



Communicating Your Feelings

Ignoring or bottling your feelings is one sure way to create stress in your life! There are many benefits to being more aware of your feelings and finding appropriate times to express them. You gain support from others, everyone in the family understands each other better, your relationships improve, and more problem solving gets done when others know how you feel.

There are many great strategies to promote feeling awareness and communication – here are a few ideas you might consider!

Feeling Thermometer

The Feeling Thermometer is simply a thermometer you draw on a piece of paper that has 4 areas – green at the bottom, then yellow, orange and red at the top. As you might imagine based on the colors, green is a comfortable, happy kind of feeling and red is a very uncomfortable or difficult to control feeling. Yellow and orange are in-between feelings. Use the Feeling Thermometer to help you identify and express your feelings. Sometimes, just using code words for feelings, such as “I’m really feeling orange right now” can help us identify and think about our feelings in a new way.

Identify Your Hot Spots

Hot spots are situations throughout your day that upset you or make your emotions go up the Feeling Thermometer toward the orange or red. Just stepping back and thinking about these situations can often help us figure out a plan for “next time.” Sometimes we can change circumstances so that a Hot Spot never even happens, such as deciding to take the bus since driving the car makes you too anxious. Some Hot Spots we have to learn to manage, such as making the morning get-ready-for-school routine go better. The very act of identifying your feelings can help you improve control over your emotions and the situation.

Identify Your Daily or Weekly Highs and Lows

Highs are the times during your day when things are going well and you’re in your “green” zone. “Lows” are the times when there are lots of Hot Spots and you are having trouble controlling your emotions. Take the time to keep track throughout the day of how you are feeling – just give yourself a color or number rating every hour or so. Everyone in your family could do this too. When you compare the charts you may discover the best times when everyone is ready to spend time together.