

Feelings

The term “feelings” can refer to physical or emotional experiences. The sensation of pain, warmth, or cold describes physical phenomena. Sensations like comfort, fear, anxiousness, and happiness describe something we experience psychologically and emotionally.

Understanding our feelings is an essential part of our human experience because feelings significantly affect how we perceive our entire existence. Our feelings help us to identify what is going on inside of us emotionally. Feelings are our body’s way to communicate how we’re experiencing our external and internal world.

Feelings allow us to experience an endless array of emotions. They are what gives us the ability to experience the joys and sorrows that life and all its ups and downs brings to us. They also help us to develop and navigate our way through relationships, make important life choices and identify our responses to events.

Anger that is not talked about and instead internalised, suppressed and denied, leads to issues of serious depression and anxiety.

Consequences of suppressed and denied feelings:

- Anxiousness, agitation and sadness
- Problems with anger, aggression and explosive behaviours
- Experiencing phobias and unexplained fears
- Struggles with eating disorders, and addiction
- Difficulty experiencing healthy relationships
- Poor communication and passive aggression
- Developing a long-standing pessimistic perspective on life
- Feelings of low self-esteem, shame, guilt, and low self-worth

To experience emotional and psychological well-being, it is crucial to learn to recognise and embrace your emotions. The next step is to learn how to verbalise your feelings effectively in order to avoid the consequences of suppressed and denied feelings.

Remember this! – We are *NOT* our feelings! We do not have to ‘act’ upon or become how we feel. In other words, just because I *feel* angry, does not mean I have to *act* angry. I can learn to appropriately and safely communicate how I feel (anger) without literally becoming my emotions (angry).

Learning to Understand Your Feelings

Our cognitions influence how we feel. This means that the way we see and perceive everyone and everything around us, impacts how we feel. We tend to follow a very simple formula in the precise order of:

- Thinking (our thinking influences how we feel)
- Feeling (what and how we feel impacts our behaviours)
- Behaving (we behave as a result of what we think and feel)

The **How I Feel** worksheet is an activity that will encourage you to learn more about your thoughts and feelings, and how to manage them. It will help you to describe your feelings, and consider the consequences of several actions you could take to deal with them. It will also help you to identify a new and healthy way to manage your emotions.

The worksheet uses examples and prompts to help you improve your emotional literacy. You will be prompted with common emotion words, and a list of helpful coping skills. It is ideal to help if you are dealing with anger, depression, or other emotional problems and are acting out behaviourally as a result.

Resources:

Feelings – How I Feel

Being in someone else's shoes

Helping Children Identify Feelings

What are feelings and why do they matter?

<https://launchcenters.com/what-are-feelings-and-why-do-they-matter/>

Feelings and Emotions

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/>

I need to talk about my feelings: Why it's important and what to do

<https://myonlinetherapy.com/i-need-to-talk-about-my-feelings/>