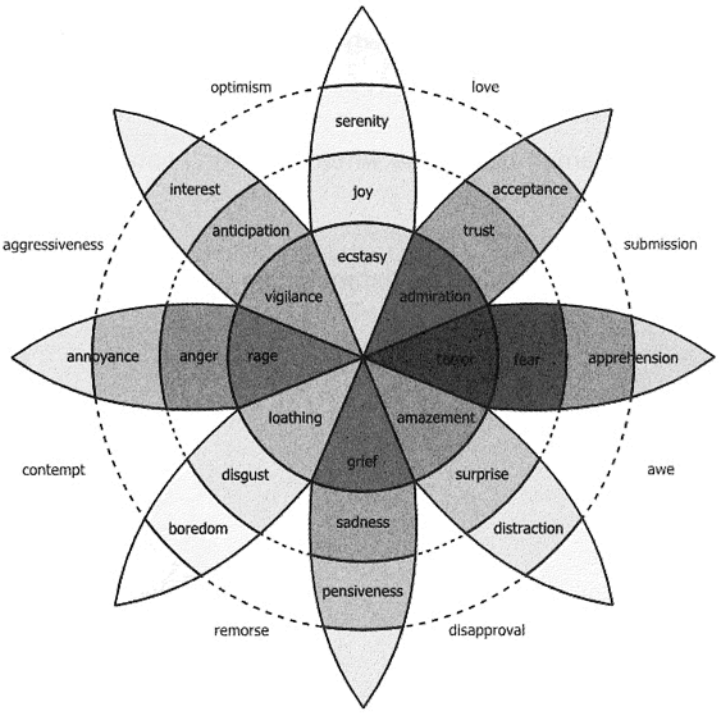
Emotions are a big part of life, as a child, as an adolescent and as an adult. We have feeling responses many times throughout every day. When we wake up and it's sunny and warm, when we miss the bus to school, when we're walking to our favourite lesson, when we've left our lunch at home, when we see an injustice, when our team wins a game, when our pet has died, when we have a difficult exam looming… all day we have feelings about what is going on inside us and around us.

There are basic emotions that we all experience. They generally have predictable effects on us, and these effects are responsible for a large part of our quality of life, for instance whether we live a life of confidence or worry. Yet many people don't learn to how to understand and manage them.

It is possible to be aware of the feelings you're having and then remind yourself that this is the lens through which you view and experience your life at that time. For example, if you're aware that anger is prominent, you can remind yourself that when you feel this way you tend to be highly critical of others, that you're temporarily unable to experience gratitude, and that you may be taking your friends for granted.

Strong feelings pass, but while they're with you, they will colour your vision, sometimes to the extreme. This is equally true of 'positive' and 'negative' feelings. In the 1980s, psychologist Robert Plutchik identified 8 basic emotions, and expressed their relationships in a wheel, which he then expanded to show different levels of intensity, and some of their combinations.





In small groups role play what a day, living with the lens of one of the 8 basic emotions, might look like.

It often feels like emotions just happen to us, however, when we understand that we can choose how we respond to an emotion we are less likely to blame others and more likely to choose what we need to do and how we want to feel.