

Module WR-M6

Describing and monitoring feelings

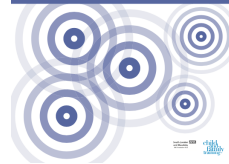
Content

- Helping the child to describe, measure and monitor their feelings and get a better appreciation of how feelings can be affected by different events in both positive and negative directions
- The child gaining, through this process, an understanding of the factors that affect their feelings and how these can be influenced.

Materials

- h** Handout
- n** Practitioner notes
- r** Record
- w** Worksheet


- Paper and coloured pencils
- Notebook
- Feelings thermometer [WR-8] **w**
- Identifying feeling states [WR-9] **w**
- Body maps [WR-3] **w**
- Thinking-feeling-doing [WR-10] **w**



Main steps

Feelings thermometer and monitoring feelings

Encourage the child to draw a thermometer with a scale of 1 to 10. If the child finds this too difficult you can help. Depending on the child's main difficulties, the scale can be used to rate happiness (mood problems), worries (anxiety problems) and distress (trauma problems).



Practitioner: Tell me, how would you rate how you are feeling right now on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the happiest you have ever been and 1 being the most upset you have ever been?

Child: 5.

Practitioner: In the last week, how low have you felt on this scale?

Child: 2.

Practitioner: Did anything happen that day that made you feel so bad?

Child: ...

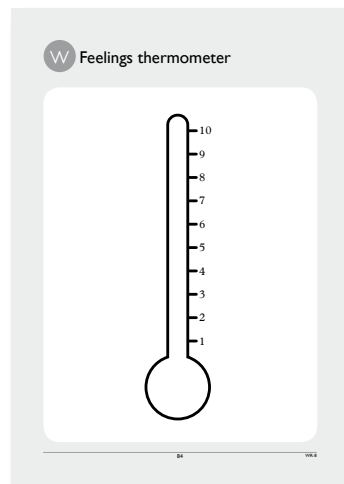
Practitioner: In the last week, what was the high point on this scale ?

Child: 7.

Practitioner: Did anything that day make you feel better?

Child: ...

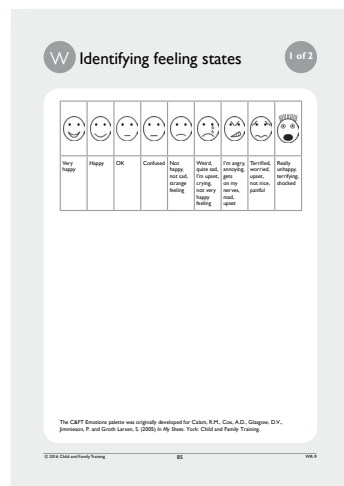
In each intervention session, you will get the child to rate their feelings in this way so that you can track progress over time and get a picture of the child's pattern of responding to events.



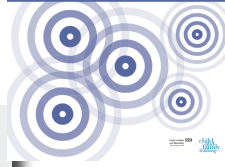
The 'feelings detective'

In utilising the notion of the 'feelings detective' the child is encouraged to investigate and function like a detective, paying attention to various clues and other signs to determine how they or another person feels. ('A feeling is on the inside of your body so you can't see it. So, how do you know how you're feeling?')¹⁰

Using 'Identifying feeling states' [WR-9], encourage children and young people to identify these expressions and to recall what might have provoked that feeling. In this way, begin to talk about the cycle of triggers, thoughts and feelings.



¹⁰ Kolko, D.J. and Swenson, C.C. (2002) *Assessing and Treating Physically Abused Children and Their Families: A Cognitive-Behavioural Approach*. London: Sage. (p.144)



Searching for clues to construct a picture of the child's typical feeling states

Encourage the child to search for clues for feelings, like a detective, by:

- looking at their own body
- looking at their face, hands and posture
- listening to their voice, tone and volume when talking
- thinking about how their head, stomach, chest, neck and shoulders feel
- thinking about how they feel and paying attention to these clues to identify their own or someone else's feelings.



If you were being a detective and looking for clues about feelings, what would you notice about your body if you were feeling scared or worried?

You may want to use a body map and ask the child to identify areas on the body that are affected and in what ways.

You could also do this by:

- looking at a magazine or other pictures, identifying the feeling states of people in the pictures via facial or postural clues
- modelling feeling states, asking open-ended questions – e.g. how a boy might feel sad because...
- role-playing an emotional state with the child
- reading statements in different ways – e.g. an angry voice, a sad voice
- establishing how often the child has special feelings, locating when they feel sad or angry or unhappy, constructing pictures which emphasise physical sensations – e.g. butterflies in the stomach
- describing physical sensations and identifying states, helping the child identify physical sensations associated with their own feelings.



You are in the countryside and you see something that frightens you, like a large animal coming towards you. What would you feel?

You are aiming to guide the child towards describing sensations like the heart pounding, feeling that one can't breathe, sweating, butterflies in the stomach. You might want to explain that that this is a normal response to danger and the body's way of preparing to fight or to run.

