

Chapter 2


Emotionally Intelligent AI: Redefining Wellness in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence shows immense potential to revolutionize how we understand, monitor, and promote emotional wellness. Emotionally intelligent AI systems leverage advanced algorithms and machine learning to recognize, understand, and respond to human emotions. By integrating emotional AI into wellness technologies, novel solutions can provide real-time emotional support, personalized therapy recommendations, and intelligent self-care guidance tailored to each individual's needs. Nevertheless, despite its transformative potential, emotionally intelligent AI faces considerable hurdles such as stigmas surrounding mental health, privacy and security concerns and cross-cultural emotional contexts. As emotionally intelligent AI capabilities mature, the role of AI assistance versus the indispensable human therapeutic connection must be carefully delineated. Therefore, this chapter elucidates the prospects of harnessing emotional AI while providing critical insights into its potential pitfalls.

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1) EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Mental health issues are a serious problem globally and have been intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the World Health Organization (2022), approximately 1 billion people worldwide are living with mental disorders. This is concerning as most of them do not have access to effective care due to various reasons such as lack of services, unaffordable prices, and widespread stigma that prevents individuals from seeking help. Mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety are often intertwined with emotional wellness.

Emotional wellness is a critical component of overall well-being that encompasses the ability to manage and respond to one's emotional state effectively. It is a multi-faceted construct that encompasses an individual's ability to cultivate awareness, acceptance, and regulation of the full range of human emotions. It is a state of being where one can authentically experience and process emotions in a balanced and healthy manner. Emotionally well individuals experience positive feelings and are motivated to perform and be productive (Braun & Kloss, 2017). They have better self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills, which aid in navigating the complexities of life with resilience and adaptability (Ryff & Singer, 1998). On the other hand, individuals who are stressed and overwhelmed fail to regulate their emotions effectively, especially intense emotions like anger, sadness and fear. These intense negative emotions would then disrupt their emotional wellness.

In healthcare settings, emotional wellness is increasingly recognized as essential for enhancing patient outcomes, reducing the burden of chronic diseases, and promoting a healthier lifestyle. Past studies found that there are other psychological challenges that patients are experiencing, such as pain, fatigue, depression and anxiety, are disrupting the treatment plan. Therefore, promoting emotional wellness among patients by providing sufficient support and referring them to mental health professionals is recommended, as patients with higher levels of emotional well-being are more likely to adhere to treatment regimens and experience better health outcomes (Keefer et al., 2022). Patients also experienced a reduction in stress, depression, and anxiety and improved quality of life through the implementation of emotional wellness programs (Russell et al., 2020). Therefore, promoting emotional wellness is important to help patients to overcome their health issues.

Challenges in Maintaining Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellness is important for a person's functioning, however, maintaining it is increasingly challenging in today's fast-paced world. Modern lifestyle encompasses huge daily stressors such as work pressures, financial stress, and relationship and family conflicts. These stressors are overwhelming, and individuals who are

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