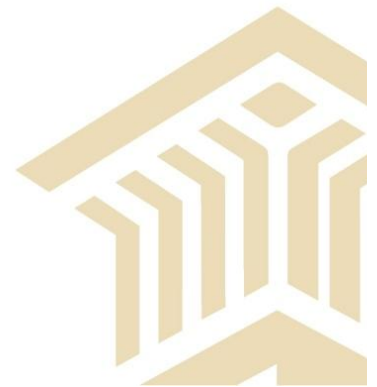


**Psicologia delle emozioni  
nel lavoro di cura**

**Psychology of emotions in care  
relationships**

Prof. Marta Casonato, PhD



Origin and development of emotions

**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

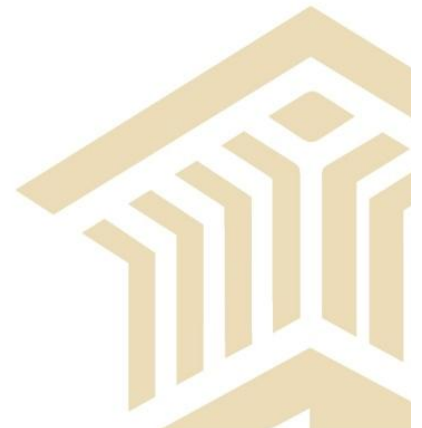


# Emotional development

- ◆ Emotions have been studied mainly (principalmente) in adults
- ◆ But what happens to children?
- ◆ How do they develop emotions?
- ◆ Do emotions play a role in the general development?



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## First emotions: 1 - a biological answer (risposta)

- ◆ First signal linked to emotions can be observed right at birth:
  - ◆ Smile
  - ◆ Crying
- ◆ And in the following weeks other signals of basic emotions appear (such as disgust)
- ◆ Emotions in the first months of life are organized based on a **biological/organic substratum**  
(if we consider all the components of emotions, not all of them are present yet... so at this age they are similar to reflexes)



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## First emotions:

### 2 - towards (verso) something psychological

- ◆ But in some authors' view, we can talk entirely about emotions just after 6 months of age. Before that, emotions are more a form of reflex
- ◆ the appearance of each emotion depends on the meaning of that situation for the child (Sroufe, 1995)
  - ◆  appraisal
  - ◆ This meaning is usually learnt (appreso) through (attraverso) interaction
- ◆ It is through dyadic interactions that emotional responses become psychological!
  - ◆  relationships are fundamental for the emotional development from the very beginning!



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## The development of smile

Let's go through a specific facial expression: smile



How does it develop over the first months of life?



**1) Endogenous smile:**  
spontaneous or  
reflexive smile observed when an  
infant is in a state of REM sleep  
(stimulus comes from **within**)



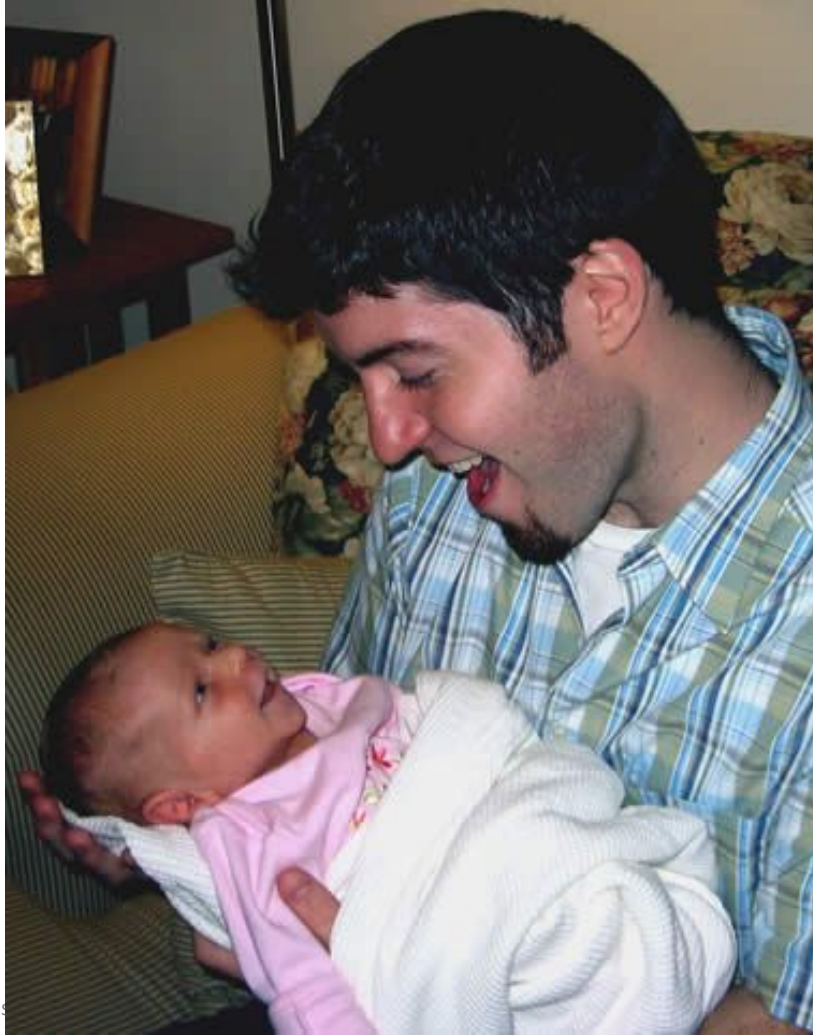
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**2) Exogenous smile:** response to  
external stimuli, same for objects  
or people.



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**3) Social smile** - after 3 months, response to people's facial expressions.



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## 3 - First emotions: an amazing increase

- ◆ The first two years of life show an impressive acquisition of different emotions
  - ◆ The emotional response acquire more variety (even in the arousal)
  - ◆ The appraisal becomes more sophisticated
  - ◆ The number and quality of emotions increase (aumenta)
  - ◆ The child learn how and when to show his behavioral response
    - ◆ And through the time he/she also learns to regulate it

### HOW?

Through the **EMOTIONAL MIRRORING** (rispecchiamento emotivo) of the adult  
The child learns the name of emotions, and link it to a set of internal sensations  
(that will help him/her to recognize and name all internal states)



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# First emotions: when do they appear?

Months of age	Type of emotional experience
0-1	Endogenous smile (inner stimulation), pain, distress, starting of psycho-physiological regulation
1-3	Exogenous smile (external stimulation), social smile, first expressions of basic emotions
4-8	Pleasure, active laugh (risata), selective smile towards caregiver, circumspection, anger
8-12	Differentiation of emotional forms, specific emotions for attachment
13-18	Joy for achievements (raggiungimento di uno scopo), starting to control emotional reactions, first complex emotions
19-24	Empathic behaviors of intentional hurting and comforting, affirmation of complex emotions
25-36	Widening (ampliamento) of complex emotions: pride, shame

Barone, 2007 (page 114; adapted from Sroufe, 1995)



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## Self-conscious emotions

### ◆ At around 20 months, complex emotions appear:

- ◆ Pride (orgoglio),
- ◆ shame (vergogna)
  - ◆  impact on the self
  - ◆ Need to withdraw (ritiro)
  - ◆ Penalize, self-diminishment
- ◆ guilt (colpa)
  - ◆  impact on others
  - ◆ Connection to others
  - ◆ Can lead to (portare a) emotional growth (crescita)

If you have to use educational strategies, it's better promoting guilt (instead of shame!)

- ◆ These are all social emotions:
  - ◆ They require the knowledge of basic social rules
  - ◆ They require the consciousness/awareness of the self!



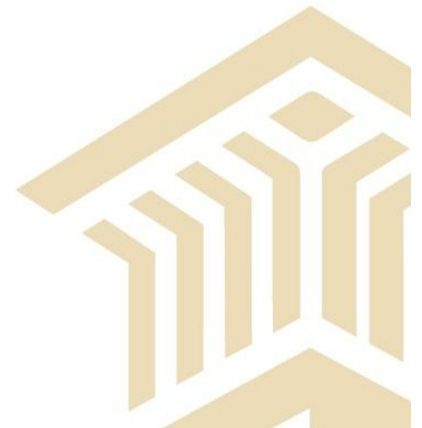
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# Language development

- ◆ The acquisition of language contributes to a psychological revolution (Harris, 2004) because through language children can:
  - ◆ better express what they are feeling in that moment
  - ◆ But also describe emotional experiences connected to the *past or future!*



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## Emotional display (manifestazione)

- ◆ In young children, the fact of showing the facial expression is an index of the subjective feeling of the correspondent emotions (at least for basic emotions)
  - ◆ *If you see it, it means that he/she is feeling it!*
- ◆ By growing up, children learn the so-called (cosiddette) *display rules* □ e.g. showing disgust, disappointment
  - ◆ *If you see it, it does not mean that he/she is certainly feeling it!*
  - ◆ Children now can:
    - ◆ Separate the expression of emotions from subjective experience
    - ◆ Simulate emotional expression through (attraverso) voluntary control
    - ◆ Show or hide emotions in a relational context
- ◆ Even if the behavioral response can be changed, the function of that emotions stays the same (e.g. sadness)



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# Emotional development

## ◆ Videos of Yale University

### ◆ Infancy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qPvfOlwRAo>

### ◆ Adolescence:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiSUK6bba6E>

### ◆ Aging:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrHGpv9G-AQ>

See also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gkdzkVbuVA>



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## Adolescence

### ◆ Main (principale) evolutionary task (compito) □

Construction of the self □ identity

### ◆ Nowadays adolescence is considered within (entro) a continuity of change (and not turmoil, upset, radical change as it was conceived in the past)

## Emotions

### ◆ Researchers have used teenagers' *autobiographical narrative* to understand emotional experiences in adolescence

### ◆ **high emotional reactivity vs low emotion regulation** □ «All gas and no brakes»

### ◆ **More mood variability** (hormonal asset)

### ◆ Not just the prevalence of negative emotions!

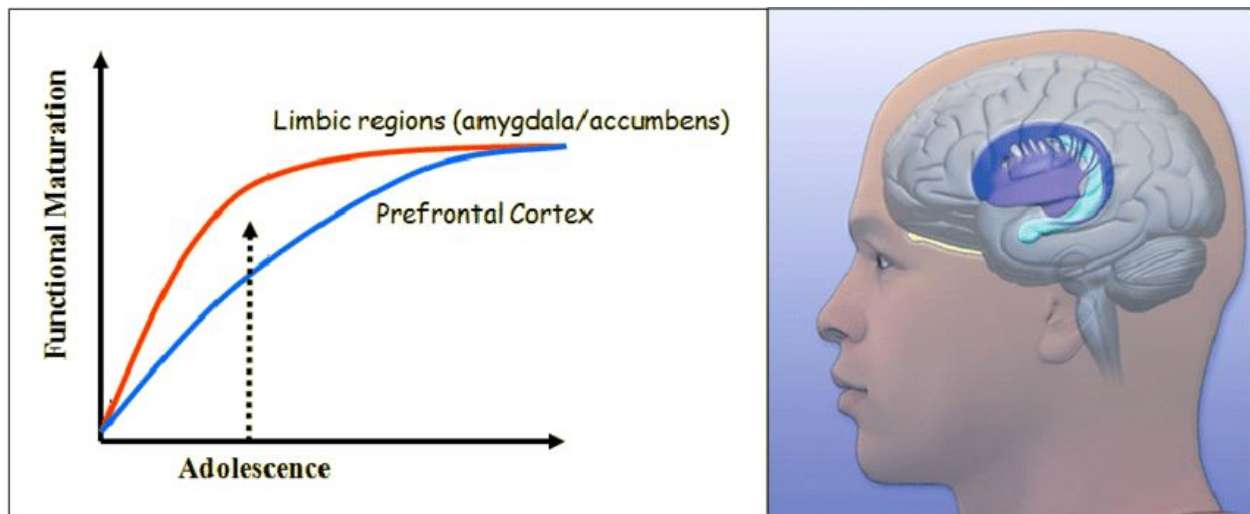
### ◆ **Emotion regulation** □ gender differences

◆ F: reflection / M: coping (action)

### ◆ Hardest emotions to cope with (le emozioni più difficili da gestire): **guilt** (colpa) + **shame** (vergogna)



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## Il cervello fragile degli adolescenti

<https://www.istituto-dantealighieri.it/ultime-notizie/il-cervello-fragile-dell'adolescente-tratto-da-focus-on-brain-rivista-di-neuroscienze-#:~:text=Lo%20sviluppo%20del%20sistema%20limbico,raggiunge%20la%20sua%20maturazione%2010%2D>



# Late adolescence

- ◆ Moving forward (late adolescence)
  - ◆ **Increasing reflective capacities**
  - ◆ More detailed descriptions
  - ◆ Shifting of interest from acting/coping, to the repercussions on the Self/identity
  - ◆ **Emotion regulation** almost completed
  
- ◆ Adolescents show/possess all the components of emotional competence:
  - ◆ Awareness
  - ◆ Lexicon
  - ◆ Understanding of emotions' causality
  - ◆ Discrete emotion regulation

Emotional competence can now  
be used to face (*affrontare*) other developmental tasks!

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# Adulthood

- ◆ Adulthood has been the main focus of the study of emotions
- ◆ It is the elective period to increase and improve/perfect emotional competence
- ◆ What do we know:
  - ◆ In adulthood the **cultural differences** become more evident
    - ◆ social learning has been almost completed
  - ◆ There are **individual differences** with respect to:
    - ◆ emotions regulation
    - ◆ Reflective functioning (different between individuals and between emotions)
- ◆ There is still space for learning!

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# Aging

- ◆ Research has shown that elderly people show:
  - ◆ Slight decline in the **recognition** of some emotions (independent from the general cognitive functioning) such as fear (and anger)
  - ◆ **Emotional memory** is well-kept (ben tenuta)
  - ◆ Increase in **emotional regulation!**
    - ◆ Sustain positive emotions
    - ◆ Reduce the influence of negative emotions
- ◆ **Emotions play a role in the level of well-being** □ it is **necessary to include emotional variables in the work with elderly!**
  - ◆ When working with them, it's interesting to understand the role of emotions in the construction of the Self



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## Working with emotions..

You might teach display rules, but you have to teach to recognize that emotion, to feel it and to manage it

Recognize a value to every single affective state: each of them is acceptable, not all behavioral responses are

Be the “EMOTIONAL MIRROR”



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