

V1 Feelings and Needs Exploration

for pairs & small groups in person or online

Small groups of 2 to 4 players take turns storytelling and listening. Typically, groups are made up of 3 players, and individual storytelling sessions are 15 to 20 minutes. One person is the storyteller holding all the Feelings cards; Listeners divide the Needs cards.

PLAY

Storyteller

- Holds the feelings cards or keeps them nearby
- Shares a life experience that stirs feelings within
 - The story can be from any time in the Storyteller's life, including something anticipated in the future
 - Something experienced firsthand, witnessed, or learned about from another source – any event that stirs feelings in them
 - Stories can be about something pleasant, fun, mildly annoying, or deeply impactful
- After sharing the story, select feelings cards that describe how they are feeling now, how they felt when the event happened, or both
 - Look beyond the first few cards that fit the story to discover feelings words that may more fully describe their feelings
- Place the cards face up in front of them, write the words down, or circles them on a feelings list
 - In-person, visual Listeners can see the cards
 - Online, Storytellers may need to repeat their feelings words for listeners to write down

Listeners

- Divide the needs cards
- Silently hold space for the Storyteller until the Storyteller completes the guessing process
- Warmly accompany the Storyteller by
 - Remaining silent until offering guesses
 - Focusing on understanding the Storyteller's feelings while
 - Preparing to guess needs cards that might connect with the feelings cards

V1 Feelings and Needs Exploration

for pairs & small groups in person or online (page 2 of 4)

- When the story is complete, and feelings have been named:
 - Thank the Storyteller for sharing
 - Silently look through their cards to identify needs that might be connected to the named feelings
 - Resist connection at this point. *AVOID* offering summary, advice, or insight, asking questions, sharing any judgment or feelings of their own
 - Building non-judgmental, deep listening skills can be hard work.
Congratulations! If it isn't easy, growth is happening.
 - Ask if the Storyteller is ready for needs guesses
 - Take turns sharing guesses by placing needs cards face up next to the feelings cards and asking a positive connection question such as:

Are you feeling _____ for the need(s) of _____?

- Remember to *Guess, not tell or state* the guess as if it's a fact or conclusion
- Hold space for the Storyteller to experience how guesses land for them
- *AVOID* problem-solving or other conversation about the story

LISTENER NOTES:

- There are no wrong guesses; Every guess has meaning and impact which may not come alive for a Storyteller until sometime after the game is played
- The story and the feelings a Storyteller shares are all about the Storyteller and the Storyteller's experience naming their feelings and receiving guesses from others – very pleasant or fulfilling 'Aha moments' are a common result.
- Non-judgmental listener support is one of the greatest gifts we humans can offer each other. All Listener guesses matter!

Storyteller

- Receives needs guesses and responds by:
 - Focusing on noticing how each guess resonates with them; every guess tells us something even if that something isn't apparent in the moment
 - Staying focused on self – avoiding conversation with guessers

V1 Feelings and Needs Exploration

for pairs & small groups in person or online (page 3 of 4)

- May thank guessers for guessing
- Acknowledges Listeners with a 'Thank you' trying hard not to offer a 'Yes or No' judgment
- Decides when guessing ends
 - When guessing ends, looks over the guesses to choose the top 2 or 3 needs guesses that most resonated with them
- Shares individual positive connection statements for each of the top 2 or 3 needs, such as:

I have the beautiful need of _____.

The process repeats until everyone has a turn as a Storyteller.

At the end of the breakout session, participants rejoin the full group for 5 to 10 minutes of Q&A and sharing experiences.

To close the 2.5-hour event, each person has an opportunity to share a brief closing statement with the full group, naming one or two feelings or needs that they are leaving the session with. For example,

I'm taking away gratitude for the need to feel heard.

ORGANIZER NOTES

- The typical group session is scheduled for 2.5 hours, allowing 20 minutes of introduction, demo, participant settling in, and Q&A followed by 3 breakout groups of 3 people each. Each breakout session is 15 to 20 minutes, with 5 to 10 minutes of facilitated Q&A between sessions and time for an all-group closing round, where each person shares a one-sentence takeaway.
- Adjust the size and timing of breakout sessions according to your group's needs, assuring equal time for each Storyteller. For example, groups of 4 might adjust storytelling sessions to 10 to 15 minutes. Groups of 5 might be 8 to 12 minutes.
- Shuffle sets of cards in advance – Blue Feelings cards shuffle together; White Needs cards shuffle together.

V1 Feelings and Needs Exploration

for pairs & small groups in person or online (page 4 of 4)

MODIFIED APPROACHES

Silent Storyteller

- The Storyteller chooses to sit in silence for most of their session, asking that a listener track time to give a 5-minute warning (or whatever timing the Storyteller chooses)
- Listeners remain with the Storyteller, warmly accompanying them in silence
- At the designated time, the time tracker softly says “5 minutes” (or whatever the designated timing is) – avoid adding words, keeping it quiet, calm, and simple matters
- The Storyteller may share feelings cards, and Listeners can proceed with guessing the needs

Ice Breaker Team Building

Ice Breaker exercises are typically themed ‘speed rounds’ of 5 to 10 minutes following the same format described above. For example, each person takes turns sharing a story about:

- A difficult commute
- Something pleasantly surprising
- A time when they averted a disaster
- Something they did during pandemic shutdowns
- Something a person that they admire (or a complete stranger) did or said that impacted them
- A recent school, workplace, or community event
- The anticipated impact of something planned for the future i.e., new school, project, job, family situation