

Introduction:

In this activity, you will discuss the concept of emotional labor and reflect on the emotional labor that you and others perform in various situations. You will first think of a situation where you felt intense feelings and then discuss what it would be like to have to either suppress those feelings or pretend that you shared those feelings with someone else. This will then lead to a discussion about coping with situations where emotional labor is required.

Participant Instructions:

1. Think of a work or school situation in which you would have strong feelings of hurt, anger, frustration, or fear. Write down emotion words to indicate your feelings during the situation. Note emotion words to indicate what one or more other people would likely feel in the situation. You will not be asked to disclose the situation.
2. With a partner or in small groups, discuss the following:
 - What are key emotions you would feel in the situation? How easy would it be for you NOT to show these feelings to the people involved?
 - What are key emotions someone else would have in the situation? How easy would it be to pretend you share that person's feelings?
 - How easy would it be to genuinely share someone's feelings in the situation?
3. Group debrief:
 - How was it to discuss how feelings get or don't get expressed?
 - What did you learn?
 - Based on this activity, how would you define emotional labor?
 - What general situations – work, home, or social – can you think of where emotional labor is required?
 - What are some success stories that you or someone you know has had with coping with situations that demand emotional labor? *Note:* If participants have smartphones, the facilitator might take 5 minutes to have people look up and share strategies for coping with emotional labor.
 - What strategies not yet mentioned could help you cope with situations that demand your emotional labor?
 - What can you do with what you learned in this activity?