


FEELINGS CIRCLE

WHAT IS IT? A group meeting to share feelings.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.



FIRST GRADE

WHY DO THIS?

IF WE...

talk about feelings...

FEELINGS CIRCLE

THEN WE...

can better understand ourselves and others...

SO WE...

can regulate and use our emotions to learn and play with others.

MATERIALS

Feelings Face Cards (optional)

THE BIG IDEA

Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a song the class likes to sing together.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What do feelings feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

»» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use basic emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings?
- Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- Do animals have feelings? How do you know?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

OVER THE YEAR...

First grade is a time to continue building awareness of basic emotions and the words we use to describe them. A learning objective for the first grade year is to begin to help kids think about what they feel and why they feel that way (i.e., what causes specific feelings). There are no right or wrong answers; students should explore these ideas in an open-ended way.

To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words. Use the Feelings Face Cards to support learning. Focus on the basic emotions first: happy, sad, mad, and scared. Show the Feelings Faces cards and discuss how each emotion looks, sounds, and feels.

As students become familiar with feelings words, begin to encourage students to think about and describe why they feel the way they feel (i.e., what happened to make you feel that way?).

When students are ready for more, begin to explore how we respond to feelings. Add into your circle time a discussion about how we can respond to others' emotions in familiar classroom situations. Have the group brainstorm different ways to respond when others share their feelings (e.g., offer a hug, offer a listening ear, offer to play together, ask for help, etc.).