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Canada

Official Languages Centre of Excellence

Managing Emotions for Linguistic Security

Forum on
Official Languages Best Practices

WORKSHOP

February 9, 2022

From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

presented by Louise Varagnolo, Strategic Advisor and Certified Integral Coach

Adapted content from French psychiatrist Christophe André's research / Mentorshow

Managing emotions for linguistic security

- Are you having trouble understanding the emotions that make you insecure when speaking in a second language?
- Would you like to better understand your unmet needs in this context of communication?
- Would you like to replace your negative thoughts with alternative ones?

If so, this workshop is for you!

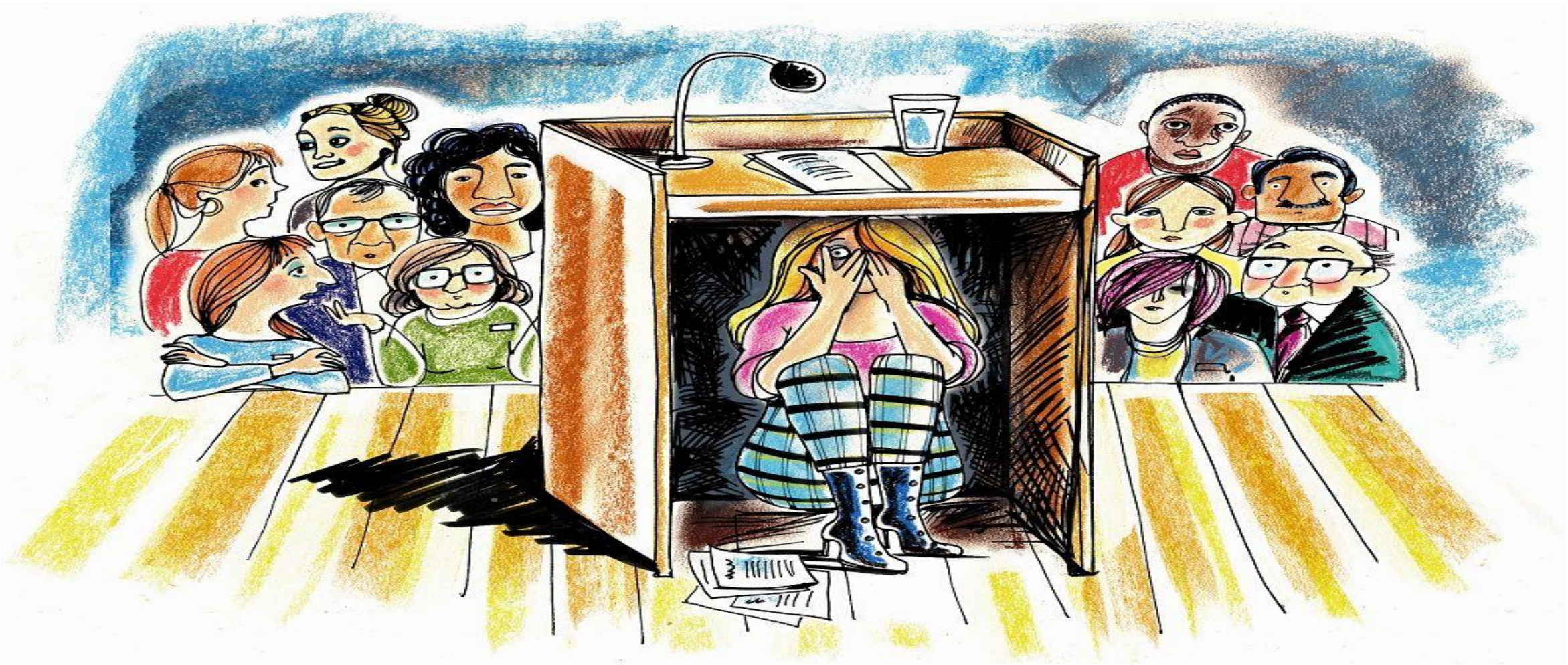
Managing or regulating emotions can help foster linguistic security by reducing certain fears or discomforts. Through information sharing, discussions, and a few exercises, this workshop will allow you to further your understanding of the causes of linguistic insecurity and some emotions management strategies. You will also be able to use what you learned to increase your risk-taking and language resilience in the official second language.

Intentions

Through information sharing, discussions, and a few exercises you will:

- Further your understanding of concepts related to linguistic insecurity and managing emotions.
- Be able to use what you have learned to improve your linguistic security.
- Have access to a complementary resource kit.

Linguistic Insecurity (LI)



https://www.franceinter.fr/

Concepts (1 of 2)

What

- Fear of not being competent enough in one's first or second official language.
- Feeling of discomfort and anxiety, coupled with the fear of making mistakes, being ridiculed and of bothering others.

Who

- Experienced more often in a linguistic minority context and/or by people who learn an official second language and must use it at work.

What are the consequences and causes?

Concepts (2 of 2)

How

- One of the major reasons that limits the effective use of both OLs within federal institutions.
- Can lead to loss of acquired knowledge and abandonment of an official language.

Causes

- Varies by individual. They may include personality traits, individual mentalities and beliefs, emotions management, the environment, etc.

Emotions

What are they and how could they be grouped together?

Concepts and contexts

- **Emotions are difficult to define**
  - Come before speech = impression/feeling
  - Generally include body and mind
  - They are often felt before they are understood

- **They represent an archaic animal legacy, triggered to save oneself. A survival instinct!**
  - They refer to a quick and imprecise tool because they are automatic and intuitive
  - Refer to a considerable margin of error
  - Are a big problem for reasoning, because they are a barrier to thinking …

Clusters of Emotions (1 of 2)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Clusters of Emotions (1 of 2)

Anger

Disgust

Fear

Surprise

Love

Joy

Sadness

Confidence

Shame

What is your current emotional state?

When you think about using your L2, what emotions come up?

EXERCISE 1

Exercise 1 – Analyze your emotions

Note your emotional activation when you need to use your L2.

Components	Emotional activation	Analysis
Positions	Positive/Negative Pleasant/Unpleasant	
Intensity	High Average Low	
Manifestations	Fear, sadness, ...	

What is emotional regulation?

Emotional regulation

- **It's an art!**
  - We need to make efforts to reap the benefits because it is up to us to work on our emotional regulation.
  - We can regulate our emotions and prevent them from taking control:
    - It's like you're playing sports – developing muscles
    - It's like making new paths in nature (Elephant path) – new *neural connections*

- **It's about developing our ability to pay attention and shape:**
  - our thoughts (inner voice), our emotions, our behaviours
    - for a desired outcome—**not** to make them disappear but to view them as allies, to decode and control them

- **Negative emotions are often linked to unmet needs.**
  - Example: concern/fear = not in control; anger = feeling wronged

Managing emotions

- More and more **neuroscientific research** points to the importance of paying attention to our inner thoughts, emotions and physiological reactions—and their impact on our well-being.

  Behaviours:

  - **physiological:** Clinical signs of fear – muscle tension, increased heart rate, perspiration
  - **psychological/thought:** Negative inner voice, sabotage
  - **emotional:** Fear, anxiety, sadness, ...

- If you work on an emotion without controlling it, you will become **the champion** of that negative emotion!

  You should therefore know how to use them and not be dominated by them:

  1. Recognize them early on
  2. Welcome them
  3. Understand where they come from
  4. Observe how they manifest themselves
  5. Decide what to do with them: stop them, amplify them,...

EXERCISE 2

Exercise 2 – Analyze your unmet needs

- Think about your thoughts/emotions/behaviours in the context of LI.
- List them.
- Identify your unmet needs when living with linguistic insecurity.
- Find relevant solutions that will help reduce your linguistic insecurity and thereby increase your linguistic security. **Ex. Letting Go**
  - What do you need? It's about harbouring positive emotions, even in the face of adversity
  - Give yourself some daily risk-taking practices

Resilience

What does it mean to you?

What science says…

- **Researcher**
  - One of the precursors to the concept = **Neuropsychiatrist Boris Cyrulnik**
  - 1993, 1st International Congress: psychologist, sociologist, biologist, doctor
- **Concept**
  - Resilience = the resumption of **new development** after trauma/injury
  - Trauma secretes substances in the brain like cortisol, which creates real emotional stress
  - We can dwell on a mistake/a pain and not recover from it or decide to **bounce back** and take risks again and dare…
  - Research also indicates that an **ecosystem** is often related to stress versus cause-effect
    - E.g.: organizational climate, leadership, self-confidence,…

HOW RESILIENT ARE YOU?

EXERCISE 3

Exercise 3 – Deconstruct your negative emotions with resilience

Situations	Degrees of emotions	Automatic thinking	Alternative thoughts

Being in the moment and breathing deeply are your best tools!

Resource Kit

Contact us at: OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca