

Frustration

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will discuss an emotional reaction known as frustration, identify causes of frustration and explore the typical reactions to it. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Frustration
 - a. Obstacles
 - b. Factors
2. Reactions to Frustration
 - a. Agression
 - b. Displaced Aggressive Reaction
 - c. Escape

1. Frustration

The body reacts to negative events and stressors within the environment in different ways.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** Stress is a reaction that a person's mind and body have to sudden changes within a person's environment. It causes a person to become excited and prepare for a fight-or-flight response.

These reactions are normal and helpful in some ways, like if you need to escape from something dangerous. They can also be harmful, particularly to a person's mind and behavior.

Frustration is a type of emotional reaction that occurs when a person can't do something that they want, or they can't reach their desired goal. In other words, the person is blocked in one way or another.



TERM TO KNOW

Frustration

An emotional reaction that occurs when a person cannot do what he or she wants to reach his or her goal

1a. Obstacles

There are different factors that affect the feelings of frustration that a person experiences. The obstacles in the way of a person can be characterized as:

- External, meaning something physical in the environment, like a broken-down car that prevents you from getting somewhere.
- Social, when another person is your obstacle, like a guard or a bouncer that refuses to let you into a nightclub.
- Personal, when you yourself are the obstacle, as in being physically unable to perform a task.

1b. Factors

Other factors can increase feelings of frustration, such as:

- The strength of the barrier
- The urgency of the goal
- The importance of the goal
- The frequency at which a particular barrier occurs

Frustration can lead to stress and anxiety within a person and can increase instances of mental health-related issues. This, in turn, can lead to physical issues as well because of the effect that stress can have on a person's body.

2. Reactions to Frustration

There are several typical reactions to frustration.

Some reactions to frustrations are positive, such as:


- Persistence: When a person continues to work towards their goal, they work harder, or they increase their efforts to reach that goal.
- Variance: A person can vary their attempts to reach that goal, trying different approaches or looking for alternatives.

Some reactions to frustration can be negative, such as:

- Aggression
- Displaced aggressive reaction
- Escape

2a. Aggression

Aggression is a response where a person attempts to harm someone or something else. While aggression can be helpful at times--like if an animal is threatening a person--in most situations, aggression is socially unacceptable. Aggression can be a more likely reaction for someone if they themselves have witnessed aggression as a reaction to frustration.

 **EXAMPLE** Studies have shown that when a person is faced with a frustrating situation, they are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors if they are exposed to movies or games that are violent.



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Aggression

A response to frustration where a person attempts to harm someone or something

2b. Displaced Aggressive Reaction

Displaced aggressive reaction is when a person might take out their frustration on something that is completely unrelated.

➦ **EXAMPLE** When you get really frustrated at something that happens at work, you might turn around and kick your chair.

Scapegoating is a form of displaced aggression, when a person or a group of people that are not at all responsible for a situation are blamed for it, and some aggressive action is taken towards them.



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Displaced Aggression

A response where a person takes out frustration on something completely unrelated

Scapegoating

When a person or group of people that are not responsible for a situation are blamed

1c. Escape

Escape refers to moving away from an obstacle and the goal itself. A person abandons what is causing the frustration, either psychologically or physically. A person can either withdraw mentally or literally walk away from the obstacle that is blocking them. This can be positive if the goal is impossible or an obstacle is insurmountable, but it can be negative if a person gives up on or abandons something that is very important to them. Escape can also be negative if a person turns to things like drugs or alcohol as a way of escaping from frustrating situations.



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Escape

Moving away from the obstacle and the goal; abandoning what is causing frustration



SUMMARY

Frustration is an emotional reaction when a person is unable to gain what they want or reach a goal. The types of obstacles that can cause frustration can be external, social, or personal. Frustration can lead to stress and anxiety, which can cause physical effects as well. There are several typical **reactions to frustration**. Positive reactions include persistence and variance. Negative reactions can include aggression, displaced aggression (including scapegoating), and escape.

Good luck!



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Aggression

A response to frustration where a person attempts to harm someone or something.

Displaced Aggression

A response where a person takes out frustration on something completely unrelated.

Escape

Moving away from the obstacle and the goal; abandoning what is causing frustration.

Frustration

An emotional reaction that occurs when a person cannot do what he or she wants or reach his or her goal.

Scapegoating

When a person or group of people that are not responsible for a situation are blamed.