The Many Faces a Generalist Encounters: Reading Facial Expressions as a Way of Improving Doctor-Patient Communication

John Ragsdale, MD
Carla L. Spagnoletti, MD, MS
Reed Van Deusen, MD, MS
University of Pittsburgh

SADNESS

Eyes
- Medial portion of brows angled up and together (very specific)
- Upper lids lowered
- Lower lids tensed
- Downward gaze

Midface
- Cheeks raised
- Nasolabial folds accented

Mouth
- Lips stretched horizontally
- Corners pulled down
- Lower lip pushed up

ANGER

Eyes
- Brows lowered and drawn together
- Medial portion of brows angled down
- Upper lids raised
- Upper and lower lids tensed

Mouth
- Lips pressed together
- Lip vermilion thinner (very specific)
- Corners tightened
- Lips open with square shape
- Lower lip pushed up
- Jaw thrust forward

Information taken from Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life by Paul Ekman, PhD
**HAPPINESS**

**Eyes**
- Brows lowered (Duchenne smile)
- Skin between lid and brow lowered (Duchenne smile)
- Upper and lower lids tensed

**Midface**
- Cheeks raised

**Mouth**
- Smile

---

**SURPRISE**

**Eyes**
- Brows raised (not drawn together)
- Upper lids raised (briefly)

**Mouth**
- Open

---

**FEAR**

**Eyes**
- Brows raised
- Brows raised and drawn together (very specific)
- Upper lids raised
- Lower lids tensed

**Mouth**
- Open
- Lips stretched horizontally
- Jaw pulled back

---

**DISGUST**

**Eyes**
- Brows lowered (not drawn together)

**Midface**
- Cheeks raised
- Nasolabial folds accented
- Nose wrinkled

**Mouth**
- Upper lip raised

---

**CONTEMPT**

**Mouth**
- Unilateral upper lip raised
- Corner raised and tightened (very specific)

---

Information taken from *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life* by Paul Ekman, PhD
Sadness

- Medial brows angled up and together
- Upper lids lowered
- Downward gaze
- Lower lids tensed
- Cheeks raised and nasolabial folds accented
- Lips stretched and corners pulled down
- Lower lip pushed up
Medial brow angled down
Brows lowered and drawn together
Upper lids raised
Lower lids tensed
Thinner lip vermilion
Corners tightened
Lower lip pushed up
Happiness

Brows lowered
Skin between lid and brow lowered
Lids tensed
Cheeks raised
Smile

John Ragsdale, MD
SURPRISE

- Brows raised
- Upper lids raised (briefly)
- Mouth open

John Ragsdale, MD
FEAR

- Brows raised and drawn together
- Upper lids raised
- Lower lids tensed
- Lips stretched horizontally
Disgust

- Brows lowered
- Nose wrinkled
- Cheeks raised and Nasolabial folds accented
- Upper lip raised
- Lower lip raised and pushed forward