

# Psychological Explanations and Interventions

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# Emotions and functions of emotions

Emotions are defined as ...

*“a conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioural changes in the body.”*

[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion)

**Characteristics and functions** (Garfinkel & Critchley, 2015):

**Motivational function:** emotions carry value (positive or negative valence) and intensity (linked to arousal) and therefore guide behavioural responses (e.g. aggression)

**Communication function:** Basic emotions can be recognized and identified by others, reflecting social communicative nature

Basic emotions are universal: e.g. anger, fear, sadness, disgust, and happiness

# Conflicts and road rage from the perspective of “real” conflicts

## Conflicts resulting in road rage:

- Conflict over road space (“space wars”)
- Conflict over blocked goals
- Value based conflicts

## There are short term and long term outcomes

Conflicts are defined as ...  
“competitive or opposing action of  
incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of  
divergent ideas, interests, or persons)”

[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion)



# Conflicts on the road and strategies to handle conflict



There are four basic strategies to handle conflicts:

1. contending
2. problem solving
3. yielding
4. inaction

# Road conflicts from the perspective of intergroup relations

## Social categorization processes

Social representations  
Stereotypes and biases

## Ingroup-outgroup processes

Social identity processes

## Improving intergroup relations:

Intergroup contact  
Negotiation  
Re-categorization



## Measures (based on psychological explanations) 1/3

Structural approaches:

- Fairness of distribution of road space
- Avoid conflict (separation of road users)
- Incentives and punishment
- Regulations and laws



## Measures (based on psychological explanations) 2/3



Social and psychological approaches:

- Communication**
- Social contact**
- Collective actions**
- Create superordinate goals
- Negotiation and participation
- Perspective transfer
- Mutual respect

## Measures (based on psychological explanations) 3/3

Social and psychological approaches:

- Communication
- Social contact
- Create superordinate goals
- Negotiation and participation
- Perspective transfer**
- Mutual respect



## References

Garfinkel, S. N., & Critchley, H. D. (2015). Emotion and Stress. In Brain Mapping (pp. 983–991). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-397025-1.00121-4>

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# Emotions and functions of emotions

## Definition:

Emotions refer to a subset of stereotyped short-term [...] reactions that encompass experiential (cognitive) and physiological states with accompanying action tendencies [...]. Critically, emotions carry value (positive or negative valence) and intensity (linked to arousal), yet the concept of emotion goes beyond reactions and states that arise directly from homeostatic need (e.g., cold, heat, hunger, breathlessness, or fatigue) or relief from such challenges (e.g., satiety). Basic emotions can be recognized and identified by others, reflecting the universality, social communicative nature, and, arguably, distinct evolutionary origins of these emotions, which include anger, fear, sadness, disgust, and happiness (Ekman, 1992; Ekman & Cordaro, 2011). Emotions are encompassed within, and reciprocally influence, a larger set of [affective states](#) that include disposition, personality, and mood (Davidson, 2002).