

# Should we ignore negative emotions?

*By Renee Norris, MBACP 08 July 2018*

A splinter in your finger or a pebble in your shoe are both uncomfortable physical sensations. If we experience either, we are encouraged to reach for the tweezers or take our shoe off, to relieve our discomfort.

When we feel anxious, sad or angry for example, we are presented with a host of uncomfortable physical sensations. Some of the physical sensations can be dizziness, heart palpitations, tummy discomfort or muscle tension.

Like with the splinter or the pebble we seek to remedy the situation. We ask questions and investigate. We draw our attention to the discomfort and without much thought we are able to take action because we've dealt with this before and it worked, therefore we know that a pair of tweezers will help the pain experienced by the splinter.

What do we do when we experience uncomfortable emotions? Do we pay close attention or do we label these sensations (called feelings) and ignore them?

Whether we think an emotion is "good" or "bad" it is part of a group. Emotions come as a package not in isolation. When we discount our feelings by minimising them, we are in some way doing this for all feelings and emotions. If we succeed in dampening one, we might discover that the ones we desire such as joy, love or pride are dampened as well.

So it is easy to see how we can get into a sticky situation where we no longer experience healthy emotional levels and feel flat, we could be heading for depression. Another extremity is feeling too much emotion and being overwhelmed when we can no longer manage emotions in a healthy way which could be anxiety. If you are nodding your head and thinking "yes, I can see that" and want to learn new healthy ways of managing your emotional discomfort, I would encourage you to give time to the negative emotions as well as positive. This does not mean to say that we pity ourselves.

I will leave you with this question - "are you seeking relief from an emotional splinter?"

