

Behavioral tools



Institute November 30, 2009 Behavioral tools-Humor/laughter Friends usually share emotions through laughter, sensitive feelings, exchange of ideas and advices, reinforcement support and sometimes anger and anxiety. The most common emotion is humor among friends of all age groups. Humor creates laughter which establishes or restores a positive emotional climate and a sense of connection between two people and take pleasure in the company of each other (Marano, 2003). Laughter is known to be physically beneficial too. Parisi and Smith (p. 216) assert that laughter can build trust between two people; for this, the laughter should be able to make the two people relate themselves or something of their knowledge to the sentiments of laughter. On the contrary, plastic or unrelated humor also generates laughter but fails to signal anything about their connection. According to Parisi and Smith (p. 217), 'laughter between sincere friends is open, unreserved, and joyful. Laughter provides the bonding gains of increased mutual trust that permit parties to exploit profitable opportunities.'

Exemplifying this statement is one of my friends who is known to have the best sense of humor in our group. We consider this friend as lively, bubbly, and full of enthusiasm. He is also extremely smart and a go-getter. He knows the knack of converting any kind of situation or moment, whether serious, dull, tiring, and anxiety, to a lively atmosphere filled with laughter. Applying Freud's postulation that pleasure attached to humor makes one think like a child and thereby escape the constraints of rationality and logic on cognitive functioning (Levine, 9). This is precisely my friend does most of the times, either to convince people unto doing something that they do not intend, to divert attention of individuals or groups or even to drive home the point he wants to make.

Instances of potential disruption between friends and within families were also regulated through his humor by a simple distraction of thought processes and emotions of the people involved in such situations. Laughter is said to reduce tensions and naturally arising hostilities in relationships. Although the intention behind cracking jokes is to induce laughter and distract people from usual boredom or impending emotional disturbances, it may also lead to serious consequences. One such instance can be traced to the day our final results were announced. All except one of our group members had cleared the examination, and this certainly was a sad moment for all of us. In an attempt to lighten everyone's feelings, this friend cracked a joke. Although he was successful in generating laughter, this behavior was not accepted pleasantly by other members of the group because they felt it was a bad remark.

In conclusion, humor can change feelings, build relationships, facilitate effective communication. It can divert thoughts and behaviors through laughter. Laughter can reduce tensions and also lighten moods and emotions of humans. Hence, it can be used as an effective tool in different kinds of stress management therapies. However, it can also cause unintended and undesirable consequences. Hence situations for appreciation of humor must be assessed before attempting to use it as a medium to influence others.

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