Exercise: Acknowledging Differences

When managing negative emotions in the workplace, a range of considerations are important. One critical aspect relates to the diverse characteristics of the workers involved. Awareness of emotions, and comfort and openness in speaking about emotions, varies by sex, age, personality, cultural background, and ethnicity. The most effective managers attempt to understand their workers’ individual characteristics related to emotions and emotional reactions. These managers then use this information to create personalized strategies for addressing the negative emotions of different workers.

Think of a situation in which you dealt creatively with a distressed employee who demonstrated a particular characteristic or style. Describe the situation and characteristic/style here:

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____________________________________________________________________________

How did you approach the situation differently than you might have with another worker who did not share that characteristic/style?

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What cues prompted you to approach the situation differently than you might have otherwise?

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____________________________________________________________________________

Are you glad you approached the situation the way you did? Why or why not? What would you have done differently, if anything?

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Reflect on the range of differences among your workers, and how you might take different approaches with each of them when dealing with negative emotional reactions.