



## Introduction:

In recent years, scholarship across disciplines has been concerned with how some people, as part of their professional role, are expected to feel or not feel particular ways in the workplace. This often uncompensated work is called emotion labor (a.k.a. emotional labour). According to Hochschild (1983), emotion labor is the work that professionals (often some groups of people, for example women, more than others) are expected to perform in order to manage their feelings and “to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (p. 7). To be “professional,” employees in many professions are often asked to hide genuine emotional reactions or portray positions emotions even when they aren’t feeling them. These forms of emotion labor are often associated with burnout and emotional exhaustion. However, research has also found that emotion labor can be rewarding or rejuvenating if these emotions are authentic and the individuals feels satisfaction with their job (Martínez-Iñigo, et al., 2007).

In this activity, you will first analyze an “Emotion Labor in Careers” case study in small groups. Then, you will design your own case for the future occupation of one or more participants in your groups using the existing cases as a model.

## Participant Instructions:

1. The facilitator will introduce the concept of emotion labor. You will then transition into a group activity. You will be divided into groups and assigned each to a different “Emotion Labor in Careers” case study. First read through your assigned case individually and then discuss the case together using the following questions as guides:
  - What challenges do workers in the profession detailed in this case study tend to face?
  - How do they perform emotion labor in response to that challenge?
  - What are the differences in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, or other social identity markers that were identified within the case?
  - What strategies for coping or managing emotion labor were suggested by the case study authors?
2. Debrief. One participant from each of the breakout groups should report back with:
  - A brief summary of the case
  - One or two insights that surfaced in your group discussion

Be ready to answer questions from others and to comment on connections you see with other groups’ cases.

3. In small groups (set by the facilitator), create your own case for a future occupation of one or more of your group members, using the existing cases as a model. The case should include the following:
  - A narrative that illustrates a frequently occurring challenge that must be met in that career by workers
  - How emotion labor is performed in response to the challenge



- The potential toll emotion labor can take on workers in that profession
  - Any differences in gender, race, or other social identities that surfaced in the research
  - Strategies suggested in the study
4. Debrief. One participant from each of the breakout groups should report back with:
- A brief summary of the case
  - One or two insights that surfaced in your group discussion

Be ready to answer questions from others and to comment on connections you see with other groups' cases.