OUR EMOTIONS CAN HAVE AN UNEXPECTED DOWNSIDE OF HOW WE RESPOND TO OTHERS IN PAIN

Our emotional state has an effect on how much empathy we feel. Our emotions literally change the way our brain responds to others, even when they are in pain. In particular, it is when we feel bad that it can have a consequence on our social world. It is apparent that our mood can influence our behaviour in a myriad of ways, from the food choices we make – when we are in a bad mood we eat less healthily – to our friendships. When our friends are down and gloomy, the feeling can be contagious and can makes us feel more miserable too. In fact, our emotions are so powerful that when we are in a positive mood, it can dampen how much pain we feel when injured. It provides us with an analgesic-like effect. When it comes to negative emotions, the opposite occurs: our feeling towards that pain is exaggerated.

Worse, a recent study has shown that when we feel bad it affects our in-built capacity to respond to others in pain. It literally dampens our empathy. Emilie Qiao-Tasserit at the University of Geneva and her team wanted to understand how our emotions influence the way we respond to others while they are in pain. Individuals were made to feel pain with a temperature-increasing device on their leg. The team also showed participants positive or negative movie clips while in a brain scanner, in addition to making them feel pain, or when watching clips of others in pain. Did participants feel empathy towards those who they knew were made to feel pain, the team wondered. It turns out that those who watched anegative clip and then saw others in pain showed less brain activity in areas that are related to pain. This work is revealing. It shows that emotions can literally change our "brain state", and that by doing so our feelings modify how we perceive someone else's. Along similar lines, a study by Qiao-Tasserit and colleagues found that after watching a negative clip, people tended to judge a face with a neutral emotion as more negative.

A lack of empathy has other implications too. Findings show that reduced empathy will result in less money donated to charity. Brain scans reveal that we also show less empathy to those who are not in our immediate social circle, say teammates in a sports club. So why would negative emotions reduce empathy? It could be that a specific type of empathy, called empathic distress, is at play. This, explains Olga Klimecki, also at the University of Geneva, is "the feeling of being overwhelmed" when something bad happens to someone else. This type of empathy even shows very different brain activation compared to typical empathy. This kind of distress might naturally also reduce compassion. One 2016 study by Klimecki and colleagues even found that empathic distress increases aggression. Here participants were subjected to unfair scenarios and then had the chance to punish or forgive their competitors. She found that those who were more naturally compassionate reacted with less derogatory behaviour.

For Klimecki this was telling. In her extensive research on empathy she has shown that it is possible to cultivate more compassionate behaviour. She found that feelings of compassionate empathy can be trained. Our emotional responses to others are therefore clearly not set in stone. This shows that we can all re-engage our inner empathy, even in the face of someone else's distress. And when we think a bit more positively it will help broaden our attention towards others' needs. "This could contribute to greater relationships, a key factor of happiness," says Qiao-Tasserit.

So next time you are in a foul mood, consider the effect it might have on the people you communicate with day-to-day. .   By Melissa Hogenboom, *BBC*

PREMIOS EXTRAORDINARIOS DE BACHILLERATO 2017/18

Ejercicio de INGLÉS   CLAVE _____   PÁG Nº 2

1.- **Write a comment on the article, giving your opinion about how empathy can cause physical pain.** Your comment should have at least a hundred words. (4 points)

2.- **According to the text, does any research show that watching a video can affect the way we interpret someone's feelings?** Use YOUR OWN words to answer. (1 point)

3.- **Explain, in YOUR OWN words, what the writer means when she says**: "Our emotional responses to others are clearly not set in stone". (1 point)

4.- **Match four words taken from the text to these synonyms:** (2 points)
a) soften (1st paragraph)
b) severe sorrow (3rd paragraph)
c) absence (3rd paragraph)
d) revealing (4th paragraph)

5.- **Rewrite the following sentence using the passive voice**: (1 point)
"It provides us with an analgesic-like effect"

6.- **Rewrite the following sentence using reported speech**: (1 point):
Did participants feel empathy towards those who they knew were made to feel pain, the team wondered.

CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN Y CALIFICACIÓN
IMPORTANTE: Toda la prueba debe realizarse en inglés.
La prueba se calificará con un máximo de 10 puntos y habrá que obtener al menos cinco puntos para superarla. La distribución de los puntos será la siguiente:
Ejercicio 1º: Su puntuación máxima es de 4 puntos. El texto debe tener una extensión mínima de 100 palabras. Se valorará:
- que el texto esté bien estructurado,
- que se organicen los argumentos de manera lógica,
- que se empleen elementos lingüísticos adecuados para dotar al texto de cohesión y coherencia,
- que se use léxico adaptado al contexto y al propósito comunicativo que se
- persigue,
- que el texto se ajuste con consistencia a los patrones ortográficos, de puntuación y de formato de uso común.

Ejercicios 2º y 3º: Cada uno de ellos puntúa un máximo de 1 punto. Las respuestas deben tener la forma de un pequeño texto escrito con un mínimo de 20 palabras. Se valorará que se identifique la información detallada del texto y algunas implicaciones. Asimismo, se valorará la utilización de términos y estructuras diferentes de las que aparecen en el texto.
Ejercicio 4º: El ejercicio puntúa como máximo 2 puntos. Se calificará con 0,5 cada palabra o sintagma correctos. En este ejercicio se evalúa el reconocimiento de léxico común.
Ejercicios 5º y 6º: Cada uno puntúa como máximo 1 punto. Se evalúa que se saben utilizar correctamente las estructuras morfosintácticas, sin errores que conduzcan a malentendidos.