

Labeling Feelings: Managing Emotions

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Understanding and regulating emotions

Content Warnings: Feelings of adversity

Facilitator Tips: The Facilitator should go around the room and ensure each Participant has identified five feasible and healthy coping skills.

Key Terms: Emotional awareness, feelings, self-awareness, coping skills

Time: 60 Minutes

Materials needed: Paper, writing utensils, dice, paint or crayons/markers (for Participants 8–11 years old), Participant scenarios (for Participants 12–15 years old)

Background: Emotional self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's feelings. Once the six basic emotions/feelings have been discussed with your group, it is equally as important to identify emotions that extend anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise, and to recognize that one situation can trigger a variety of feelings, not just one. It is important that Participants know that their emotions are important and valid and should not be hidden or suppressed, rather they should be expressed and managed in a healthy manner that does not inflict harm on others or leads to other maladaptive behaviors (i.e. isolation, overeating). Paul Ekman established the six basic emotions as anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. Psychologists of all fields have recognized and accepted these as the foundation of all emotions since the 20th century and will be utilized for the sake of this lesson.

Resources:

- [30 Games, Activities and Printable to Teach Emotions to Young Kids](#)
- [Childhood101.com](#)

Discussion Questions

With your group, identify various emotions that one may experience (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise). Other examples may include:

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| • Annoyed | • Curious | • Envious |
| • Bored | • Depressed | • Excited |
| • Cold | • Determined | • Exhausted |
| • Confident | • Disappointed | • Frustrated |
| • Confused | • Embarrassed | • Hurt |
| • Content | • Energized | • Indifferent |

- Interested
- Jealous
- Lonely
- Loved
- Nervous
- Paranoid
- Proud
- Regretful
- Relieved
- Satisfied
- Sick
- Silly
- Worried

To further the discussion, ask participants the following about expressed emotions:

- I felt this way because...
- This is what I did about it...
- Something I can do or say better next time is...
- How can I have avoided the situation in the future?

Procedure

- Begin today's session by writing the following questions on the board or other visible location.
 1. I am most happy when _____
 2. I feel embarrassed when _____
 3. I think negative thoughts about myself when _____
 4. I get nervous when _____
 5. I get mad when _____
 6. Things that surprise me are _____
- Instruct Participants to sit in a circle. Then have Participants roll the dice one-by-one and fill in the blank to the corresponding number that they rolled (refer to the fill in the blanks numbered 1-6 above). You can then read them aloud to the group without stating who wrote it. This may validate a Participant's own feelings by realizing that others in the group have or currently feel similar emotions.
- Remind your group that there may be various situations that cause them to feel more than one emotion. Stress the point that each situation may trigger a very distinct emotion depending on the person; for example, while one person may feel excited about riding a rollercoaster for the first time another person may feel completely scared and worried. Emotions are subjective, and they are neither "wrong" or right."
- **Emotional Charades—for Participants that are 8-11 years of age:** have one Participant act out one scenario to the group. Select a few volunteers to act out the same scenario, then compare the different way Participants reacted. For example, one Participant may physically express excitement when acting out "riding a rollercoaster for the first time" while another expresses fear.

- The scenarios are as follows:

- Hitting a baseball through a car window
- Fighting over a toy with your brother or sister
- Saying goodbye to someone you care about
- Riding a rollercoaster for the first time
- Eating a cake
- Falling off a bike
- Breaking your favorite game
- Losing a competition
- Holding a baby
- Speaking in front of the class
- Taking out the trash
- Not getting invited to a friend's party
- Drinking spoiled milk

- **Reflection—for Participants 12+ years of age:** discuss the physical, emotional, and behavioral consequences of not managing emotions in a healthy manner. Ask for examples, and guide them with the table below:

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
Chest pains	Mood changes	Smoking
Dizziness	Inability to concentrate	Nail biting
Excessive fatigue	Nightmares	Tapping
Excessive sweating	Panic attacks	Pulling hair
Headaches	Anxiety	Grinding teeth
High blood pressure	Aggressive behavior	Excessive use of alcohol
Inability to sleep	Irritability	Misuse of Prescription drugs
Joint pains	Excessive crying	Compulsive dieting
Nausea	Thoughts of suicide	Hair chewing
Oversleeping	Depression	Nervous laughter
Rapid or difficulty breathing	Confusion	Pacing
Skin problems	Feelings of helplessness	Procrastinating
Stomach aches	Restlessness	Not caring about personal hygiene/appearance
Stomach problems (ulcers)		Overeating
Twitches (eyes, face)		
Weakness		
Weight gain or loss		

- Now shift the conversation and brainstorm healthy ways in which Participants can manage their emotions. A few examples are listed below:
 - Ask for a hug
 - Call a friend or loved one to ask for their opinion or help
 - Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths
 - Cooking
 - Crafting
 - Dancing
 - Draw a picture or color
 - Exercising/Playing a Sport
 - Gardening
 - Go outside and play
 - Listen to music or sing a song
 - Paint
 - Read a book
 - Talk to a friend
 - Write a letter, story, or song
- **High Five—for Participants that are 8–11 years of age:** have them trace their hand on a sheet of paper. Then help them brainstorm a few ideas on how they can personally manage their emotions. Once they have traced their hand, have them write down their 5 tools for managing emotions.
- **Reflection—for Participants 12+ years of age:** ask for volunteers to identify a previously acted scenario, whether it be anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, or surprise. Then have the Participant answer the following questions.
- If Participants don't volunteer, ask them to reflect on one of their six scenarios by answering the following questions directly on their paper. Help Participants identify the different components to their scenarios such as the trigger, initial response, alternative response, and how they may be able avoid the trigger/situation in the future.

Trigger	I felt this way because...
Initial Response	This is what I did about it...
Alternative Response	Something I can do or say better next time is...
Avoid Trigger	How can I have avoided the situation?