

## Neurodivergent-Affirming Emotional Dictionary - Fear Based Emotions

---

This reference table provides neuro-affirming, clinical-coaching aligned definitions and coaching strategies for understanding fear-based emotions. It is intended for professional use within The School of Life's CPD-accredited Neurodiversity Life Skills Coach Training Programme.

<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Neurodivergent-Affirming Definition</b>	<b>Supportive Coaching Strategy</b>
Anger	An activation response to perceived threat, boundary violation, or sensory overwhelm; may mask hurt or fear.	Help client identify underlying unmet need; introduce pause strategies before communication; use boundary-setting scripts.
Anxiety	Heightened alertness or physiological arousal linked to uncertainty, change, or sensory overload.	Teach grounding, predictability routines, and reframing techniques; normalise body responses.
Frustration	A tension state arising when effort does not meet outcome or executive functioning is blocked.	Coach realistic planning; break tasks into steps; support self-compassion for cognitive load limits.
Fear	Protective emotional signal triggered by perceived danger or rejection; may be real or anticipatory.	Acknowledge fear as valid data; use exposure in safe increments; strengthen regulation tools.
Overwhelm	Emotional and cognitive flooding due to excess input or task demand; common in ADHD/autism.	Coach sensory regulation breaks; teach prioritisation; introduce visual scheduling.

Irritation	Low-intensity anger often triggered by repeated small stressors or sensory discomfort.	Identify environmental or relational triggers; apply micro-regulation (movement, stretching).
Guilt	An emotion of responsibility for perceived harm or error, often magnified by RSD or perfectionism.	Distinguish factual responsibility from emotional over-identification; encourage self-forgiveness practices.
Shame	Internalised belief of unworthiness or defect; may arise from social rejection or masking fatigue.	Reframe through self-acceptance and identity affirmation; build safe feedback loops.
Embarrassment	Transient social discomfort from perceived social error or exposure.	Normalise imperfection; model humour and perspective-taking; reinforce safety cues.
Disappointment	Response to unmet expectations or outcomes; may trigger sadness or withdrawal.	Support adaptive expectations; highlight learning outcomes; plan small achievable goals.
Resentment	Stored anger from perceived injustice or imbalance in effort versus reward.	Coach assertive boundary setting; re-evaluate reciprocity in relationships.
Jealousy	Fear of loss of attention, connection, or opportunity to another.	Explore underlying attachment needs; build self-value and communication of reassurance needs.
Envy	Desire for qualities or possessions of others; linked to comparison thinking.	Shift focus to personal progress metrics; cultivate gratitude practices.

Insecurity	Chronic uncertainty about self-worth, competence, or social acceptance.	Develop evidence-based self-confidence plans; reinforce strengths recognition.
Distrust	Protective stance based on prior invalidation or betrayal; safety system response.	Encourage slow trust-building; clarify communication expectations explicitly.
Suspicion	Hyper-vigilant interpretation of others' motives; may arise from trauma or masking fatigue.	Coach perspective-checking; promote direct questioning for clarity.
Rejection	Emotional pain following exclusion or invalidation; intensified by RSD sensitivity.	Acknowledge the physiological impact; guide through self-soothing and reframing exercises.
Loneliness	Sense of disconnection or lack of belonging even when among others.	Build social energy management plans; foster value-based connection over quantity.
Hopelessness	Loss of perceived control or optimism; may follow chronic stress or failure cycles.	Introduce strength evidence; create micro-goals to restore agency; monitor for depressive risk.
Powerlessness	Belief of inability to influence outcome; common in hierarchical or rigid systems.	Use cognitive reframing; identify controllable elements; encourage advocacy skills.
Discouragement	Reduced motivation following effort without reinforcement or recognition.	Use success tracking tools; rebuild self-efficacy with graduated challenges.

Confusion	Cognitive disorganisation often linked to overload or unclear social rules.	Provide structure and clarify ambiguity; use written or visual explanations.
Worry	Repetitive anticipatory thought about possible negative outcomes; linked to anxiety loops.	Introduce scheduled worry time or journaling; apply CBT-informed thought mapping.
Regret	Emotional response to perceived wrong choice; self-reproach mixed with learning opportunity.	Guide toward meaning-making; focus on behavioural change not rumination.
Helplessness	Learned response to repeated failed attempts; may present as emotional shutdown.	Coach reactivation through small wins; reinforce self-efficacy statements.
Fear of Conflict	Avoidant response due to prior negative experiences of confrontation or emotional overload.	Role-play safe assertiveness scripts; reframe conflict as information exchange.
Self-Doubt	Internal questioning of competence; often linked to perfectionism or external comparison.	Normalise doubt as part of growth; develop evidence lists of competence.
Defensiveness	Protective mechanism to avoid perceived criticism or threat to self-image.	Teach curiosity over protection; model reflective listening before responding.

© The School of Life (Pty) Ltd