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Emotionality

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Definition

Emotionality includes a variety of subjective feeling states that predictably influence observable behavior and physiological responses for functional purposes related to adaptation. Emotions typically involve multiple components including autonomic, hormonal, behavioral, and cognitive components. Physiological signs of emotions may include change in autonomic nervous system activity which includes changes in heart rate, muscle tension, perspiration, and metabolic changes. Ekman's research on the cross-cultural invariance of emotional identification and expression is suggestive of emotions as a species-typical response. The coordination of the emotional state is facilitated by the amygdala. The amygdala, a cluster of nuclei in the limbic system near the temporal lobes, has been found to be important for eliciting a cascade of physiological changes involved in emotional behavior.

Various theories of emotions have been proposed. The James-Lange theory postulates that emotions are the by-product of the physiological changes occurring in the body. In contrast, the Cannon-Bard theory proposed that emotional

experience precedes the physiological responses corresponding to emotions. Most contemporary models of emotion provide a synthesis of these two views that include the interacting influence of both cognitive appraisal and physiological events.

Assessment of emotional behavior is of critical importance in clinical neuropsychology as many emotional behaviors are symptomatic of clinical conditions. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) includes emotional behaviors or symptoms as part of many disorders including anxiety, depression, schizoaffective, and a variety of other disorders. A number of instruments are available to screen or assess the emotional symptoms of particular disorders, such as the Beck Depression Inventory, Second Edition (BDI-II), or to widely screen multiple disorders, such as the emotional status exam of the Dean-Woodcock Neuropsychological Battery.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Emotion](#)
- ▶ [Emotional Intelligence](#)

References and Readings

- Dean, R. S., & Woodcock, R. W. (2003). *Dean-Woodcock neuropsychological battery*. Itasca: Riverside Publishing.
- Ekman, P. (1980). *The face of man: Expressions of universal emotions in a New Guinea Village*. New York: Garland STPM Press.