

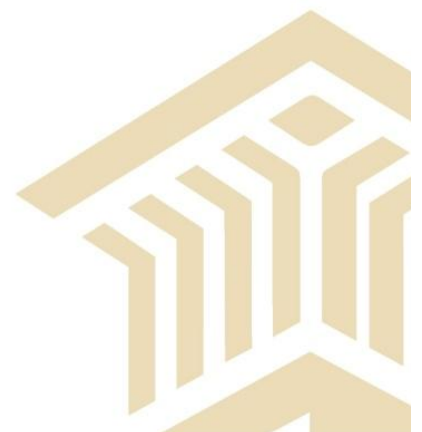
Being emotionally competent

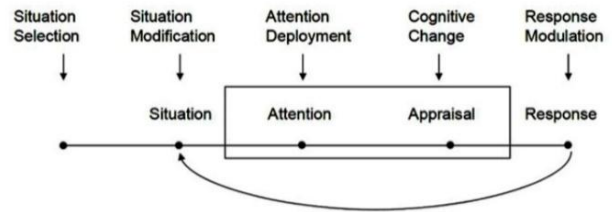
Emotional intelligence, competence,
emotion regulation and mentalizing



Managing emotions on our own, without the «other»

EMOTION REGULATION





EMOTION REGULATION

Individual strategies used

- *to effectively manage and respond to an emotion experience*
- +
- *to match the emotional experience and its external manifestation to social situation and cultural rules*



Prof. Marta – Psychology of emotions in care relationships

How is emotion regulation different from social sharing?

- ◆ Emotion regulation is a set of mechanism that help the person to manage his/her emotions **individually**, without the presence of another person
 - ◆ Or, if this is not possible, to promote the request of help from others
- ◆ It effects on
 - ◆ the process of emotion (length, intensity, latency, recovery)
 - ◆ sometimes also on the type/quality of emotion felt
- ◆ the effects can be:
 - ◆ **short term** (appraisal and reappraisal)
 - ◆ while social sharing has an effect on long term



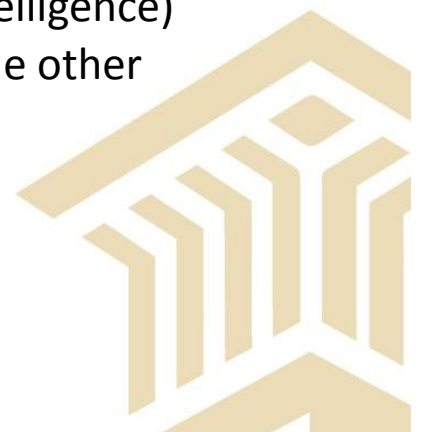
The construct of emotion regulation (ER)

- ◆ ER is functional to the individual's aims in that specific moment
- ◆ Highly significant in human life!
 - ◆ **It is frequent!** ER is used many times during the day to cope with (per far fronte a) difficult situations, even unconsciously
 - ◆ **It is important!** Its aim is to help us fitting within our society
 - ◆ It is wide and complex: ER includes self-regulation (intrinsic) and the regulation of other people's feelings (extrinsic)
- ◆ Strong heuristic power! (increasing number of studies)
 - ◆ But still some critical points (does ER comes just after the emotion, or even during it? Are them biologically funded?)



What is emotion regulation (ER)?

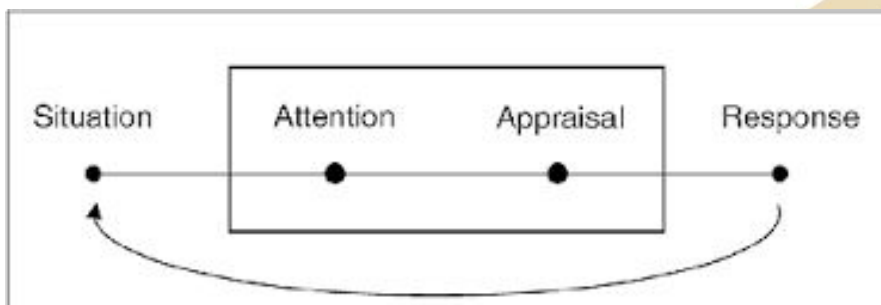
- ◆ ER processes **can be**
 - ◆ Automatic / controlled (e.g. hiding an emotion)
 - ◆ Conscious / unconscious
 - ◆ Placed in various points of the emotional process
- ◆ **ER is determined by**
 - ◆ **internal factors** (personality, personal experience and learning, emotional competencies and intelligence)
 - ◆ **Interpersonal factors** (relationship with the other person/s)
 - ◆ **Socio-cultural factors** (e.g. display rules)



The modal model of emotion (Gross, 1998)

Used to explain the various ER strategies

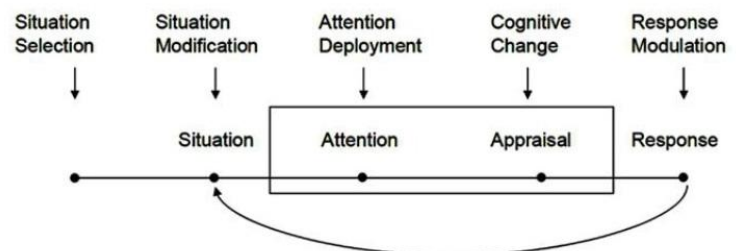
1. Situation: the sequence begins with a situation (real or imagined) that is emotionally relevant.
2. Attention is directed towards the emotional situation (when we become aware of the situation)
3. Appraisal: the emotional situation is evaluated and interpreted.
4. Response: an *emotional response* is generated, giving rise to changes in experiential, behavioral, and physiological response systems.
5. **Feedback loop**: an emotional response can cause changes to a situation
 - ◆ the emotion generation process is ongoing and dynamic¹



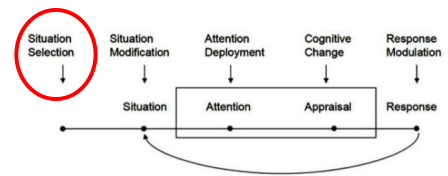
The Process Model of Emotion Regulation

Each of these four points in the emotion generation process can be subjected to regulation

1. Situation selection
2. Situation modification
3. Attention deployment (distribuzione dell'attenzione)
4. Cognitive change
5. Response modulation



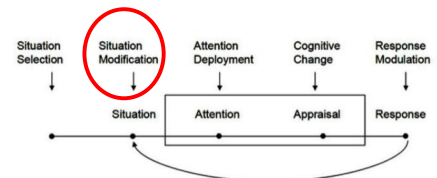
Situation selection (selezione della situazione)




- ◆ choosing to avoid (or to approach) an emotionally relevant situation.
- ◆ It decrease (or increase) the likelihood (probabilità) of experiencing an emotion
 - ◆ when a parent removes his or her child from an emotionally unpleasant situation (e.g. not bringing the child to the pool if he/she hates swimming)
 - ◆ When we do not walk around our ex partner's house not to meet him/her
 - ◆ When we look for a friend to «social share» our emotions
- Situation selection is not always an easy task, because of unpredictability of our emotional responses



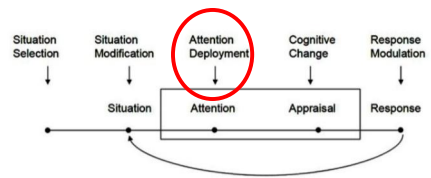
Situation modification (modificazione della situazione)



- ◆ Situation modification involves efforts to modify a situation so as to change its emotional impact.
 - ◆ Situation modification refers specifically to altering one's external, physical environment
 - ◆ When we insert humor into a speech to elicit laughter
 - ◆ When we extend the physical distance between ourselves and another person
 - ◆ when we ask the neighbor to lower the volume of the music that is disturbing us
-  It just includes modifications to the **external environment!**
- ◆ Because altering one's "internal" environment to regulate emotion is another strategy of ER, called “cognitive change”



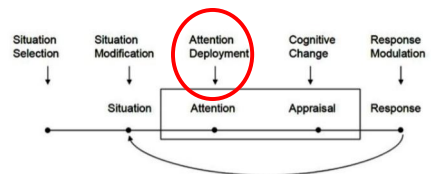
Attentional deployment (distribuzione dell'attenzione)



- ◆ Attentional deployment involves modifying the attentional focus
 - ◆ It means directing one's attention *towards* (verso) or *away from* (lontano da) an emotional situation (thus focusing on other contents)
- ◆ In this ER strategy we do not avoid nor change the situation, we «leave it there» and just direct our attention to something else



Attentional deployment (distribuzione dell'attenzione)

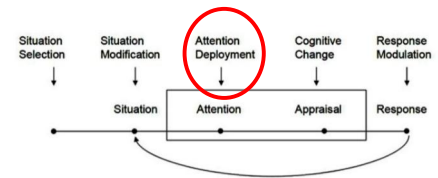


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Attentional deployment

(distribuzione dell'attenzione)



◆ Attentional deployment includes different strategies:

◆ Distraction

- ◆ Focusing on the non-emotional aspects of the situation or move the attention away from the situation (e.g. thinking about flowers during a blood sample intake)
- It decreases facial responding and neural activation in the amygdala

◆ Concentration

- ◆ Selection on specific aspects of the situation
- increase of the emotional response

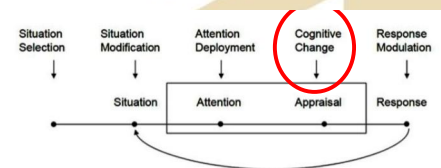
◆ Rumination

- ◆ Direct attention not on the situation, but on the feelings and on its consequences (passively and repetitively focusing on them)



Cognitive change

(cambiamento, ristrutturazione cognitiva, riconsiderazione)



◆ Cognitive change implies altering one's "internal" environment

◆ Possible strategies:

◆ Changing the appraisal/reappraisal

- ◆ changing how one evaluates a situation so as to alter its emotional meaning ("in fondo non mi meritavo 30, quindi il voto è corretto, non mi devo arrabbiare...")
- ◆ reinterpreting the meaning of an event so as to alter its emotional impact (e.g. using a broader perspective) ("prendere un voto più basso non è una sconfitta, ma uno stimolo a fare meglio al prossimo esame")
- ◆ Distancing: assuming an independent, third-person perspective when evaluating an emotional event (meditation techniques)

◆ or acting in order to be able to manage the situation

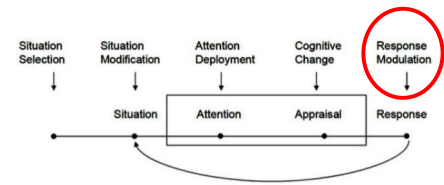
- ◆ Use sense of humor; empower the coping strategies

◆ Usually applied to reduce negative emotions, but can also be used to amplify (or reduce) positive ones

◆ is linked to better outcomes on physical and psychological health and on relationships



Response modulation (modulazione della risposta)



- ◆ Response modulation involves attempts to directly influence the response system (experiential, behavioral, and physiological)
- ◆ Is the last one in the time-lapse of the emotional process
 - ◆ it appears when emotional responses are already activated
 - ◆ It directly influences the experience of the emotional response (behaviorally and physiologically)
- ◆ Strategies:
 - ◆ **Expressive suppression** Inhibiting the ongoing emotional expression (e.g. poker face) negatively affect health on the long term!
 - ◆ But also behavioral responses such as drug use (“ci bevo sopra”), physical exercise (“vado a correre per sfogarmi”), sleep helps regulating the level of activity of the amygdala



Development of ER

This is up to you if you will work in a nursery!

- ◆ During **the first year of life**, the ER is mainly **external**, because the caregiver help the child regulating his/her emotions
- ◆ What happens when the caregiver does not help the child? E.g. «still face» experiment; the child can use two different ways (that share the same scope) (Gianino & Tronick, 1988)
 - ◆ Self-directed regulatory behaviors acting on self (sucking thumb or objects, detach gaze, etc.)
 - ◆ Other-directed regulatory behaviors acting on others (establish eye contact, vocalizations, facial mimic, motor agitation)
- ◆ The role of the caregiver underlines (sottolinea) how much the **relational environment** is important for the development of ER, even if **temperament** do play a role *bidirectional link*



Development of ER

- ◆ In the **next years** , the child:
 - ◆ may still use the help of the caregivers (with higher differentiation: mother for some aspects, father and other caregivers for others)
 - ◆ but at the same time he/she become more and more active in self-regulation
- ◆ For 5 years old, the child treats emotions in a more abstract way □ appearance of the ER strategies we have presented previously
 - ◆ Own emotions and others' ones

From dysregulation, to co-regulation to self-regulation



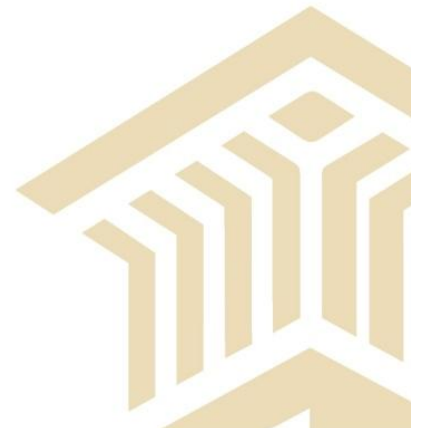
Emotion Regulation and psychological wellbeing

- ◆ Emotion regulation (ER)
 - ◆ Good levels of ER are associated with positive social competences and the expression of socially appropriate emotions
- ◆ Emotion **dysregulation**:
 - ◆ difficulties in controlling the influence of emotional arousal on *the organization and quality of thoughts, actions, and interactions*
 - ◆ emotionally dysregulated people exhibit patterns of responding in which there is a mismatch between their goals, responses, and/or modes of expression, and the demands of the social environment
 - ◆ Depression, anxiety, eating disorders, drug abuse

Can you make any examples?



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



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A combination of cognition and affect

- ◆ In the past, emotion and intelligence used to be considered as adversaries (rational vs irrational).
- ◆ Emotions were conceived (considerate) as something that disorganizes thoughts (*see behaviorism*) (comportamentismo)

COGNITION
(thought):
memory, reasoning,
judgment, abstract
thought. Intelligence=how
well the cognitive sphere
functions (Different from
talents, that are the
nonintellectual abilities)

MOTIVATIONS
purposes, aims, goals
(both biological urges
and learned
goal-seeking behaviors)

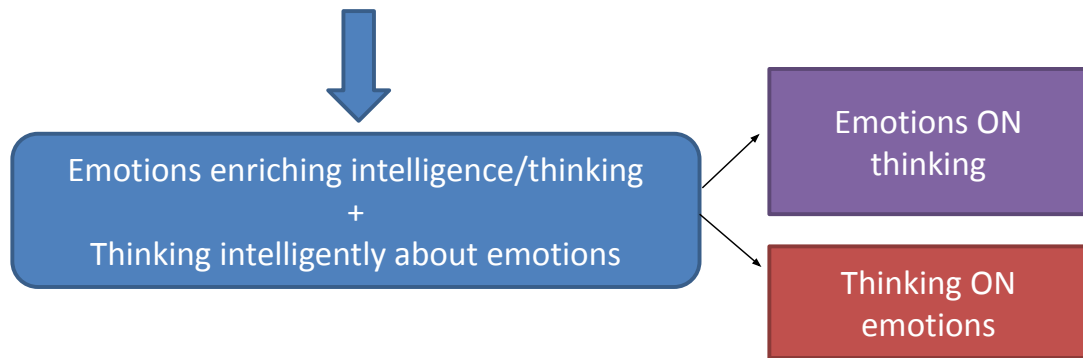
AFFECT:
emotions, moods,
other feelings (fatigue,
energy)

Emotional intelligence as one of the
possible combinations between
Cognition and Affect
(but it is not the only one!)



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Emotional intelligence: definition



Beyond (oltre) Descartes' dualism!



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Emotional intelligence / Intelligenza emotiva *Definizioni evocative*

La sapienza del cuore

Il sapere dei sentimenti

*Pensare le emozioni.
Sentire i pensieri.*



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Emotional intelligence in practice

It requires thinking!
(emotional reasoning)

- ◆ Emotional intelligence involves the ability to:

Basic

1. perceive emotions accurately (perception, appraisal and expression of emotions)
2. access and generate emotions/feelings to facilitate thought

Complex

3. understand emotions & emotional knowledge
4. regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth

On SELF and on OTHERS

(all these 4 abilities are usually related both to personal and internal emotions and to other's emotions)

5. (Mayer and Solovey)

SELF-TEST!
Try to rate your abilities
(see next slides)



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Subcomponents of emotional intelligence

1. Accuracy in identifying emotional content

- a) Identify emotions in one's physical states, feelings and thoughts (infants can react differently to emotions, but do not reproduce them yet)
- b) Identify emotions in other people, design, artwork, through language, sounds, appearance and behaviors
- c) Express emotions accurately (and to express needs related to those feelings)
- d) Discriminate between accurate/inaccurate, honest/dishonest expression of feelings

2. Emotional facilitation of thinking

Use of emotions or emotions' generation to

- a) Direct our attention to important information □ e.g. anticipatory anxiety
- b) Help judgement and memory (putting ourselves in other's place) □ it assists planning and decision making
- c) Help considering multiple perspectives (e.g. mood driving thoughts)
- d) Differentiate between forms of reasoning that can be facilitated by different moods (e.g. the emotional content put in commercial by advertisement)



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Subcomponents of emotional intelligence

3. Understanding emotions and using emotional knowledge

- a) Label emotions and recognize relations between them (similarity between anger and tantrums, etc.)
- b) Understand the meanings of emotions in interpersonal relationships and in specific situations
- c) Understand complex feelings
- d) Recognize sequence of emotions (from anger to shame)

4. Consciously regulating emotions to promote personal growth

- a) Stay open to feelings (*conditio sine qua non*), both positive and negative
- b) Reflectively engage or detach from one emotion (e.g. learn that emotions are separated from behavior)
- c) Reflectively monitor emotions (meta-evaluation)
- d) Reflectively regulate emotions (trying to improve a bad mood, etc.)



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How do we acquire (acquire) and improve emotional / personal intelligence?

- ◆ **Personal intelligences, as every form of intelligence, show a certain (una certa) genetic predisposition**
- ◆ **But mostly we acquire it through *education***
 - ◆ In childhood: parent-child *interaction*
 - ◆ Later in life, school and educators can offer a different model (even a recovery one) □ remedial learning in the informal interactions between teacher/educator and child
 - ◆ *Modeling* by caregivers and peers (especially in adolescence)

This is your role!



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A similar concept: Gardner's wider idea about intelligence and emotions

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE



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Personal intelligences

- ◆ Let's start with a wider theory, coming from Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences
- ◆ In his view, intelligence is not a single general ability, but it is composed of specific modalities
- ◆ We are interested in 2 out of 8 type of intelligence:
 - ◆ Intrapersonal intelligence
 - ◆ Interpersonal intelligence



Personal intelligences



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Personal intelligences

- ◆ Intrapersonal intelligence and Interpersonal intelligence are usually neglected (trascurate) in the study of intelligence
- ◆ Can we find them in the human brain?
 - ◆ They occupy different *brain areas* (both in the frontal lobes), different areas of intervention
 - ◆ But intra/inter are strictly interconnected (as one develops, the others does the same)
 - ◆ «sense of the self» puts the two together (me+others)



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Personal intelligences

- ◆ Characteristics of these two forms of *personal intelligences*:
 - ◆ **Intrapersonal**: access to inner affective life (from distinguishing between pleasure and pain, to very complex abilities)
 - ◆ Subjects showing introspective and self-reflective capacities: having a deep understanding of the self (strengths or weaknesses, unique characteristics), and capacity of predicting one's own reactions or emotions.
 - ◆ **Interpersonal** (external): detect and distinguish others' intentions, moods, temperaments, etc.
 - ◆ Subjects showing sensitivity to others' moods, feeling temperaments, motivations, and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group □ **educational work!**



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Personal intelligence during *adolescence*

- ◆ Social relationships are deeper and less chaotic, more emotionally attuned
- ◆ Comprehension of the social world is more complex and structured
- ◆ Knowledge of the self and of others develops and increases
- ◆ Sense of the self is a crucial process for further development

Does this development happen through continuous development or through critical points?



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Quantomeno una persona comprende i suoi sentimenti, tanto più facilmente potrà esserne dominata

Quanto meno una persona comprende i suoi sentimenti, le risposte e il comportamento di altri, tanto più probabile è che interagisca con loro in modo improprio, non riuscendo quindi ad assicurarsi il posto che le compete nella comunità più generale

Howard Gardner, *Formae mentis* (p. 364)



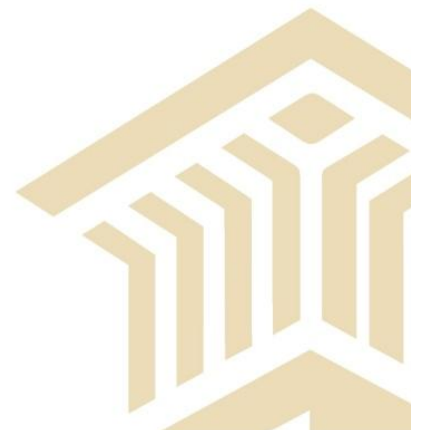
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Using emotions adequately in different situations

EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

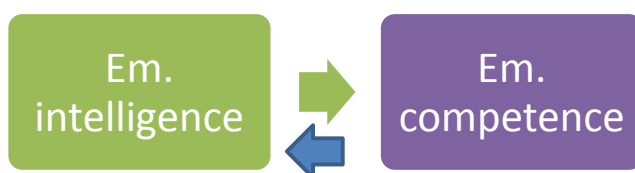


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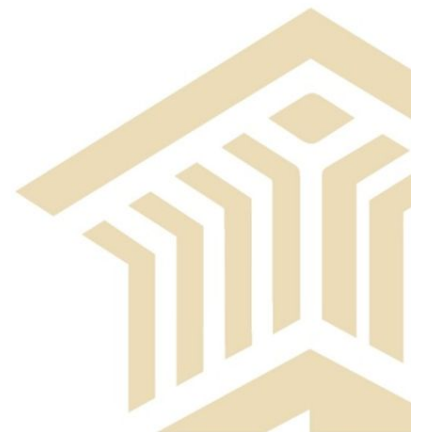


Emotional *intelligence* and *competence*

- ◆ They are similar concepts, but:
 - ◆ **Intelligence is the aptitude**
 - ◆ *Achievement (risultato, conquista)* is the result accomplished
 - ◆ **Competence: meeting the standard of achievement is how the person function adequately across situations**



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Emotional *intelligence* and *competence*



Relationship between intelligence and competence is symbiotic (Vaida, 2014):

- ◆ **emotional intelligence is the abstract prerequisite** that forms the “building bricks” for developing emotional competence which, in turn, leads to performance
- ◆ emotional competence must be developed, based on improved emotional intelligence.



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Emotional competence (in Saarni's work)

- ◆ Since emotional competence is shown (è mostrata) in different situations, then:
 - ◆ It strictly depends on the context
 - ◆ It is crucial to self-efficacy
- ◆ **How do we acquire it?** (come la acquisiamo?)
 - ◆ **It's the result of the interaction between individual and social factors!**
 - ◆ Individual: gender, intelligence, temperament (intelligence is just one part)
 - ◆ Social: informal cultural rules regulating emotions in social interactions
 - ◆ Social factors are learnt through socialization immediately after birth □ emotional education (società atomistiche vs società campo, Lasker)
 - ◆ Poor emotion education □ poor emotional competence
 - ◆ Still, individual factors remain active!



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One step further... mentalization

Mentalization

capacity of understanding / representing our own mind and the other's mind...

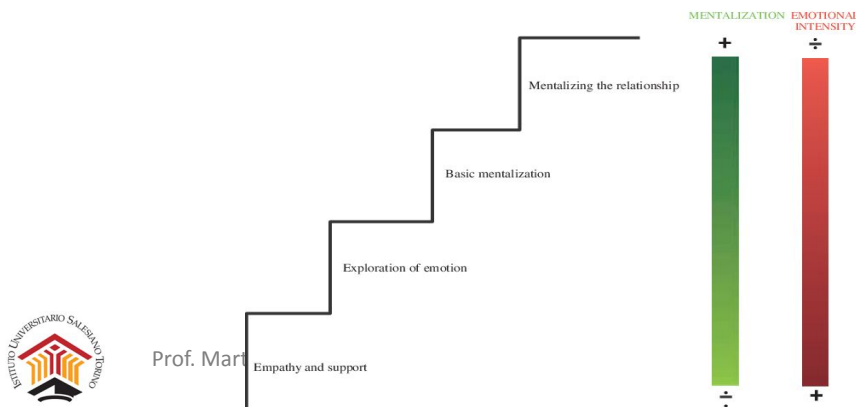
...in relation to mental states, such as thoughts and feelings

"Having Mind in Mind"

"Understanding Misunderstandings"

"Seeing oneself from the outside and others from the inside"

MENTALIZATION STAIRCASE



Mentalization

Theory of mind → mentalization

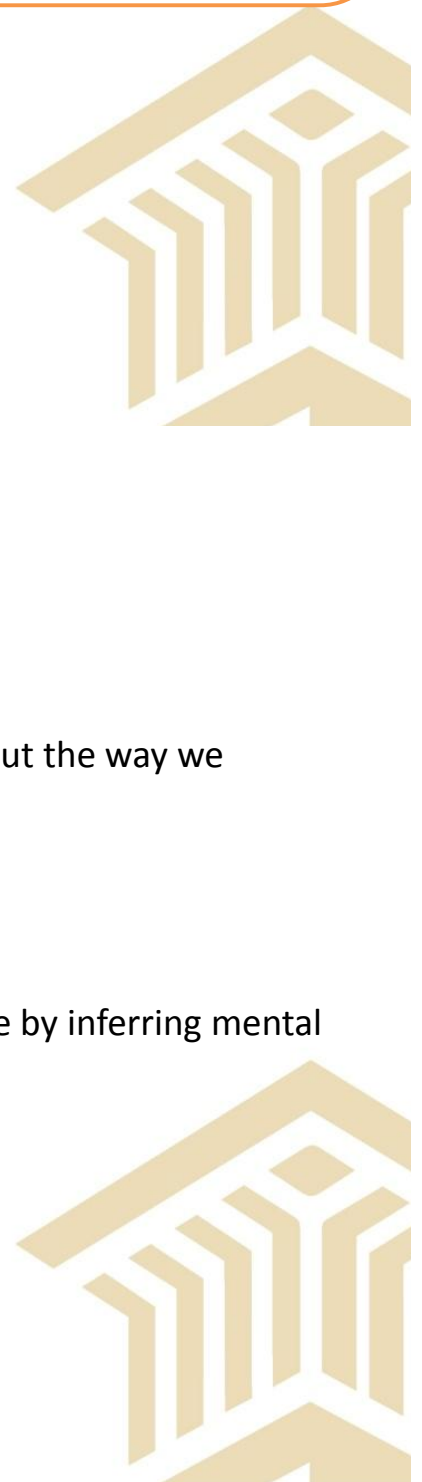
("theory" is not intended as something epistemological, but the way we understand and interpret others' behaviors)

Mentalization has **social and interpersonal functions**:

- *communicative* (going beyond what words say)
- *adaptive and regulatory* (makes behaviors predictable by inferring mental states that are behind that behavior)
- *protective* (finding support)

Link with attachment

- higher in secure attachment
- lower in insecure/preoccupied and disorganized



Mentalization

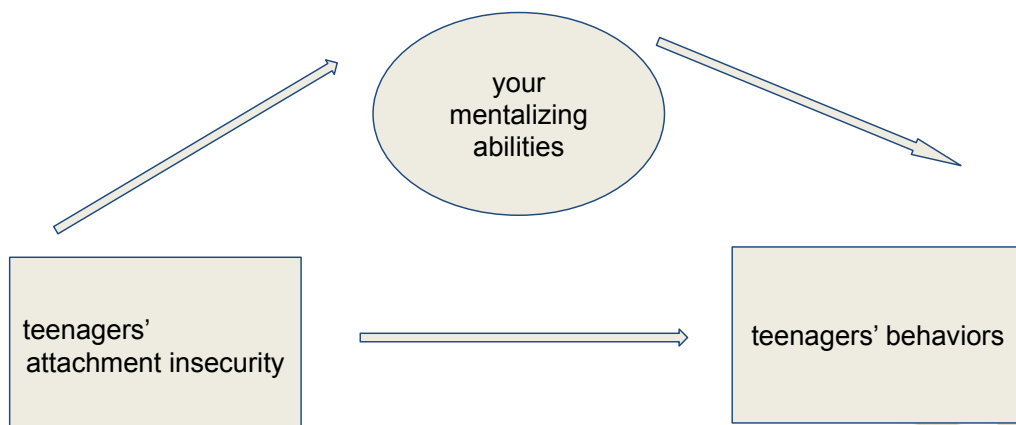


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Interesting fragments:
From 1.50 to 5.50
From 8.48 to 10.05

Mentalizing educators

- ◆ Does being able to mentalize play a difference?



Professional carers' attachment style and reflective functioning: Links with adolescent behavioral and emotional adaptation in residential care. Pascuzzo et al., 2021
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0190740921001237>

A pesca di emozioni e sentimenti

Questo gioco prevede l'utilizzo di una lista o di carte con le emozioni/sentimenti. Va proposto in un momento in cui educatore ed educando possono interagire in modo rilassato.

Introduci il gioco dicendo che indovinerete almeno 2 emozioni diverse (con ritardi o quadri compromessi anche una basta) che l'altro potrebbe aver provato oggi, quindi bisogna spiegare perché è stata scelta quell'emozione.

Con le carte scegli l'emozione

L'altra persona confermerà o negherà e argomenterà se necessario.

Esempi:

Educatore: "Ok tocca a me! Hmm – Penso che tu ti sia sentito frustrato oggi perché sembra che tu abbia un'espressione irritata sul viso. Mi chiedo cosa sia successo a scuola oggi e quali pensieri potresti avere? Penso anche che a un certo punto potresti esserti sentito felice oggi perché a pranzo c'era il tuo cibo preferito!"

Lascia che l'educando parli e rafforza la tua curiosità riguardo alle sue emozioni e alla sua mente. Se non risponde, potresti dire qualcosa del tipo "beh, posso solo chiedermi e indovinare perché non so veramente cosa stai pensando o provando a meno che tu non me lo dica o non me lo mostri. Ma sono COSÌ curioso e interessato!"

Successivamente, chiedigli/le di indovinare quali sentimenti potresti aver provato oggi (indica i sentimenti sulla lista o scegli una carta) e se ha una "ragione" per cui pensa questo. Assicurati di dirgli/le quali emozioni hai provato oggi e perché "beh, oggi ero frustrato perché una mia amica mi ha detto una cosa che non mi piace molto".

** Questo gioco funziona bene anche con gli adolescenti, rendilo solo più maturo; forse non usare carte o carte a meno che non lo vogliano anche loro



Mentalizing educators

- ◆ Exercise:
 - ◆ Write a brief story about this picture, about what is happening.
 - ◆ Include the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of the characters involved.





emotions expression/regulation and health

- ◆ Emotion regulation is strictly linked to health: for our well-being, it is important to use effective strategies of emotion regulation!
- ◆ Suppression and response modulation are helpful in the short-term for social interaction, but the emotion leaves longer-term marks that must be elaborated (or could leave to health problems)
- ◆ Reappraisal seems more beneficial than suppression
- ◆ Emotional disclosure helps sense-making, help-seeking and helps regulating the long-term effects of emotions
- ◆ Importance of programs teaching adequate emotion regulation strategies from childhood!



Conclusions

- ◆ Different emotional strategies are linked both to internal and external factors (we shall reinforce aspects promoting emotion regulation)
- ◆ Suppression and response modulation are helpful in the short-term for social interaction, but the emotion leaves longer-term marks that must be elaborated (or could leave to health problems)
- ◆ Reappraisal seems more beneficial than suppression
- ◆ Emotion regulation is strictly linked to health: for our well-being, it is important to use effective strategies of emotion regulation!
- ◆ Emotional disclosure helps sense-making, help-seeking and helps regulating the long-term effects of emotions
- ◆ Importance of programs teaching adequate emotion regulation strategies from childhood!

