Welcome to

Metacognitive Training for Depression (D-MCT)
D-MCT: Satellite Position
Today's D-MCT Topic:

Perception of Feelings
Perception of nonverbal cues

Example: A person crosses their arms.
Perception of nonverbal cues

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Why?
What helps to find the answer?
Prior knowledge about the person → Does the person tend to be anxious, arrogant, etc.?
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- **Environment/Situation** → When someone crosses their arms in the winter, it's probably because they're cold!
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- **Environment/Situation** → When someone crosses their arms in the winter, it's probably because they're cold!
- **Self-observation** → When do I cross my arms? 
  (But: Watch out! You can't always assume the reasons for your behaviors are the same as others!)
What helps to find the answer?

- Prior knowledge about the person → Does the person tend to be anxious, arrogant, etc.?
- Environment/Situation → When someone crosses their arms in the winter, it's probably because they're cold!
- Self-observation → When do I cross my arms? (But: Watch out! You can't always assume the reasons for your behaviors are the same as others!)
- Facial expressions (mimics) → Does the other person look annoyed, friendly, etc.?
How does this relate to depression?
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Studies show that many people with depression ...

- have difficulties assessing the emotional expressions of others

- and tend to judge **neutral** facial expressions as **sad**.
Feelings
Feelings

- Happiness
- Surprise
- Fear
- Sadness
- Anger
- Disgust
- Shame
- Guilt
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Basic emotions

Socially induced feelings
Different basic emotions

Sometimes it's easy to understand what someone is experiencing, especially when you have information about the context.
Different basic emotions

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It becomes more difficult when we do not know the person and do not have other clues!
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Try to assign specific emotions to figures 1 through 5.
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Try to assign specific emotions to figures 1 through 5.
Exercise

You will be shown part of a picture. You are to decide what is going on for that person – what is that person experiencing?
1. Man tries to solve a riddle.
2. Man plays music passionately.
3. Man is upset about a bill.
4. Man is grieving about his dead pet.

*Picture piece!*
1. Man tries to solve a riddle.
2. Man plays music passionately.
3. Man is upset about a bill.
4. Man is grieving about his dead pet.

Concentration!
1. Man worries about his broken paddle.
2. Man just caught a big fish.
3. Man poses for a holiday picture.
4. Man is disgusted by an animal carcass.
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2. Man just caught a big fish.

3. Man poses for a holiday picture.

4. Man is disgusted by an animal carcass.

Proud!
1. Man is alarmed by a bloody finger.
2. Man is upset about spilled coffee.
3. Man is excited about a birthday cake.
4. Man is surprised by a message.

*Picture piece!*
1. Man is alarmed by a bloody finger.
2. Man is upset about spilled coffee.
3. Man is excited about a birthday cake.
4. Man is surprised by a message.

Happiness!
1. Man is shocked by a motor-vehicle accident.

2. Man is pleased by a surprisingly good offer.

3. Man admires a magician performing on the street.

4. Man is angry about his boxed-in car.
1. Man is shocked by a motor-vehicle accident.

2. Man is pleased by a surprisingly good offer.

3. Man admires a magician performing on the street.

4. Man is angry about his boxed-in car.
First conclusions!

- Facial expressions and gestures, as we saw, cannot always be clearly interpreted!
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Many people, either by nature, due to illness (e.g., Parkinson's Disease) or because of substances (e.g., Botulinumtoxin/Botox®, antipsychotics), have less pronounced expressions, so that their feelings cannot be clearly interpreted.
Facial expressions and gestures, as we saw, cannot always be clearly interpreted!

Many people, either by nature, due to illness (e.g., Parkinson's Disease) or because of substances (e.g., Botulinumtoxin/Botox®, antipsychotics), have less pronounced expressions, so that their feelings cannot be clearly interpreted.

Further information (situation, previous knowledge about the person, direct questions) should be consulted before facial expressions and gestures are interpreted with certainty.
Imagine you enter a bank and meet the following consultant:
What do you think when you see the man in this photo?

Your mood is:  
- happy
- sad
- angry

Possible thoughts:
What do you think when you see the man in this photo?

**Your mood is:**

- happy
- sad
- angry

**Possible thoughts:**

- happy: *He looks nice. Let's hear his advice. If it doesn't appeal to me, I will leave.*
- sad: *He is so young and already so successful. I sure he things I am ridiculous.*
- angry: *He knows that he can sell me anything. He wants to rip me off.*
Second conclusion

- Studies show that your own mood influences how you interpret the facial expressions and gestures of others!
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- During depression, we also often assume that others are rejecting us ("reading negative thoughts of others").
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- Studies show that your own mood influences how you interpret the facial expressions and gestures of others!
- During depression, we also often assume that others are rejecting us ("reading negative thoughts of others").
- Facial expressions and gestures are also not seen through "rose-colored glasses", but more often they are interpreted through gray lenses.
What are feelings actually good for?
1. Feelings are used for communication
   - Feelings are shown in facial expressions. They often convey information faster than words; sometimes even before we can consciously realize it ("something is strange", "gut instinct").
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What could depressive feelings signal to myself or others?

- Others: ???
- Self: ???
1. Feelings are used for communication
   - Feelings are shown in facial expressions. They often convey information faster than words; sometimes even before we can consciously realize it ("something is strange", "gut instinct").

What could depressive feelings signal to myself or others?

- Others: need for help
- Self: exhaustion, overworked, unresolved conflicts
2. Emotions prepare **behaviors**.

- They allow us to act quickly in important situations without having to think about it.
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   - They allow us to act quickly in important situations without having to think about it.

Example, which behaviors can depression prepare us for?
- ???

What are feelings actually good for?
2. Emotions prepare behaviors.
   - They allow us to act quickly in important situations without having to think about it.

Example, which behaviors can depression prepare us for?
   - Withdrawal (wound licking)
   - The possibility to remove oneself from overwhelming situations and to regenerate
   - Abandon unattainable and unrealistic goals
3. Emotions ensure that we feel **alive**!
   ➢ Without negative feelings, there would not be any positive ones!
Do feelings always reflect reality?
No, feelings are not always "correct"!
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When I feel worthless, that does not mean I am worthless!
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When I feel worthless, that does not mean I am worthless!

Therefore, feelings may at times not reflect reality!
No, feelings are not always "correct"!
- When I feel worthless, that does not mean I am worthless!
- Therefore, feelings may at times not reflect reality!

Often people with depression tend to use "emotional reasoning," which means that they believe their negative feelings express exactly what is really happening ("I feel offended – so, you must have insulted me!").
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But feelings are not always “facts.” Just because I feel rejected does not mean that I am rejected.
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But feelings are not always “facts.” Just because I feel rejected does not mean that I am rejected.

Facial expressions and gestures of others are important clues for the feelings of others. However, one can be misled!
To assess other people, you should consider other information in addition to facial expressions (previous knowledge of someone, actual situation, etc.).
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Your own mood has a large impact on how you perceive the world around you.
Thank you!

Perception of Feelings