

# How to Use the Feelings Wheel

## Introduction

When children are young, we frequently discuss feelings with them. These are usually very simplistic feelings like happy, mad, and sad. As children grow, their emotional vocabulary should grow too. The Feelings Wheel is a tool you can use to discuss emotions with youth.

The Feelings Wheel is part of Talk to Tweens, an emotional wellbeing program by Primary Children's Hospital. Below are some ways you can use this tool. They can be separate conversations, or flow together. Feel free to adapt them to make it your own in a way that flows naturally for you. Learn more at [talktotweens.com](http://talktotweens.com).

## Script Suggestions

### *Identifying Feelings*

As humans, we all have feelings. Our feelings change over time. Whether you are feeling happy, sad, or frustrated, there is another feeling just around the corner. Learning how to name your feelings is a good first step in learning how to manage them. The Feelings Wheel is a great tool to help you drill down into what you are feeling. Being able to distinguish a feeling is helpful because it helps you decide how you want to act. Once you can name it, you can accept it, then decide how to respond. How you manage feeling jealous may be different than how you manage feeling stressed.

### *Feeling Multiple Things at Once*

It's very common and OK to have multiple feelings at once. Sometimes they jumble up inside you and it can be difficult to understand how you are feeling. The Feelings Wheel is a great tool to help you sort out the jumble of feelings. It's ok to feel more than one thing. Being able to identify all the things you are feeling is the first step to understanding why you feel that way and how you want to act as a result.

### *Point to Your Feelings*

Sometimes it can be difficult to name your feelings out loud. The Feelings Wheel is a great tool to help you drill down into what you are feeling. Close your eyes and turn your attention inward. Focus on what's going on inside your body while taking deep breaths. When you are ready, open your eyes. Look at the Feelings Wheel and point to the word that best describes what you are feeling inside. It might be more than one.

### *Internal Feeling vs External Expression*

We all have feelings. Sometimes we show those feelings on the outside through our facial expressions, body language, gestures, and words. Other times, we can disguise what we feel on the inside by forcing the outside to present a different way. You can't always know what someone is feeling based on how they look on the outside. Look at the facial expressions on the Feelings Wheel. Does that match what you think a sad or fearful person would look like? Is that how you look when you are feeling those things? Asking those around you what they are feeling is a good way check in and notice if their inside feeling matches their expression.

## Classroom Activities

### *Masks – Inside vs Outside*

This can be done with a paper mask template or a ceramic mask. After discussing internal feelings vs. external expression, encourage the student to color or draw on the inside of the mask what they feel on the inside. Color or draw the outside of the mask for what they present to the world. Discuss how they differ and reasons why they may or may not match.

### *Paper Chain*

Prepare strips of paper in advance. After discussing Identifying feelings, encourage each student to write or draw a feeling on their paper strip. Discuss how humans are connected by feelings. Glue them together into a paper chain and hang from the ceiling as reminder of how we are all connected.

### *Connecting Feelings to Daily Life*

What songs, books, movies, or activities produce different feelings? What do you do/watch/listen to when you feel different things? This can also be done with a prepared playlist or movie clips in advance. Discuss how the same song or movie clip may produce different feelings for different people.

