THE EMOTION WHEEL

How are you feeling?

Start at the center, then move out to the word that fits best.



emotion-wheel.com

Free to use in classrooms, therapy and training: print it and hand it out at no charge, unchanged. © 2026 Merlin Martel Consultant Inc. App Store and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

Download on the App Store

How to use it

Putting the right word on what you feel helps you see more clearly, and be understood. The wheel starts broad, at the center, and gets more precise as it goes out.

1. **Take a moment.** Notice what is going on inside you, and in your body: tension, warmth, heaviness, an urge to move.

2. **Start at the center.** Pick the family closest to what you feel.

   Fear · Anger · Disgust · Sadness · Peace · Joy · Strength · Surprise

3. **Move outward.** Among the words of that family, look for the one that rings truest. Torn between two? Say them out loud: “I feel…”.

4. **More than one word is normal.** We often feel several emotions at once, sometimes from different families. Keep them all.

5. **What next?** Ask yourself what you might need. The next page gives some ideas.

In a group, in class, in therapy or in training

Everyone points to their word on the wheel, with no need to explain it. Do it again at the end: has the word changed?

In the Emotion Wheel app

The whole wheel, with its 138 emotions and a definition for each. Questions to find the word when you don't know where to start. A journal that stays on your iPhone. Free to download, with an optional subscription.

Download on the App Store

This wheel helps you find a word. It is not a diagnostic tool, and it does not replace help from a qualified person.

Free to use in classrooms, therapy and training: print it and hand it out at no charge, unchanged. © 2026 Merlin Martel Consultant Inc.

Emotions and needs

An emotion often signals a need: unpleasant when it is missing, pleasant when it is met. Find your word below: the need written above it is often the one it points to.

Safety
Fear · Anxious · Scared · Distant · Threatened · Hateful · Aggressive · Averse · Peace · Startled

Rest
Peace · Peaceful · Content

Connection
Distant · Hurt · Sadness · Lonely · Rejected · Guilty · Grieving · Close · Joy

Belonging
Insecure · Humiliated · Lonely · Rejected · Accepted

Support
Sadness · Grieving · Down · Hopeless

Trust
Disappointed · Trusting · Optimistic

Respect
Humiliated · Anger · Hurt · Aggressive · Mad

Recognition
Threatened · Inferior · Proud

Autonomy
Frustrated · Strength · Powerful

Competence
Insecure · Frustrated · Inferior · Strength · Proud · Powerful

Fairness
Anger · Critical · Hateful · Mad · Disapproving

Clarity
Anxious · Surprise · Confused · Startled

Meaning
Bored · Disappointed · Down · Hopeless · Optimistic · Amazed

Pleasure
Content · Joy · Elated · Excited

Discovery
Bored · Interested · Excited · Amazed

Integrity
Critical · Disgust · Averse · Disapproving · Guilty

These are leads, not rules: for you, the same word may speak of another need.

Free to use in classrooms, therapy and training: print it and hand it out at no charge, unchanged. © 2026 Merlin Martel Consultant Inc.