

The Psychology of Affect

Silvan Tomkins 'the 9 innate affects'
(1991)

The 'biological basis for emotions'



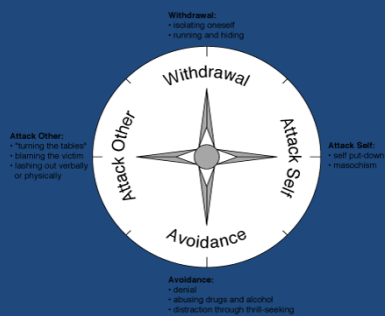
Theory

- Each 'affect' is experienced in a range from mild to strong
- The positives (interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy)
- The neutrals (startle-surprise) – reset button
- The negatives (shame-humiliation, distress-anguish, fear-terror, anger-rage, disgust-dissmell)

Shame-humiliation

- Nathanson (1994) suggests there are no specific chemical or electrical triggers for shame, as there are for the other affects. Instead shame is defined as the reaction to any interruption of a positive affect.
- This 'interruption' is why victims often experience a sense of shame even when having done nothing wrong. Rather they have experienced a dramatic and harsh interruption of their positive affects.

Compass of shame (Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 1994)



Four reactions to shame:

- **Attack other** – blaming others for what they've done, e.g. "you made me angry, it's your fault I"
- **Attack self** – self-blame "I'm so stupid", "why can't I do anything right". Can be expressed in self-harm.
- **Avoidance** – denial, creating distraction to feelings, may involve drug/alcohol misuse.
- **Withdrawal** – wanting to run away, shutting down.

Purpose

- Awareness of the compass of shame allows us to identify our response. We can learn to react less intensely and quickly recover from our shame response.
- We can identify the shame response in others and help them move beyond it by:
 - Listening to what they have to say
 - Acknowledging their feelings
 - Encouraging them to express their feelings and talk about the experience

Affective/Restorative questions

When challenging behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking of at the time?
3. What have you thought about since?
4. Who has been affected by what you have done?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Affective/Restorative questions

To help those affected

1. What did you think when you realized what had happened?
2. What impact has this incident had on you and others?
3. What has been the hardest thing for you?
4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
