

14 understanding your feelings

you need to know

The more you understand about the feelings that make you want to hurt yourself, the closer you will be to finding better ways to solve your problems.

Sometimes it is easy to understand why you feel a certain way. If someone gives you a compliment, you will probably feel happy. If someone says or does something rude to you, you will probably be angry. If someone you care about has a problem, you will probably be worried or upset.

At other times, feelings come for no apparent reason. On a beautiful, bright spring day, you might feel depressed even though nothing is really wrong. You might wake up feeling angry and irritable and yet not have any real reason for feeling this way. Sometimes our emotions seem to have lives of their own. Yet if you stop to think about your feelings, you will often find a pattern.

Most teens say that they hurt themselves as a way to control their upsetting feelings. An important part of recovering from SI is learning to understand all your feelings and finding better ways to cope with the ones that upset you.

In this activity, you will get a chance to think about all the feelings you are capable of having and which ones you most commonly have.

what are your primary feelings?

As you can see by the list below, humans are capable of hundreds of shades of feelings. However, most of us have ten or twelve feelings that we commonly experience throughout a day. Circle the feelings below that you commonly have. Circle as many feelings as you like.

abandoned, abused, accepted, accused, admired, adventurous, affectionate, affirmed, afraid, aggravated, aggressive, agitated, alarmed, alienated, alive, alone, ambivalent, angry, annoyed, antagonistic, anxious, apathetic, appreciated, apprehensive, arrogant, ashamed, assertive, attacked, attractive, awed, awkward

balanced, beaten-up, belligerent, betrayed, bewildered, bitter, blamed, bored, bothered, bugged, burned up

capable, cared for, caustic, chagrined, challenged, cheated, closed-up, comfortable, comforted, compassionate, competent, complacent, compromised, concerned, confident, confused, controlled, out of control, creative, cruel, crushed, curious, cut off

deceived, defeated, defensive, defiant, degraded, dejected, delighted, deserving, desired, desperate, devastated, dirty, disappointed, discontented, disgusted, disillusioned, dismayed, distant, distorted, distracted, distressed, disturbed, dominated, domineering, drained, dreadful, drugged, dumb

eager, edgy, elated, embarrassed, empty, endangered, enraged, enthused, envious, exasperated, exhausted, exhilarated, exploited, explosive, exposed

like a failure, fat, fatigued, fearful, fighting mad, floundering, fooled, forgiven, forgotten, foul, free, friendly, frightened, frustrated, furious

galled, generous, genuine, gifted, gracious, grateful, gratified, greedy, grumpy, guilty

happy, hated, healed, heavy, helpless, hopeful, hopeless, hostile, hurt, hyperactive, hypocritical

ignored, immobilized, impatient, impotent, inadequate, incompetent, in control, indecisive, independent, indifferent, indignant, inferior, infuriated, inhibited, injured, insecure, irked, irritated, isolated, integrated, intense, intimate, intimidated, irrational, irritated

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jealous, joyful, judged, judgmental

liberated, light, limited, lonely, like a loser, lost, lovable, loved, loyal

mad, manipulated, melancholic, miffed, misinformed, misunderstood

naked, needy, neglected, noxious

obligated, offended, optimistic, outraged, overlooked, oversized, overwhelmed

pained, panicked, paranoid, passionate, peaceful, persecuted, perturbed, pessimistic,
phony, pissed off, playful, pleased, possessed, possessive, powerful, powerless,
precious, preoccupied, pressured, private, protective, proud, provoked, punished,
purposeful, put down, put out, puzzled

ragefilled, rambunctious, reassured, rejected, resentful, responsible, responsive,
restrained, reverent, rewarded, rigid

sad, sadistic, scapegoated, scared, secretive, secure, seething, selfish, sensual, shaky,
shamed, shocked, shy, sick, sincere, sinful, smothered, soiled, sorrowful, spontaneous,
spiteful, stressed, strong, stubborn, stupid, subservient, superior, supported,
suspicious, sympathetic

tender, terrified, threatened, ticked off, tired, tolerant, tolerated, traumatized, tranquil,
triumphant, trusted, trusting, turned off

ugly, unable, unappreciated, unbalanced, uncertain, understood, unfulfilled, unhappy,
unique, unlikable, unloved, unprepared, upset, unresponsive, uptight, used, useful,
useless

valuable, vengeful, vicious, vindicated, vindictive, violent, vulnerable

warm, weak, weary, whole, withdrawn, wonderful, worn out, worthless, worthy

yearning

zany, zealous

Write other feelings here: _____

thinking about yourself

Were you surprised by any of the feelings you circled? _____

Read the list again and put a line under feelings you used to have but rarely have now.
Why do you think your feelings have changed?

What are the three feelings that you have most often? _____

Describe a time in your life when you had more of the positive feelings you circled.
