

The
Mental Wealth Co.

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Feelings Detective

A gentle guide for kids ages 5–8 who are learning to name their feelings.

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Hi, grown-ups,

This resource is designed to be used with a child, not handed to them. The prompts and pages are worded simply so a young child can follow along, but they're most helpful when a trusted adult reads through the pages together, one at a time.

The goal isn't to teach a child every emotion word in the dictionary. The goal is to build a habit: notice the feeling, name it, and be okay with it being there.

A few gentle reminders:

- Big feelings don't need to be fixed. They need to be witnessed.
- Kids learn co-regulation before self-regulation. Your calm is the classroom.
- Some feelings take a while to name. That's normal.

— *Jasmine*

Founder, The Mental Wealth Co. · LPC, NCC

Hi, feelings detective.

A detective is someone who looks for clues. In this book, you're the detective — and the mystery is what you're feeling.

Here's the secret

There are no bad feelings. Some feelings feel comfy, like happy or calm. Some feel uncomfortable, like sad or nervous. All of them are okay. All of them come and go.

Your detective job

- Notice the feeling.
- Give it a name.
- Say hi to it.
- Ask what it needs.
- Do one small thing to help.

You are a very good feelings detective. Ready?

Clue #1: Find the feeling.

Point to a feeling word below that matches what you're feeling right now. It's okay to circle more than one.

Comfy feelings

- happy
- calm
- excited
- proud
- loved
- silly
- brave

Uncomfy feelings

- sad
- mad
- scared
- worried
- left out
- shy
- tired
- confused

If you don't see your feeling on the list, that's okay. You can make one up. Feelings are yours.

Clue #2: Where does the feeling live in your body?

Draw a big star on the body part where you feel it the most. You can also draw how big the feeling is — a tiny dot for a small feeling, a giant circle for a huge one.

Where in my body do I feel it?

How big is the feeling? (a little / medium / very big)

What color would this feeling be?

What sound would it make?

Clue #3: What happened first?

Every feeling starts somewhere. Let's see if we can find the beginning.

What was happening right before the feeling showed up?

Who was there?

Was I hungry, tired, or hot? (Sometimes those make feelings bigger.)

Clue #4: What does the feeling need?

Feelings are usually asking for something. Here are some things kids often need. Point to one or two you'd like to try.

- A hug from a grown-up.
- A quiet place for a minute.
- A big cup of water.
- A snack.
- To wiggle it out.
- To draw or color.
- Someone to just listen.
- A break from what I'm doing.
- To say what happened.

Grown-ups: this is a great place to co-regulate. Offer the option rather than assigning the coping skill.

Your calm toolbox

Here are some things a lot of kids use when a big feeling shows up. Circle the ones you'd like to try.

Body ideas

- Big bear hug from someone I love.
- Slow belly breaths — put your hand on your belly and breathe.
- Squeeze a pillow tight, then let go.
- Push against a wall as hard as you can.

Quiet ideas

- Draw the feeling on paper.
- Listen to a favorite song.
- Cuddle up with a stuffed animal.
- Look out the window and name 5 things you see.

Grown-up ideas

- Ask for a snack.
- Ask for a hug.
- Ask to be alone for a minute.
- Tell someone what happened.

Great job, detective.

You did a really brave thing today. You noticed a feeling. You gave it a name. You asked it what it needed. That's what grown-ups spend a whole life learning to do.

You are not your feelings. You are the very kind person who is learning to take care of them.

A gentle note.

This resource was created by The Mental Wealth Co. for educational and informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for individualized mental health care, diagnosis, or treatment, and using it does not create a therapist-client relationship.

If you are working with a therapist or clinician, consider bringing this resource into your work together so they can help you apply it to your specific situation.

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call 911 or contact your local crisis resource. In the United States, you can also dial or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

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With warmth,
The Mental Wealth Co.