



Helping Children Deal With Feelings

Using Permissions

a newsletter for people who care about self-esteem

Volume 15, Number 2 - Issue 83 - April, 1996

Dear Reader,

Welcome to **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support, examining attitudes, and learning new skills. The skill focus of this issue is helping young children claim what they feel, name the feeling, and know what to do about the feeling. Although the exercises are written for preschool age children, you can use the exercises with school-age, adolescent or adult groups by changing the examples.

Please explore Carole Gesme's pink permission ovals, their use in combination with developmental affirmations and suggestions for using them as support for children's feelings. A sheet of punch-out pink permissions is included and I hope you find many ways to use them in your setting.

You can post the **What I Can Do With My Feelings** and the **Feelings Faces Board** posters and use them in formal and informal learning situations. The **What I Can Do With My Feelings** poster is from Carole Gesme's book, *Help For Kids! Understanding Your Feelings About Moving*. The **Feelings Faces Board** is from her game, *Ups & Downs With Feelings, Ages 6 - Adult*.

Explore!

Carole Gesme Talks About Feelings

What Are Feelings?

According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1984) a feeling is: 1. The sense of touch. 2. The ability to experience physical sensations. 3. An awareness, sensation. 4. An emotion. 5. Sensitivities (hurt feelings). 6. Sympathy, pity. 7. An opinion or statement. (p. 225)

An emotion is: 1. A strong feeling. 2. Any specific feeling, as love, hate, fear, anger, etc. (p. 201)

Respecting Feelings

From her experience working in a family treatment center:

"When a client expresses a feeling, it is important to accept that feeling. Feelings are neither right nor wrong, good or bad. They just are. Feelings are facts. No two people may feel the same way in the same situation. When a client expresses a feeling, he may still be hearing the old messages in his head: 'There's nothing to cry about; everything will be all right' or 'There is nothing to be scared about.' It is important to let him hear new messages. It is also

important to remember that if a client is in a highly emotional state, he should be allowed to express the feeling and be comforted. Afterwards we can find out what happened. Too often helpers encourage the thinking and talking before the feeling, and so the feeling is lost or remains unexpressed. This is why so many children and adults from alcoholic families learn to think rather than feel."

What We Need to Know About Feelings

From her work helping clients reclaim feelings, Carole found these are the questions they need to be able to answer.

1. Am I really feeling what I'm feeling?
2. Do I have a right to feel this way?
3. How do I express my feelings?
4. Can I check out my feelings with someone else?
5. How do I label my feelings?
6. How do I learn to know **what** I'm feeling **when** I'm feeling it, instead of later?
7. How do I stop confusing one feeling with another?

(Editor note: We can use these questions as a guide to help children claim their feelings in the first place.)

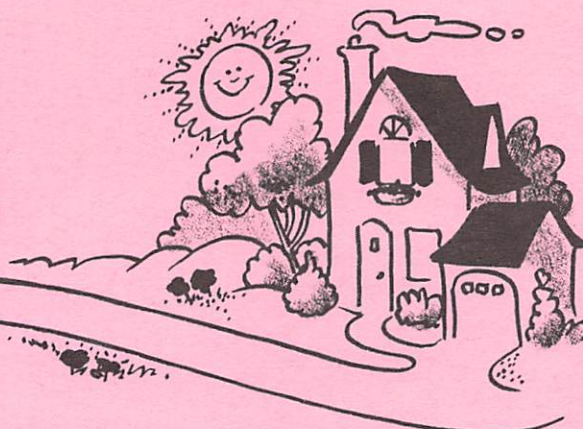
Pink Permission Ovals

To help children claim their feelings, Carole developed the pink permission ovals which include permissions to accomplish and permissions to feel.

"When I was working with children in a family treatment center, I noticed that the children would tell me what they *couldn't* do or feel. I made cards for my *Ups & Downs With Feelings* game stating: 'I have friends,' 'I feel sad,' The children would read the card and hand it back to me saying, 'I don't have any friends.' When they read the card, I feel sad,' they would hand it back to me saying, 'I don't feel anything,' or 'I just feel bad.' When I changed the cards to read 'You *can* have friends,' I noticed the new message gave them permission to accomplish new tasks and I could follow the statement with information on how to accomplish the skill. When I gave them the message, 'You *can* feel sad,' they would say, 'I can?' Then we would talk about what sad means. I would say, 'Sure, I'm sad a lot,' and tell them about times I had been sad. Then when I asked them about times they had been sad they were able to describe times."



FEELINGS



What I Can Do With My Feelings

When I feel



SAD I can tell someone I feel sad.
I can cry. I can ask for comfort and help. I can get support.

When I feel



HAPPY I can tell someone I feel happy. I can celebrate by myself or with others.

When I feel



ANGRY I can tell someone I feel angry. I can ask for help to solve problems. I can ask questions, gather information and get help.

When I feel



SCARED I can tell someone I feel scared. I can find safety and comfort. I can ask for information.

When I feel



SICK I can tell someone how I feel and what is bothering me. I can ask for help. I can tell someone where I feel sick.

When I feel



MIXED-UP I can tell someone I feel mixed-up. I can use the Feeling Faces Board in the back of this book to show all of the ways I am feeling. I can ask for help.

YOUR FEELINGS ARE IMPORTANT

From: *Help For Kids! Understanding Your Feelings About Moving* by Carole Gesme, M.A. & Larry Peterson, Minneapolis, MN: Pine Press, 1991.

Suggested Activity: Look at each face. Read the affirmations. Place each affirmation oval above the face that reminds you of that affirmation. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

Suggested Activity: Pick an affirmation that you are not sure you believe today. Point to the face that shows how you feel when you believe it. Make your face look like that picture. Read the affirmations aloud.

special • stupid • brave • helpless • smart • guilty • depressed • confident • rejected • free • disgusted •

start	16	31	47	63	78	WINNER I AM /A/ WINNER
1	14	30	46	62	76	
2	15	29	45	61	77	
3	18	28	44	60	76	
4	11	27	43	59	75	
5	10	26	42	58	74	
6	9	25	41	57	73	
7	8	24	40	56	72	

needed • jealous • glad • hurt • lucky • tired • joyful • surprised •
carefree • embarrassed • scared • lovable • ashamed • capable • sad • excited • angry • alive • let down •

Feelings Faces Board
UPS & DOWNS WITH Feelings

Suggested Group Activity

Affirmations and Pink Permissions

For use with parents or child care providers for three to six-year-olds.

Use with one individual or in a group.

Purpose: To support a child in the belief of a Developmental Affirmation.

Ask each adult to select one child between the ages of three and six. Read the Developmental Affirmations for Stage IV, three to six years:

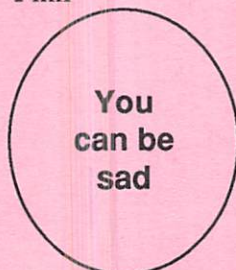
- You can explore who you are and find out who other people are.
 - You can be powerful and ask for help at the same time.
 - You can try out different roles and ways of being powerful.
 - You can find out the results of your behavior.
 - All of your feelings are OK with me.
 - You can learn what is pretend and what is real.
 - I love who you are.
(If you are using the affirmation ovals, this is the green set.)*
- Choose one of these affirmations that you wish the child would believe or would believe more.
 - Look at the pink permission messages. Pick three that you think might help your child believe the green Developmental Affirmation.

Examples:

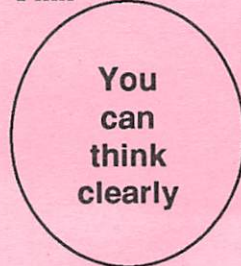
Green



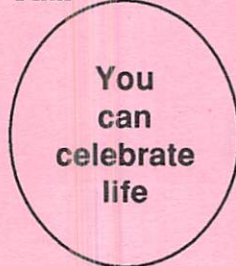
Pink



Pink



Pink



"All of my feelings are my friends. The more I am in touch with my feelings, the more information I have about what is going on at any point in time and the more able I am to make helpful decisions about what is good for me and for others."

Carole Gesme

- Select three behaviors that you think would indicate that your child has increased that belief. For example:
 - Child comes to you for comfort when she is sad.
 - Child says, "I would be scared," when you describe a scary situation and ask how she would feel.
 - Child tells you something she is glad about.
- Tell your child that you have three important messages that are especially for him this week and that you are going to read them to him three times each day. Put them in a special place and in an attractive container.
- For one week, three times each day, in a kind and loving way get the child's attention. Touch the child (put your arm around him or hold him on your lap) while you read the pink messages. Do this when you are calm and feeling loving toward the child.
- Observe the child's behaviors.
- During the week, using the chart on the next page, record whether the child shows none, a little, some, or much change for each of the behaviors.
- Evaluate whether those are the behaviors you want to continue observing or choose new ones.
- Repeat the process for a second week.
- At the end of the second week, decide if you want to continue this activity or change to another affirmation.

* You can order Pink Permission Ovals and Developmental Affirmation Ovals from Carole Gesme, (4036 Kerry Court, Minnetonka, MN 55345, 612 938-9163) or from WE.

The Developmental Affirmations are listed in *Help! For Parents of Children from Birth to Five* by Jean Illsley Clarke et al. Order from WE. \$12.00 U.S., \$16.00 plus \$3.00 postage.

PERMISSION CHART

Name _____ Date _____

Green Developmental Affirmation _____

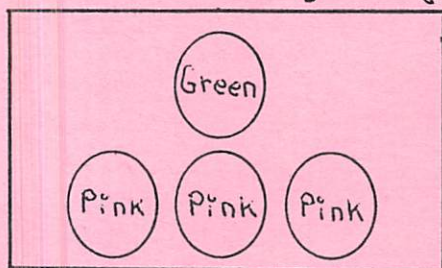
Three Pink Permissions _____

BEHAVIORS	First Week			Second Week		
	no improvement	some improvement	much improvement	no improvement	some improvement	much improvement
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

Notes:

MESSAGE FROM A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

I chose to help a child in my class. On a piece of tag board I placed 3 pink permission balloons, or ovals. Each balloon had a different message. I placed a green affirmation oval at the top of the tag board.



I used the following green affirmation:

You can find out the results of your behavior.

I used the following pink permissions:

You can tell the truth.

You know what you are feeling.

You can be mad.

Three times during the day we would sit down and read each of the pink permissions and the green affirmation on the tag board. I wrote them on her notes home as well.

I would help her to understand why she has these permissions to help her sort out her feelings other than just being angry and not saying why and to help her to understand that it is okay to have these feelings without hurting anyone.

I was working with this child for 2 weeks. After the first week I could see some improvement in her behavior. The second week showed even more improvement.

Parents of this child asked me what I had been doing with the child during the day because they noticed an improvement at home. So I told them what I had been doing with her during the daytime and they worked with her at home as well.

After doing this for 2 weeks she continued to ask me to read and look at the tag board on a daily basis.

Linda Sprague

ACTIVITY

Feelings Faces

To do with one child at a time when you want to help the child claim feelings.

Post the *Feelings Faces Board*. Punch out the pink affirmations and put them in an attractive bowl, box, basket, or can.

Adult says:

"(Child's name), you are not acting like your usual self today. You have a special look. Point to the face on the *Feelings Faces Board* that shows how it is for you today. That face might be _____. Do you think you feel _____?"

If child says:

"No."

Adult responds:

"OK. Do you want to tell me about it?" Or -

"Is there something you want from me?"

Then if child says:

"No."

Adult responds:

"OK. I'll see you later." Or -
"If you want me to, I'll sit by you."

If child says:

"Yes."

Adult responds:

"OK. I feel _____ myself sometimes. Do you want to tell me about it?"

If you need more options choose one of the following examples or write your own on the blank line.

If child says:

"Yes" to MAD

1. "What is the problem?"
2. "Can I help you think how you can make it better?"
3. _____
4. "Would you like to pick a pink balloon?"

"Anger is about a need or a want. It is a burst of extra energy to the brain to be used for problem solving, not for lashing out."

Jean Clarke

If child says:

"Yes" to SAD

1. "I'm sorry you feel sad. Would you like me to... (pick one)
 - rub your back?"
 - sing you a song?"
 - read you a book?"
 - rock you?"
 - play blocks with you?"
2. "Would you like to come with me while I...?"
3. "Would you like to carry Teddy for awhile?"
4. _____
5. "Would you like to wear a pink balloon today?"

If child says:

"Yes" to SCARED

1. "Oh, thanks for telling me. Scared is an important feeling because it means you need some help or some place to feel safe. Do you know what you feel scared about?"
2. "I'll protect you or I'll help you think what to do."
3. _____
4. "Let's look for a pink balloon that will help you."

If child says:

"Yes" to CONFUSED

1. "I feel mixed up myself sometimes. Is there something I can tell you or explain or show you how to do?"
2. _____
3. "Would you like a pink balloon to carry in your pocket?"

If child says:

"Yes" to GLAD

1. Smile. "I like to see you glad!"
2. "Do you want to tell me about it?"
3. "Do you want to tell the other children about it?"
4. "Sometimes we just feel glad and we don't need to tell anyone why."
5. _____
6. "I have a pink balloon for you. Would you like to have it?"

ACTIVITY

Feeling Role-Plays

For Pairs or a Group

- Practice in pairs, one person plays the helping adult, one role-plays the part of the child.
- Hand each pair a copy of this sheet and a *Feelings Faces Board*.
- Pair chooses one role-play to do. One person takes the role of the child. The other person follows the steps in the *Feelings Faces* activity.

Christie 3

You brought your little red purse today and your Mom didn't really want you to bring it because she was afraid you'd lose it. Now you can't find it. Or -

It is raining and there is thunder and lightning. You are terrified.

Brad 4

You had a neat place to push your truck and Rick keeps standing right in your way. Or -

You made plans to play with a friend today and your friend is playing with someone else.

Sally 5

Your puppy didn't come home last night. Or -

You thought your friend, grandpa, aunt, (choose someone) was coming to visit you last night and that person couldn't come.

Nathan 4

Your folks had a big fight this morning and Mom said, if it weren't for the kids she'd leave. Or -

There is a big dog with a big bark next door. Your Mom says he is not mean, but you aren't sure. He is bigger than you are.

Amy 5

Mom told you that you will be getting a new baby at your house, but not to tell anybody yet. You have been wanting a new baby. Or -

Your friend, grandma, uncle, (choose someone) is coming to visit and you can hardly wait.

- After all pairs have completed their role-play, ask each pair to report to the group what they learned.
- Repeat for a second role-play with a different example.
- Discuss what people learned in the large group.

You can use this with adults. Let them generate a list of examples to choose from.

Opening Activity

To Help a Group Think About Feelings

Hand out name tags.

- Choose a partner. Make a name tag for her and ask her to tell you one time someone honored her feelings and how she felt about that.
- Introduce your partner and tell the group how someone honored her feelings if she is willing for you to share that information.

Closing Activity

That Encourages People to Think About Feelings

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to share how they might change the ways they respond to other people's feelings.
- Ask for resentments. Listen to Resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.

FEELINGS

Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke
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WE

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materials to use individually
or in support groups.

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Facilitator Training

A week-long workshop for people who want to learn group facilitation skills.

- **June 24 - 28, 1996, Minneapolis, MN**
Led by Jean Illsley Clarke & Carole Gesme
- **July 15 - 19, 1996, Seattle, WA**
Led by Jean Illsley Clarke
- **October 7 - 11, 1996, Toronto, Canada**
Led by Jean Illsley Clarke

Reminder: Facilitators who have taken the workshop anywhere may repeat it in Minneapolis for half price.

Growing Up Again

A three day workshop for people who want to lead the six meeting Growing Up Again model.

- **June 19 - 21, 1996, Minneapolis, MN**
Led by Mary Paananen & Nat Houtz

Help! About Drugs

A three day workshop for people who want to explore *The Key Chain*, a way to teach drug abuse prevention as a separate course or as part of any parent education program.

- **July 1 - 3, 1996, Minneapolis, MN**
Led by Carole Gesme & Jean Illsley Clarke

Transactional Analysis Training

One of a series of workshops on the psychological system of Transactional Analysis for beginners and professionals.

- **May 18 - 19, 1996, Minneapolis, MN**
How groups are structured and why they function as they do.
Led by Nat Houtz, Susan Clarke, Mary Paananen, Jean Illsley Clarke & Russ Osnes

Write to WE for details on the workshops.

REQUEST: If you use the book, *Affirmation Ovals*, *139 Ways to Give & Get Affirmations*, please honor this request. Jean Illsley Clarke and Carole Gesme are revising it. NOW is the time to tell us if you want the format changed or kept as it is AND to send us the ways you use affirmations.



Please Note Request

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