

Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum

Parent Information: Tip Sheet 5

Feelings

Children experience complex feelings just like adults. They get *frustrated, excited, nervous, sad, jealous, frightened, worried, angry* and *embarrassed*.

However young children usually do not have the vocabulary to talk about how they are feeling. Instead they communicate their feelings in other ways.

Children can express their feelings through facial expressions, through their body, their behaviour and play. Sometimes they may act out their feelings in physical, inappropriate or problematic ways.

From the moment children are born, they start learning the emotional skills they need to identify, express and manage their feelings. They learn how to do this through their social interactions and relationships with important people in their lives such as parents, grandparents and carers.

Being a parent means you have got a really important role to play in helping children understand their feelings and behaviours. Children need to be shown how to manage their feelings in positive and constructive ways.

When children learn to manage their emotions in childhood it leads to positive attitudes and behaviours later in life.



Children who learn healthy ways to express and cope with their feelings are more likely to:



Be empathic and supportive of others



Perform better in school and their career



Have more positive and stable relationships



Have good mental health and wellbeing



Display less behavioural problems



Develop resilience and coping skills



Feel more competent, capable and confident



Have a positive sense of self

Kids Help Line 2020

What can you do to help your child learn about and express their feelings?

- ✓ **Tune into cues** - Sometimes feelings can be hard to identify. Tune into your child's feelings by looking at their body language, listening to what they are saying and observing their behaviour. Figuring out what they feel and why, means you can help them identify, express and manage those feelings better.
- ✓ **Behind every behaviour is a feeling** - Try to understand the meaning and feeling behind your child's behaviour.

You can help your child find other ways to express that feeling once you know what is driving the behaviour.

- ✓ **Name the feeling** - Help your child name their feelings by giving them a label. Naming feelings is the first step in helping children learn to identify them. It allows your child to develop an emotional vocabulary so they can talk about their feelings.
- ✓ **Identify feelings in others** – Provide lots of opportunities to identify feelings in others. You might ask your child to reflect on what someone else may be feeling. Cartoons or picture books are a great way discuss feelings and helps children learn how to recognise other people's feelings through facial expressions.
- ✓ **Be a role model** - Children learn about feelings and how to express them appropriately by watching others. Show your child how you are feeling about different situations and how you deal with those feelings.
- ✓ **Encourage with praise** - Praise your child when they talk about their feelings or express them in an appropriate way. Not only does it show that feelings are normal and it's ok to talk about them, it reinforces the behaviour so they are likely to repeat it.
- ✓ **Listen to your child's feelings** - Stay present and resist the urge to make your child's sad/worried etc feelings go away. Support your child to identify and express their feelings so they are heard. When feelings are minimised or dismissed, they will often be expressed in unhealthy ways.

Name the feeling –

Help children expand their feelings vocabulary, identify feelings, express feelings and manage feelings through the use of ‘feelings cards’ games.



Daniel J. Siegel, M.D : The Whole Brain Child

Feelings cards be used in a variety of ways in the home environment including:

- Morning check in : Spread the feelings cards out on the table/floor, ask each other ‘How are you feeling this morning?’ This can create a routine of sharing feelings everyday. The feelings cards help to remind children that there are a range of emotions and will assist in building their feelings vocabulary. When other members of the family join in with the check in it

role models that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to feel and that it is ok to talk about feelings.

- Take turns in choosing a card from the stack and guess what situation the person was in to cause that particular feeling.
- Hold the cards in a fan, choose a card and talk about a time that you each felt that way, what happened and what was it like.
- Set out some toys and put a feeling card in front of each one. Take turns in speaking to each one of the toys eg "Hey Peppa Pig you look like you are feeling sad today, what happened?" This will help your child to practice how they can respond to people in different emotional situations.
- Place a set of cards face down on a stack. Turn over the top card. Have your child name the emotion and make a face to match.
- Print two sets of the feelings cards to make your own 'Concentration' style matching game. To play, spread out all cards face down. Take turns turning over two cards at a time. If you find a match, you keep that pair of cards. Also use the 2 sets to play a game of 'Snap'.
- Feelings heads (in the style of 'Celebrity Heads'). Take turns choosing a card from the pile. Hold the card overhead without looking at it. The other person mimes the feeling whilst you guess which emotion card you are holding.

Use the feelings cards in this tip sheet or create your own from clip art or photos.

Angry



Embarrassed



Nervous



Happy



Annoyed



Excited



Proud



Sad



Surprised



Worried



Hurt



Scared



The Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum includes 'feelings' as a topic in Focus Area One.

Children are encouraged to learn about the various feelings they might have in different situations, including feeling unsafe/worried/scared.

Feelings activities can provide opportunities for children to identify and label their feelings and develop the skills to talk with people on their trusted network if they need help to be safe.

We can help ourselves be safe by talking to people we trust.



Healthy and respectful relationships
create an engaging, safe and supportive environment. It also equips children and young people with the understanding of how they should be treated.

> childsafce.cewa.edu.au


CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA