

Feeleez Learning Guide
A Mini-curriculum for Teaching Feelings
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FEELEEZ Learning Ideas

A mini-curriculum for classroom teachers, therapists, home schooling families, and counselors.

Our perspective:

We believe teaching empathy is as important as teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. When children are taught to communicate effectively about feelings, their lives and relationships benefit greatly. People with developed emotional intelligence (EQ) are fulfilled, have successful careers, and contribute to our world in worthwhile ways. EQ is just as important as IQ, and more significantly, emotional intelligence can be taught. Feeleez is here to guide you in that pursuit.

Our thoughts on feelings:

- Children will feel a full range of emotions in their daily lives. The single most important thing we can give our children is the space to feel all of their feelings.
- Our feelings do not define who we are.
- Feelings are transient. They are always changing.
- It is helpful to notice feelings come and go without being attached to them.
- Every feeling is acceptable. We do not judge any feeling as bad or wrong.
- Feelings are an important source of information. When we help children trust their feelings, they are able to access this information source and make more intelligent decisions.
- In order for us to be of greatest service to our children, we need to learn to be comfortable with the full range of feelings in ourselves and in others.
- Feelings often arise in response to thoughts. Working with your thoughts can be a helpful tool for affecting emotions.

The four components of Emotional Intelligence (according to Daniel Goleman)

1. Self-awareness — the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.
2. Self-management — involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.
3. Social awareness — the ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks.
4. Relationship management — the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

Ideas for Play

These ideas are cooperative. We support cooperative play with children, believing that competition is harmful and unproductive. Competition does NOT build character, this is a myth. Cooperation is our natural tendency as humans and we can encourage children to build stronger relationships with each other by providing them with cooperative play opportunities.

VERY BASIC MATCHING

Activity:

Younger children can be set up to take cards from the Feeleez game and match them to the images on the poster.

MATCHING BY MEMORY

Activity:

Spread out all Feeleez cards face down. Take turns flipping two cards at a time looking for pairs.

FEELEEZ A DAY

Activity:

Choose one feeling for each day.

“What do you see in this picture?

What do you notice about the face?

What do you notice about the body?

Put your own face and body into this position. What is this like for you? When have you felt like this before? What happened for you before you felt this way? What happened after?”

“One word for this feeling “brave”.

What are other words to describe this feeling? (e.g. courageous, daring...there is no wrong answer)”

“Today...notice if you ever feel like this, or if you see others looking like this.

See what else you can discover about this feeling today.”

Do this for each of the 25 Feeleez.

CHARADES

Activity:

One child picks a Feeleez card from the pile and acts out a feeling, including, perhaps, the events leading up to the feeling. The rest of the group attempts to guess which card was drawn.

SORTING

Activity:

Spread the Feeleez cards out face up. Let children sort the cards into groups. Allow for freedom when deciding the criteria of the groups, as children will decide on their own which categories to sort by. They can play this game many times as they look for different ways to sort.

FEELING DETECTIVE

Discussion and activity:

“We can’t see feelings. We can observe facial expressions and body positions which we think show us what a person is feeling on the inside.”

The child can partner with someone and have him/her take on the expression/position of a feeling while the other makes the observations. With a group of children, one person could stand up and show a feeling while others in the group make the observations.

“What are the eyes doing? What about the forehead? The nose? Cheeks? Position of the head? Mouth? The eyes and the mouth give you lots of information, but so does the rest of the face.

Now look at the person’s body. What position are the shoulders in? Arms and legs? These are observations. The more you are able to make keen observations, the more effective you will be as a detective. What else do you see? Look again. Can you see more?”

Each group or child can make a list of the possible feelings the person could be having based on the observations.

“When you guess a feeling based on observations of facial expressions and body positions, and possible actions you have seen, you are making assumptions or inferences. You are guessing because you can’t know for sure. How could you find out more?”

The guesses can be written on chart paper, then cut out and sorted into observations or assumptions/inferences.

FEELING OR NOT?

“Often we use words that we consider to be feelings, but they actually are not feelings at all. How can we learn the difference?”

Activity:

Write words on index cards and lay them out in the middle of a circle.

Part one

“Let’s sort these words into groups. Which ones go together? What could you call each of these groupings?”

Now re-sort into different categories. Repeat several times as interest allows. Most creative ideas will come after several sorting episodes.

Part two

“How do you know if a feeling is a feeling?”

“True” feelings are something that you experience in your body. They are universal. Everyone on the planet experiences these feelings.

“Pretend” or “false” feelings happen in your mind. They are ideas or judgments, rather than actual physical sensations. Often they have to do with something we think someone has done to us.”

The following is a list of feelings when your needs are satisfied:

AFFECTIONATE

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious

EXCITED

amazed
animated
ardent
aroused
astonished
dazzled
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
giddy
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised
vibrant

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
jubilant
pleased
tickled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
equanimous
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed

engrossed ENGAGED(cont.)	elated EXHILARATED (cont.)	PEACEFUL(cont.)
enchanted entranced fascinated interested intrigued involved spellbound stimulated	enthralled exuberant radiant rapturous thrilled	relieved satisfied serene still tranquil trusting
INSPIRED amazed awed wonder	GRATEFUL appreciative moved thankful touched	REFRESHED enlivened rejuvenated renewed rested restored revived
	HOPEFUL expectant encouraged optimistic	

These are feelings when your needs are not satisfied:

AFRAID apprehensive dread foreboding frightened mistrustful panicked petrified scared suspicious terrified wary worried	DISCONNECTED alienated aloof apathetic bored cold detached distant distracted indifferent numb removed uninterested withdrawn	PAIN agony anguished bereaved devastated grief heartbroken hurt lonely miserable regretful remorseful
ANNOYED aggravated dismayed disgruntled displeased exasperated	DISQUIET agitated alarmed discombobulated disconcerted	SAD depressed dejected despair despondent disappointed discouraged

ANNOYED(cont.)

frustrated
impatient
irritated
irked

ANGRY

enraged
furious
incensed
indignant
irate
livid
outraged
resentful

AVERSION

animosity
appalled
contempt
disgusted
dislike
hate
horrified
hostile
repulsed

CONFUSED

ambivalent
baffled
bewildered
dazed
hesitant
lost
mystified
perplexed
puzzled
torn

DISQUIET(cont.)

disturbed
perturbed
rattled
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
troubled
turbulent
turmoil
uncomfortable
uneasy
unnerved
unsettled
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
chagrined
flustered
guilty
mortified
self-conscious

FATIGUE

beat
burnt out
depleted
exhausted
lethargic
listless
sleepy
tired
weary
worn out

SAD(cont.)

disheartened
forlorn
gloomy
heavy hearted
hopeless
melancholy
unhappy
wretched

TENSE

anxious
cranky
distressed
distraught
edgy
fidgety
frazzled
irritable
jittery
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
leery
reserved
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing
nostalgic
pining
wistful

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False feelings list:

abandoned
 attacked
 blamed
 betrayed
 cornered
 criticized
 ignored
 insulted
 intimidated
 invalidated
 left out
 let down
 manipulated
 misunderstood
 neglected
 pressured
 put down
 rejected
 threatened
 unimportant
 unseen

EXPRESSING FEELINGS

The most powerful and clear way of expressing feelings is to say: “I feel.....” and state the emotion. Whenever we say: “I feel like....” Or, “I feel that ...” we are about to say a THOUGHT rather than a FEELING.

Part one.

Discussion:

“Observe how others express themselves today. Simply notice how others express their feelings in words. What do you notice? What is it like when people say “I feel...” or “I feel that...” or, “I feel like...” Can you distinguish between thoughts and feelings based on how people start to express themselves?”

“And also notice within yourself. How often are you expressing thoughts when you intend to express feelings? Simply notice without judging yourself or others. What is the impact when you state a thought? How does that feel?”

Part two.
Practice.

“Practice expressing yourself by simply stating the actual feeling. You can begin this in your own mind.”

Provide children with a physical reminder, such as a rubber band around their wrist or a sticker.

“Whenever you see the reminder, stop and say to yourself ‘I am feeling....’ Then simply state the emotion. Just notice. When you have practiced this for some time, you can begin to express yourself to others this way. What do you notice? What is the impact? How does it feel? What is it like to stop saying thoughts and start saying emotions?”

FEELING FREEZE TAG

Activity:

Throughout the day, a leader blows a whistle and everyone freezes, closes their eyes for 5-10 seconds, and checks in with their own body. They then say, shout or write: “I feel...” without an explanation.

This is a powerful practice for children and adults. In our culture, most of us have lost touch with the ability to simply feel our feelings consistently throughout each day. This is a valuable source of information for us. Our feelings guide us if we know what we are feeling.

FEELEEZ LADDER

Feelings can be thought of as existing on a continuum, from despair/depression/grief all the way to joy/elation/bliss. By helping children understand this idea, they can learn to climb the emotional ladder to help soothe themselves when they are feeling low and want to feel better.

Activity:

Put the Feeleez out in random order and ask children to line them up from bottom to top, like a ladder, with “hardest” feelings on the bottom and “easiest” feelings on top. Allow children to talk about their ideas as they put them in their own order. There is no ‘right’ answer, so give children the space to work this out themselves in the way that makes sense to them (this may vary from day to day).

Once the Feeleez are in the ‘ladder’, ask a child to work from bottom to top.

In it's simplest form, a child can just talk openly about the ladder and what it means to them. For more structure, you can ask the child to describe what the bottom rung Feeleez is thinking.

“What would be a thought that could help this person move UP to the next rung on the feeling ladder?”

For example...

“This is the worst day of my entire life. My best and I fought, my dog didn't walk with me, and my mom gave me oatmeal. I feel miserable.”

What thought could help this person move up one rung on the ladder?

Discussion:

“How could this technique help you when you are really feeling like you want to climb out of some kind of lower feeling?”

“What happens if you want to stay in the feeling you are having? Sometimes it is valuable to just stay where you are and feel that fully until it changes on it's own. You don't have to climb up, you always have the choice.”

WHAT HAPPENED?

Discussion:

“No one “makes” anyone feel anything, yet that is often how we describe things. “He made me mad”. We give away our power and create violence whenever we blame someone for something. We can become more powerful within ourselves when we realize that we choose to feel whatever we feel, no matter what anyone else does.”

Activity:

Pick two Feeleez cards and make up a story to describe what happened between these two people. First make up a story together that is full of blame. Next make up a story where each of the two people takes responsibility for their feelings.

WHAT HAPPENED THEN...?

Activity:

Ask children to think of what may have happened to a Feeleez character, and then create a story that describes how that feeling changed. Maybe an unhappy feeling was resolved. Children can then draw a picture of the Feeleez experiencing a new feeling.

For example: *“What would the girl in the bathing suit who is jumping up and down look like if she felt sad?”*

WHICH ONE IS MISSING?

Activity:

Pick out single set of Feeleez cards and lay all 25 out turned face up. While one player closes his or her eyes, have another person remove one card. Child can then guess which Feeleez is missing. This is great for memory and encouraging observation skills. This also helps children embrace a wide variety of feelings into their idea bank to grow beyond just remembering their favorite Feeleez is. This contributes to expanding emotional vocabulary.

TELL ME A STORY

Activity:

Turn all Feeleez cards over. Each person playing can pick out 3 cards to start. Each player makes up a story about the three Feeleez that they picked. Stories can include changes in each character's feelings and the player can describe how the feelings changed and what the character looked like afterwards. Next round, pick 4 Feeleez cards and create new stories. Players can also challenge themselves to continue the story from one player's plot line to the next so that stories get woven together. The ultimate finale for this game is to create a story which uses all 25 Feeleez people and that every player contributes to. This game can also be played alone where you choose as many or as few cards as you'd like and create a story. Stories can also be written to incorporate journaling/writing skills and/or drawn.

THE END OF THE DAY

Activity:

Find a comfortable place to sit together. Spread the Feeleez cards out before you, or have the poster nearby. Ask them to close their eyes, take some deep breaths, and allow their bodies to relax. They can also do a body scan, starting with their feet and moving up to their face and head, consciously allowing each part of their body to relax and release any tension.

“Let your minds begin to look back throughout the day. Open your eyes and look at the cards or poster. Look for feelings that you felt during the day.”

With older children, these can be organized sequentially. Allow the child to proceed in their own way with this. As each card is considered, encourage the child to talk about what was happening for them during the day when they felt that way.

This activity can be kept very simple, or it can become more advanced. It doesn't matter. What matters is allowing the child to use the Feeleez images to reflect on their day. They

can simply pull the cards that represent some of their feelings throughout the day, without adding any explanation or story. Or, they can tell all about what was happening when they experienced each feeling.

“Which of these Feeleez did you experience today?

Was anyone else involved?

What was going on around you?

What was it like for you to experience that feeling?

What was that feeling like in your body, today?

What thoughts went along with that feeling, before, during, and after?

What actions came out of that feeling?

What was that like?”

You can bring closure to this reflection by asking the child what they are feeling right now.

FEELING, WITHOUT ACTION

In our culture, we often want to DO something with a feeling. Action that emerges after allowing feelings to simply be is more grounded and inspired, and usually more helpful than action that is taken when in the midst of strong emotions. This activity is designed to help us feel the feeling without taking action.

Activity:

Direct children to pick a Feeleez that shows how they are feeling now, or how they were feeling recently.

Discussion:

“What was that like? What did you feel in your body? What were the thoughts that went along with this feeling?

What did you want to DO when you were having this feeling?

Often we want to ‘fix’ our feelings by taking action. For example, when you are feeling uncomfortable with something that happened between you and a friend, you want to go and talk to that friend right away to make it all better. You want to stop feeling uncomfortable and fix what you think of as the problem. But there can be something important about going deeper into the feeling before taking any action.

What would it be like to stop yourself from taking action next time you feel this way or any other strong emotion? Maybe the feeling would get more intense, stronger, because you are used to fixing it with action. What if you sat with that feeling and took deep breaths and just allowed that feeling to BE within you. What would that be like? Try it right now. Close your eyes, feel what you are feeling in your body, notice what you want to DO as a result of that feeling and don’t do it. Stay still and feel the feeling. How is that?”

FEELINGS WITH SIGNS

Activity:

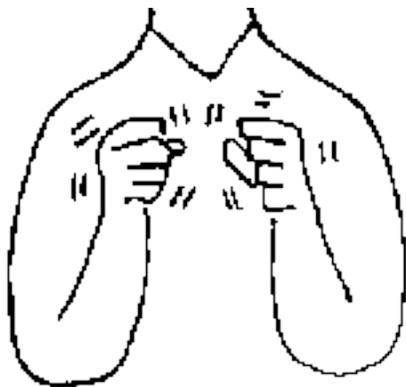
Sign language can be helpful for anyone that can't verbalize feelings, or doesn't want to. Learning the signs for feelings gives children an opportunity to play with feelings while learning a new language.



ANGRY



BORED



COLD



HAPPY



HOT



HUNGRY



INTERESTED



SAD



SICK



SLEEPY



THIRSTY



TIRED

ANGRY: Hold the right hand in front of the face, palm facing in. Bend and unbend fingers twice. Make an angry face as your hands make the sign. Unbend fingers twice.

BORED: Place the index finger of the right hand on the right nostril, rotating the wrist slightly to the front, as if you are picking your nose.

COLD: Two clenched fists 'shivering' about chest high.

HAPPY: Open hands brushing upward lightly on chest.

HOT: Take the hot (food) out of your mouth and drop it!

HUNGRY: Loosely, weakly hold an empty cup. Draw it down your throat to chest level.

INTERESTED: Place the left hand just in front of the chest (not shown in illustration) and the right hand near the nose. Then move the hands forward while closing the thumb and index fingers until touching (all other fingers remaining extended).

SAD: Spread fingers and place hands several inches in front of the face, palms in. Move hands in a downward position to indicate a flow of tears.

SICK: Middle fingers, both hands, point to head (right) and chest (left) at the same time.

SLEEPY: Hold a semi-open hand in front of your eyes, then close them gradually as you bring them down, to mimic closing your eyes.

THIRSTY: Right index finger traces a line down your throat as if following a drink down.

TIRED: Place fingertips of bent "c" hands on upper chest. Move hands in a downward motion, pivoting the hands so that each finger touches the chest as the hands rotate into the final position where fingertips point upward, no longer touching the body.

This is a very basic list. www.aslpro.com is an excellent resource for video demonstrating these signs and more.

DRAWING WTH FEELEEZ

Activity:

Set up a drawing table with the poster in view and pages for kids to draw how they are feeling, or a feeling they feel might be missing from the poster. Pages could include a blank frame for them to draw a feeling face, and a blank spot for the name of the feeling. These could be posted on a "Feelings Wall".

This would also be a fun thing to do with Polaroids or digital photos.

FEELEEZ IMPROV

Activity:

Provide a Feeleez poster, a mirror, and a set of index cards with scenarios written on them. The child can draw a card, and read a scenario: "You just got a big scoop of your favorite ice cream but right before you take a lick it falls on the ground! How do you feel?". The child then tries on the feeling while looking in the mirror or points to a feeling on the poster.

FEELEEZ BIOGRAPHIES

Activity:

Children can develop personalities for each Feeleez character.

"What is the name of this person? Is it a boy or a girl? What do you think happened? Why does he/she feel like this?"

These can be discussed, drawn, or written down.

NEXT STEP: NEEDS

After determining what a person is feeling and empathizing with them about that feeling, the next logical step in a healthy relationship might be to discuss what needs underlie the feeling.

"If someone is sad, what might they need? Help? A hug? A friend?"

Activity:

For each Feeleez character, children can decide what the character might need. They can draw this as an image, circle it from a list of needs, or act it out.

The following is a helpful, though by no means complete, list of universal needs.

CONNECTION

acceptance
 affection
 appreciation
 belonging
 cooperation
 communication
 closeness
 community
 companionship
 compassion
 consideration
 consistency
 empathy
 inclusion
 intimacy
 love
 mutuality
 nurturing
 respect/self-respect
 safety
 security
 stability
 support
 to know and be known
 to see and be seen
 to understand and be understood
 trust

PHYSICAL**WELL-BEING**

air
 food
 movement/exercise
 rest/sleep

safety

shelter

touch

water

HONESTY

authenticity

integrity

presence

PLAY

joy

humor

PEACE

beauty

communion

ease

equality

harmony

inspiration

order

MEANING

awareness

celebration of life

challenge

clarity

competence

consciousness

contribution

creativity

discovery

efficacy

effectiveness

growth

hope

learning

mourning

participation

purpose

self-expression

stimulation

to matter

understanding

AUTONOMY

choice

freedom

independence

space

spontaneity

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