

Identifying and Naming Emotions

Emotions are the mental and physical responses we have to the world around us and to our own experiences. Understanding emotions and being able to identify and name emotions are essential self-awareness skills for adolescents.

Here are some definitions of emotion words that can help your adolescent more clearly describe his or her feelings:

- anxious—nervous, worried, concerned
- determined—strong-minded and controlled
- hurt—upset or offended by something
- apologetic—sorry for something
- ecstatic—delighted, extra happy
- interested—curious or engaged
- exhausted—extra tired
- frightened—scared or alarmed
- jealous—feeling or showing envy of someone else’s achievements, advantages, or possessions
- cautious—careful or thoughtful
- irritated—annoyed or aggravated

Simple words such as happy, sad, mad, or scared are often used to explain how people are feeling. But these emotion words may not always describe how they really feel.

Building Your Adolescent’s Social and Emotional Competence

Self-awareness is a social and emotional learning competency that helps adolescents better understand their emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence their behaviors. Self-awareness skills include: identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, self-efficacy, recognizing strengths, and self-confidence. These activities can help adolescents identify and name their emotions.

Journal It!

Each family member can start a personal journal and record their emotions and the ways they feel in certain situations using the emotion words defined in this resource.

Create It!

Create an “Understanding Emotions” guide for young children. Use photos of body language and facial expressions along with emotion words to describe each emotion. Share your guide with other families in your community.

Many adolescents are experiencing feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear due to the onset of COVID-19. They need a chance to share their thoughts and feelings and ask questions. Make sure you are accurately informed and ready to educate your adolescent knowing the information is evolving all the time. Get information from: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

