THE NINE AFFECTS

Recognizing the basic signals beneath emotional experience.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Silvan Tomkins described nine innate **affects**: patterns that help us respond to what is happening. An affect is not a moral failure or a diagnosis. Recognizing these signals can help us respond with curiosity and Consideration instead of judgment.

2 POSITIVE AFFECTS

INTEREST / EXCITEMENT

Drawn toward something new, meaningful, or engaging.

ENJOYMENT / JOY

Pleasure, delight, relief, or satisfying connection.

1 NEUTRAL AFFECT

SURPRISE / STARTLE

A brief reset that interrupts what you were doing and directs attention to something unexpected.

6 NEGATIVE AFFECTS

DISTRESS / ANGUISH

Pain, discomfort, or unmet needs.

FEAR / TERROR

Alarm when danger is perceived.

ANGER / RAGE

Mobilization when blocked or threatened.

SHAME / HUMILIATION

Pain when positive connection is interrupted.

DISGUST

Strong rejection of something unpleasant.

DISMELL

Turning away from an unwanted object or experience.

THE CARES LEARNING LENS

Biology: affects • **Psychology:** feelings • **Biography:** emotions shaped by experience. This is a practical teaching distinction, not a rigid scientific separation. Our response should consider the person, not merely label the feeling.

Framework: Silvan S. Tomkins, Affect Theory. See IIRP, "The Next Step: Developing Restorative Communities," and the Tomkins Institute.

COMPASS OF RESPONSE

Four common ways shame may shape our response.

When shame is activated, we may withdraw, turn against ourselves, avoid the discomfort, or attack others. CARES uses **Compass of Response** for reflective learning; the original framework is Donald Nathanson's *Compass of Shame*.



A RESPONSE IS NOT YOUR IDENTITY

These patterns are understandable protective responses, not permanent personality types. Noticing your direction creates room to choose a response that preserves dignity and responsibility.

YOUR REFLECTION

Which response shows up for you under stress? What would help you pause, name what matters, and remain accountable without shame? You may choose reflection or trusted support rather than addressing everything alone.

Original model: Donald L. Nathanson, Compass of Shame. Educational reflection only; not a diagnostic or facilitation tool.