

THE HOLISTIC CARE · FREE RESOURCE

Emotion Cards

for Children

20 printable cards · Ages 4–12

Emotion · Body sensation · Calming tool · Reflection



20 EMOTIONS · BODY MAPS · CALMING TOOLS · PRINTABLE

theholisticcare.com

Mindfulness programs for schools & families

THE HOLISTIC CARE

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How to Use These Cards

These 20 emotion cards help children build emotional vocabulary, body awareness, and self-regulation skills. Research from the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence shows that children who can accurately name their emotions are 3x more likely to manage them effectively.

Print & Cut

Print on card stock, cut along the edges. Laminate for durability.

Morning check-in

Ask: "Which card shows how you feel this morning?" No judgment.

Feelings jar

Keep cards in a jar. Child picks one that matches how they feel.

Story time

When reading a book, ask: "Which card shows how the character feels?"

Conflict resolution

After a disagreement: "Can you find the card that shows how you felt?"

Daily wind-down

Before bed, pick today's emotion card and talk about it gently.

THE SCIENCE — WHY NAMING EMOTIONS WORKS

Neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman (UCLA) found that labelling an emotion — simply naming it — reduces amygdala activation by up to 50%. This is called "affect labelling." Emotion cards give children the vocabulary to do this naturally.

HAPPY



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Warm and light in the chest. Smiling. Energy in the legs!

WHAT HELPS

Jump for joy! Smile at someone. Share your happiness.

What made you feel this way today?

cut here

SAD



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Heavy in the chest. Tears behind the eyes. Quiet inside.

WHAT HELPS

It's okay to cry. Hug someone or a soft toy. Take slow breaths.

Is there someone who could sit with you right now?

ANGRY



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Hot in the face. Tight in the tummy. Hands might clench.

WHAT HELPS

Take 5 BIG breaths. Squeeze something. Run or jump outside.

What felt unfair? What do you need?

cut here

WORRIED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Butterflies in the tummy. Tight chest. Mind going fast.

WHAT HELPS

Breathe in for 4, out for 4. Name 5 things you can see.

What is the worry telling you? Is it really true?

EXCITED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Fizzy feeling everywhere. Hard to sit still. Big smile!

WHAT HELPS

Channel it! Dance, draw, or tell someone all about it.

What are you most looking forward to?

cut here

SCARED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Shaky legs. Fast heartbeat. Wanting to hide or run.

WHAT HELPS

Find something safe to hold. Breathe slowly. You are safe.

What would make you feel just a little bit safer?

CALM



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Slow and easy breathing. Body feels relaxed and still.

WHAT HELPS

Stay here. Breathe gently. Notice this peaceful feeling.

What helps you feel this way? Remember it.

cut here

FRUSTRATED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Tight forehead. Sighing a lot. Feeling stuck or blocked.

WHAT HELPS

Step away for a moment. Shake your hands. Try again slowly.

What exactly feels stuck? Can you try a different way?

PROUD



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Tall and strong feeling. Light in the chest. Big smile.

WHAT HELPS

Celebrate! Tell someone. Remember this moment.

What did you do that made you feel proud?

cut here

LONELY



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Empty feeling inside. Quiet. Wishing someone was here.

WHAT HELPS

Reach out to someone. Draw a picture. Write how you feel.

Who is one person you could contact right now?

JEALOUS



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Tight chest. Comparing yourself. Feeling a bit left out.

WHAT HELPS

Notice the feeling without acting on it. Breathe. It will pass.

What do YOU have that is special and unique?

cut here

EMBARRASSED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Hot face. Want to disappear. Looking down.

WHAT HELPS

Remember: everyone makes mistakes. Take a breath. It passes.

Would you judge a friend for this? Then don't judge yourself.

BORED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Restless. Hard to concentrate. Everything feels dull.

WHAT HELPS

Move your body. Find something creative. Go outside.

What would make this moment more interesting?

cut here

CONFUSED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Head feels foggy. Hard to think. Might feel a bit lost.

WHAT HELPS

Slow down. Ask for help. Write out what you do know.

What is one small thing you DO understand?

GRATEFUL



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Warm glow in the chest. Feeling lucky. Wanting to give.

WHAT HELPS

Write three things you are grateful for. Tell one person.

Who has helped you recently? Have you thanked them?

cut here

SURPRISED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Eyes go wide. Gasp. Feeling of "oh!" all over.

WHAT HELPS

Take a breath. Give yourself a moment to take it in.

Was the surprise good or difficult? How do you feel now?

TIRED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Heavy eyelids. Body feels slow. Hard to concentrate.

WHAT HELPS

Rest if you can. Breathe deeply. Drink some water.

What does your body need right now?

cut here

OVERWHELMED



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Too much at once. Can't think. Might feel like crying.

WHAT HELPS

STOP. ONE breath. ONE thing at a time. Ask for help.

Can you do just one small thing right now?

LOVING



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Warm and open in the chest. Wanting to be close.

WHAT HELPS

Give a hug. Say "I love you." Do something kind.

Who do you love? Have you told them lately?

cut here

BRAVE



HOW YOUR BODY FEELS

Nervous AND willing. Scared but doing it anyway.

WHAT HELPS

Take a breath. Remember: courage is not no fear — it's going anyway.

What is one brave thing you have done?