


English for Medical Students (L1/ S2).

Medical Psychology Module

 *Online Learning Course*

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### Lesson 3: Emotions and Their Impact on Health

#### 1 Lesson Introduction

Emotions are **powerful psychological factors** that influence both **mental and physical health**. Understanding emotions and their effects helps doctors **provide better patient care**.

This lesson explains **what emotions are, types of emotions, and how they impact health**. It also provides practical examples to help students understand the role of emotions in medical practice.

#### 2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define **emotions** clearly.
2. Identify **types of emotions** commonly affecting health.
3. Explain **how emotions influence the body and mind**.
4. Provide examples of **positive and negative emotional effects** on patients.

#### 3 Key Vocabulary and Definitions

Term	Definition	Example
Emotion	A feeling such as fear, happiness, anger, or sadness	Fear before surgery; happiness after recovery
Positive emotion	Emotions that improve health or well-being	Joy, gratitude, hope
Negative emotion	Emotions that may harm health if excessive	Anger, anxiety, sadness
Psychosomatic	Physical symptoms caused by emotional factors	Stress-induced headache or stomach ache

Term	Definition	Example
Mood	General emotional state over a longer period	A patient may feel anxious for several days
Emotional regulation	Managing and controlling emotions effectively	Deep breathing to reduce anxiety before surgery

## 4 Lesson Content

### a) What are Emotions?

Emotions are **reactions of the mind to situations** that involve feelings, thoughts, and often physical changes. They affect **how we think, behave, and interact with others**.

- **Example:** Fear of a medical procedure → rapid heartbeat, sweating, avoidance behavior.
- **Example:** Happiness after successful treatment → improved energy and optimism.

### b) Types of Emotions

1. **Positive emotions** – Promote health and resilience:
  - Joy, hope, gratitude, calmness
  - **Example:** A patient encouraged by family support recovers faster.
2. **Negative emotions** – Can harm health if prolonged or intense:
  - Anxiety, anger, sadness, fear
  - **Example:** Chronic anxiety can lead to insomnia, high blood pressure, or digestive problems.

**Demonstration idea:** Think of a time you felt nervous or happy. Notice **changes in your body:** heartbeat, breathing, posture. This illustrates the **body's response to emotions**.

### c) How Emotions Affect Health

#### Physical Effects:

- Rapid heartbeat, sweating, high blood pressure
- Muscle tension, headaches, stomach problems

#### Mental Effects:

- Anxiety, difficulty concentrating
- Mood swings, irritability

#### Long-term Consequences:

- Weakened immune system → higher risk of illness
- Sleep disorders
- Chronic diseases such as hypertension or heart disease

#### Example:

A patient with prolonged sadness and worry may experience fatigue, frequent colds, and slower recovery from illness.

## d) Emotional Regulation and Coping

Learning to **manage emotions** is crucial for health:

1. **Relaxation techniques** – meditation, deep breathing
2. **Physical activity** – walking, exercise
3. **Positive thinking** – focusing on solutions rather than problems
4. **Social support** – talking with family or friends
5. **Professional help** – counseling or therapy if necessary

### Example:

A patient feels anxious about a test result. Using deep breathing and discussing concerns with a counselor can reduce anxiety and improve health outcomes.

## 5 Practical Examples

1. **Positive emotion in recovery:**  
A patient who maintains hope and gratitude recovers faster after surgery.
2. **Negative emotion and illness:**  
A patient with chronic anger and stress develops frequent headaches and high blood pressure.
3. **Emotional regulation:**  
Using relaxation techniques before surgery reduces anxiety and lowers risk of complications.

## 6 Conclusion

Emotions are **central to health and recovery**. Medical students and future doctors must :

- Recognize **emotional states in patients**
- Understand the **physical and mental effects of emotions**
- Encourage **positive emotions and emotional coping strategies** to improve outcomes

## 7 Suggested Exercises for Students

1. Write a short paragraph (5–7 lines):  
*“How can positive emotions help a patient recover faster?”*
2. Give two examples of **negative emotions affecting health** and explain their impact.
3. Identify one **emotional regulation strategy** and explain how it could help a patient.