



CBT and Me – Part 2: Feeling our Feelings – VIDEO INTRO: <https://youtu.be/Ow4mmoqzmgg>

Opening Icebreaker – “I Feel You”

The purpose of this exercise is simple, which is to get the group identifying and talking openly about feelings. Make sure everyone in the group can see a feeling list. (It may make sense to print one or more of these feeling lists out if you do not have your own. People can share them)

Feelings List 1 From Hoffman Institute	Feelings List 2 From ndapandas	Feelings List 3 From Center for Nonviolent Communication
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Directions: Take turns where one person in the group picks a feeling word from one of the feeling lists and shares a brief true story where they really felt that feeling in their life. Stories should be brief but descriptive with a focus on helping others understand how you really felt and why. Everyone in the group should do their best to listen to one another and show support for these feelings' stories. When a person is done with their feeling story, if anyone in the group had a similar experience that resulted in the same (or similar feeling) that person should say “I feel you” and share with the rest of the group their similar experience with that same feeling. There may be more than one group member who has the “I feel you” experience so everyone should get a chance to share who is interested. When this follow up process is complete, resume again with the next person picking a new feeling from the list. - *Counselor: When the group is over, you may need to take some time to debrief everyone and make sure the group is ready to continue as it may take a minute after people express some more difficult feelings.*





About Feelings

Feelings have power: They can inspire and create, and they can discourage and destroy. What matters most is where and how you channel, guide and direct them.

Discussion: Read each point about feelings and discuss the questions that follow as a group

Feelings are often misunderstood – Feelings can seem mysterious or difficult to recognize and even more challenging to appropriately express. Also, it is important to be careful when learning about feelings because there is a lot of inaccurate information about feelings on the internet.

- **Does anyone identify with this and struggle a little with identifying or expressing feelings?**

- **Why can identifying and expressing feelings be a challenge?**

Feelings can be intuitive, but sometimes feelings are misleading – Our feelings may be telling us something so we should listen to them. However, it is important to also use caution as sometimes feelings can lead us to an inaccurate conclusion. Therefore, the general rule is **“Listen to and consider your feelings, but do not automatically trust them”**

- **Have you ever listened to a feeling about something, and it was helpful?** (For example, maybe you had a “creepy” feeling about a situation and got out and found out later you avoided trouble)

- **Have you ever had a feeling about someone or something and later learned the feeling was misleading?**
 - Example: feeling “love” for someone new only to learn later that the person was no good for us.
 - Example: feeling angry about something but later learning that you jumped to a wrong conclusion about what triggered your anger.
 - Example: feeling annoyed or strong dislike for someone you first meet but later that person becomes a close friend

We can let our feelings inspire our (positive) actions, but we should not let our feelings control our actions – *There’s a difference:*

- **How can feelings motivate you?** (For example, how can a person could let their feelings inspire them to make life changes)

- **Why can it be a really bad idea to let your feelings dictate your actions?** (For example, imagine saying something hurtful to someone you care about in a state of anger but later regretting it)



Feelings are subjective and influenced by time, context, surroundings as well as perception

- **Can anyone come up with an example of how feelings can change with time? - Why is it better sometimes to “sleep on it” or wait when we are confused or unsure about our feelings?**

- **How can our context and surroundings impact feelings?**
 - Example – Your friend or partner makes fun of you during a fun conversation where everyone is being playful and joking around compared with your friend making fun of you in public in front of people you don't know or who just met in a more serious setting.

- **How can new information and facts change our perception which can then change our feelings?**
 - Jumping to conclusions is a risk involved with blindly following our feelings. Why is it important to try to get the whole story before taking action on strong feelings?

Feelings are contagious

- **Has anyone had an experience where being around happy people made them feel happier or being around angry people made them angry or any example where feelings were contagious?**

Finally - There are things that all of us can do each day to better manage our feelings and make good choices in spite of challenging feelings. Think positively and soon you will feel positively

1. **Track and name your feelings** – How does identifying our feelings help with managing our feelings?

2. **We can learn more about feelings using empathy** – When listening to someone else talk, try to imagine what it must feel like for them. You can do the same when watching movies or listening to music by practicing identifying with the writer or character's feelings. This can help with our own feelings too. The more we understand feelings, the more equipped we are to handle them well.

3. **Express your feelings with someone you trust** - How does talking about our feelings help? Do you have someone in your life who you can share your feelings openly and honestly with?

4. **Learn to work with our thoughts to better manage feelings**. - Our thoughts impact our feelings so it is often better to adjust our thinking which can help us change how we feel
 - a. **Example** – “I lived my life thinking that everyone is out to get me, so I often felt uncomfortable and stressed around people” However I have learned to adjust my thinking by telling myself “Some people out there are not safe, but not everyone wants to hurt me. I have friends now”

To close the group, share a positive thought that can help inspire positive feelings. For example, thoughts of:

Gratitude, Optimism, Creativity, Love, Appreciation, Compassion, Peace, Kindness, Goodness, Joy, Acceptance, Friendship, Beauty, Admiration, Confidence, Faith, Warmth, Patience, Respect, Affection, Enthusiasm, Encouragement, Comfort, Laughter, Delight, Motivation, Inspiration, Courage, Hope

THINK POSITIVE – FEEL POSITIVE – LIVE POSITIVE