

Swiss Center for Affective Sciences

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LECTURE SERIES

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CISA Conference
Room
Campus Biotech
9, chemin des Mines
Geneva

Emotions as Agents of Social Influence

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There is an increasing realization that emotions play a crucial role in regulating social and organizational life. Interpersonal interactions are the most commonly reported sources of emotions, and these emotions may in turn influence social behavior in various ways. Until recently, the dominant research focus has been on the intra-individual consequences of emotional experience for cognition and behavior. In this talk I advocate a more social approach to emotion, which views emotion as occurring between rather than just within individuals. I summarize a model of the interpersonal effects of emotions, which addresses the impact of one person's emotional expressions on others' emotions, cognitions, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors: Emotions as Social Information (EASI) theory. EASI theory posits that emotional expressions exert social influence via two distinct processes – an inferential process and an affective process. The social consequences of emotional expressions are proposed to depend on the relative strength of these two processes, which is in turn determined by individuals' information processing motivation and ability and by social-contextual factors that shape the perceived appropriateness of the emotional displays. I review empirical support for the model from various domains of social and organizational psychology, including conflict and negotiation, leadership and team performance, attitude formation and change, conformity in groups, and coaching and performance. ■

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