



Helping Children Understand Emotions: My Emotions Wheel

Helping children learn to recognise and cope with different emotions is an important ongoing process throughout childhood. Sometimes emotions can be very strong and overwhelming especially in challenging situations. It is important to understand emotions happen to everyone. Identifying their emotions is a big part of helping children understand how and why they are feeling a certain way.

An Emotions Wheel is a great tool for helping children understand and talk about the emotions we have and their personal emotions.

As you introduce the wheel talk about the fact that all emotions are helpful, we all have emotions, and that making an emotions wheel can help us to identify how we are feeling at any given time. Look at the different emotions on the wheel and talk through each of the emotions. Look at the emotion face pictures and see if you can match the facial expression to the sections in the wheel.

Use these ideas to help discuss the pictures:

- What is this emotion? How does our body feel when we feel angry/sad/happy? How does our face look?
- Can you share an example of a time that you felt angry/sad/happy?

Stick the emotion face to the matching emotion on the wheel.

Different Ways to Use Your Completed Emotions Wheel

1. For parents, use the wheel as you talk with your child about their day. Talk about how they felt during the experiences they share. Label their emotions by referring to the wheel.
2. Develop empathy by referring to the wheel as you discuss how others may have felt in a situation/book/movie that you are discussing.
3. At home, hang the wheel as a check in point for each family member to indicate how they feel about their day as you gather at the end of the day. This is a great way of opening conversation between family members about their individual experiences during time apart.
4. Choose an emotion and then sing a familiar song (Happy Birthday works well) in a voice representing that emotion. Experiment with a range of voices to represent a range of emotions.
5. Talk about and model together how your face looks when you feel each emotion on the wheel. For example, "I feel angry when my friends won't wait for me and my mouth turns down, my forehead crinkles and my teeth clench."