

About this book

This book will help children and adults work together to understand and share feelings. It teaches healthy concepts while encouraging appropriate self-expression and concern for the feelings of others. It is designed for children ages six through twelve to illustrate with pictures they choose to draw. Younger children may need help understanding some of the words and concepts in the book, but do not offer too many suggestions. This is their book; let them make their own decisions about what to draw or write.

I recommend that a child be given a small box of new crayons to illustrate the book. While many children enjoy drawing with markers, crayons often encourage greater self-expression. Older children may prefer colored pencils.

Younger children like to illustrate books because images come more naturally to them than words. Older children are more comfortable expressing themselves verbally and may use words with their illustrations.

As you work through this book, focus on ideas and expression rather than drawing ability. Do not try to protect the child from difficult feelings. As children learn to understand and express their feelings, they develop life-long coping skills. If a drawing reveals that the child has misperceived something, correct the child gently. Remember that what a child perceives to be real is as powerful to that child as any reality.

Periodically invite the child to tell you more about his or her drawings. At the end of each section, you might explain something you have learned and ask the child to tell you something he or she has learned. When the book is completed, encourage the child to share his or her work with another adult for review and continued learning. Save the book as a keepsake of childhood memories.

Adults can help children understand feelings

Until recently, society encouraged people to repress unpleasant feelings, and many adults still have trouble sharing their emotions. Today, children are learning to recognize and verbalize feelings in school. They need parents and other adults to help them understand emotions and model acceptable forms of expression. They also need to develop sensitivity to the feelings of others.

Parents may be unaware of a child's emotions. Children often go into their rooms to cry alone, or act out feelings in problematic behaviors that seem unconnected with any recent event. It is important for children to express their feelings, especially at times of divorce, illness, death, and other changes. If they are unable to express grief, they may learn unhealthy ways of coping.

Magical thinking and a false sense of power over events may leave young children feeling guilty about things they did or did not do. They can learn to share feelings of guilt and accept that bad thoughts do not make bad things happen.

Shy children find it difficult to develop social skills and often feel unhappy about being alone. Parents must acknowledge these feelings and provide opportunities for socialization while children are young.

Anger is another difficult emotion. Young children first feel anger in the mouth, hands, or feet. They may want to bite, yell, hit, or kick. When they learn this isn't acceptable, they begin to repress their feelings, stuffing them in the stomach, head, or back. This leads to aches and pains.

Painful feelings will not just go away. Avoidance complicates feelings, but sharing draws people together. The Feelings Person exercise in this book will teach children and adults to more easily recognize their emotions. Once feelings are experienced internally, they can be released in appropriate ways.

This book is intended to help children:

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|-------------|---|-------|
| I. | Know that feelings are important
Develop an interest in learning about feelings
Accept that all feelings are O.K.
Understand that feelings affect actions
Identify feelings that are difficult to share | 1-4 |
| II. | Understand their feelings
Recognize and name personal feelings
Identify repressed feelings
Discover the relationship between feelings and behaviors
Learn about defenses | 5-10 |
| III. | Feel good about themselves
Recognize individual strengths
Increase communication
Develop new interests and skills
Build self-esteem | 11-15 |
| IV. | Accept that feelings can be difficult
Identify difficult feelings
Discover ways to cope with difficult feelings
Develop greater understanding of feelings
Recognize that feelings change | 16-28 |
| V. | Know that others have feelings too
Identify actions that make others uncomfortable
Develop respect and concern for others
Learn positive ways to express negative feelings
Develop mature ways to express feelings | 29-32 |

To children

This is your book. You will make it different from all other books by drawing your own thoughts and feelings. You do not need any special skills to illustrate the pages. Just use lines, shapes, and colors to draw the pictures that come into your head as you read the words on each page.

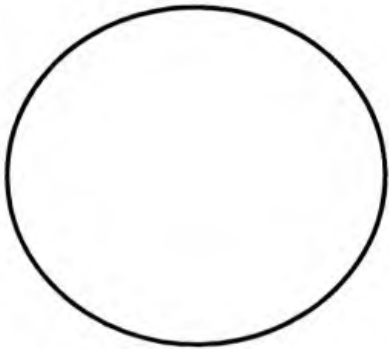
Begin with the first page and do the pages in order. Ask an adult for help with words or pages you do not understand. When you have done a few pages, stop and share your work with an adult who cares about you.

Everyone has all kinds of feelings and they are all O.K. It is what you do with them that matters. You can control your behavior.

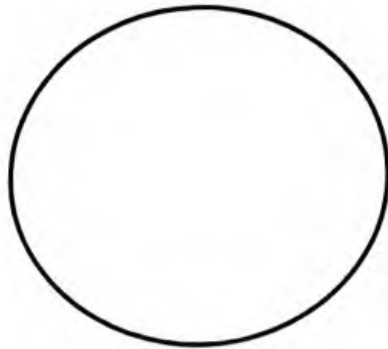
I hope you will have fun with this book while learning to accept and express your feelings and care about the feelings of others.

Feelings come from what I see and think. They may show on my face.

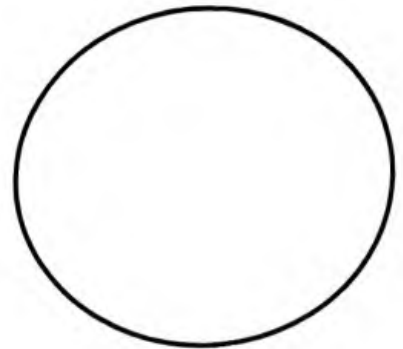
(Draw some feeling faces.)



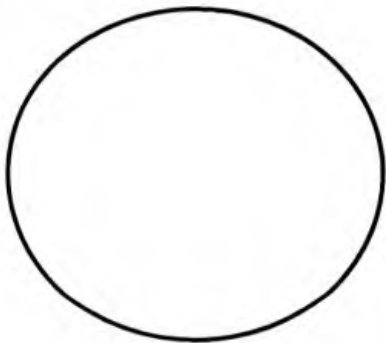
sad



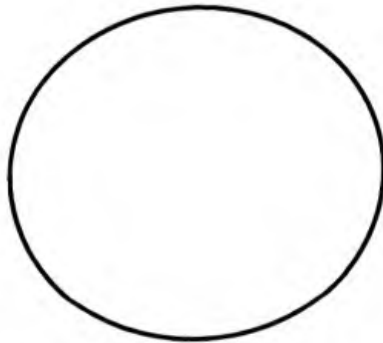
happy



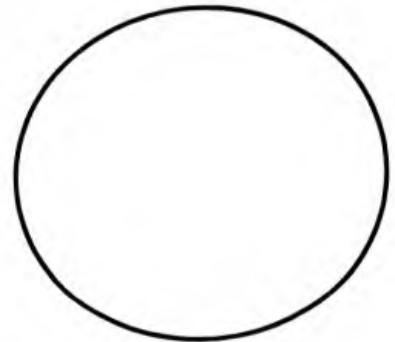
angry



scared



excited



embarrassed

Feelings are all O.K. Feelings are important.

When I don't want anyone to see me cry, I go somewhere else.

(Draw a picture of where you go to hide your crying.)

No one can comfort you if you cry alone. Crying to let sadness and pain out is always O.K.

I remember a time I felt very happy.

(Draw that time.)

It is good to remember happy times and happy feelings.