

Describe your Emotion

Name the feelings (see reverse):

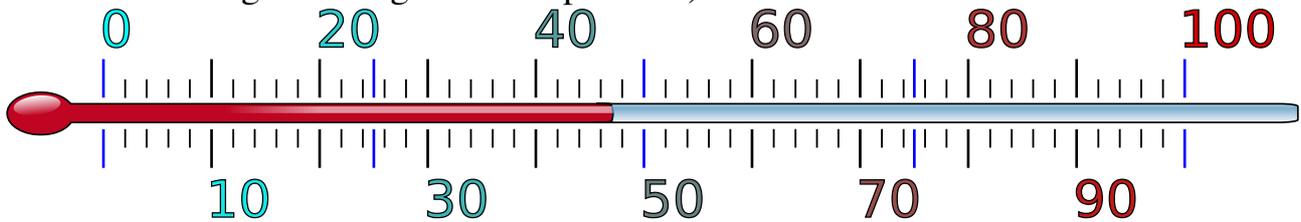
Draw a picture representing my feelings:



Describe a sound connected with the feeling:

Describe an action connected with the feeling:

Rate and describe the intensity of the feeling: (0 = complete absence of feeling; 100 = the strongest feeling I could experience)

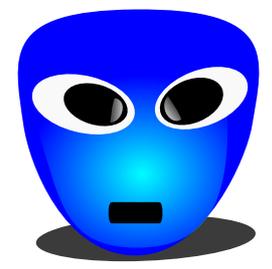


Intensity description:

Quality of the feeling:

Describe the thoughts that go with the feeling:

What purpose do these feelings serve? How can these feelings be helpful?



adored
 afraid
 angry
 annoyed
 anxious
 apologetic
 aroused
 ashamed
 blessed
 blissful
 bored
 bothered
 broken
 bubbly
 burdened
 cautious
 cheerful
 confident
 content
 curious
 delighted
 depressed
 determined
 disappointed
 disgusted
 disturbed
 embarrassed
 empty
 energetic
 enlightened
 enlivened
 enraged

enthusiastic
 envious
 excited
 exhausted
 flirtatious
 foolish
 fragile
 frightened
 frustrated
 furious
 glad
 guilty
 gutted
 happy
 hopeful
 hopeless
 horrified
 hurt
 hysterical
 indifferent
 infatuated
 insecure
 interested
 irritated
 jealous
 joyful
 lively
 lonely
 loved
 loving
 mad
 nervous

obsessed
 overwhelmed
 playful
 pleased
 proud
 regretful
 relieved
 respected
 restless
 sad
 satisfied
 scared
 scattered
 secure
 shy
 smart
 sorry
 stressed
 strong
 surprised
 suspicious
 terrified
 thrilled
 tired
 unsure
 upset
 vivacious
 vulnerable
 worried
 worthless
 worthy



Adapted from *The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook* by McKay, Brantley, Wood & Marra

Exercise: Describe Your Emotion

This exercise will help you recognise and focus on your emotions and their associated thoughts and physical sensations. This can help integrate logical/rational information processing with emotional processing and develop capacity to use “wise mind”.

To begin, pick an emotion. It can be either a pleasant or an unpleasant emotion. Ideally, you should choose an emotion that you’re feeling right now, *unless that emotion is overwhelmingly sad or self-destructive*. If it is, you should wait until you feel more in control of your emotions before beginning this exercise.

If you can’t identify what you’re feeling now, choose an emotion that you were feeling recently, something that you can easily remember. Whatever you choose, try to be specific about what the emotion is. For example, if you got into a fight with your spouse or partner recently because he or she did something to you, that’s the situation, not the emotion. Maybe this situation made you feel angry, hurt, sad, stupid, or something else. Be specific about how you feel. Here’s another example: Maybe someone recently gave you a gift. That’s the situation. Your emotion would depend on how you felt about the gift. If it was something you’ve always wanted, you might feel elated. If the gift came from someone you don’t know very well, you might feel anxious about its purpose. Be specific about how you feel.

To help you identify or name your emotion you can use the included list of words for emotions.

When you finish identifying the emotion you want to explore, write it down at the top of the Describe Your Emotion form. Then, using your imagination, draw a picture of what your emotion might look like. This might sound hard to do, but just do the best you can. For example, if you are feeling happy, maybe a picture of the sun expresses how you feel or maybe a picture of an ice-cream cone would do better. The picture doesn’t have to make sense to anyone else but you. Just give it a try.

Next, try to think of a sound that would further describe the emotion. For example, if you are feeling sad, maybe the sound of a groan would describe how you feel, such as “ugh.” Or maybe a certain song expresses your emotion better. Describe the sound as best you can.

Then describe an action that “fits” your emotion. For example, if you are feeling bored, maybe the action would be to take a nap. Or if you are feeling shy, maybe the action would be to run away and hide. Do your best to describe the action.

The next step of this exercise is to rate and describe the intensity of the emotion on which you’re focusing. On the thermometer, choose a number from 0 (absence of emotion) to 100 (the most intense you think an emotion could ever feel) and mark it. Next, do your best to *describe* the strength of this emotion. Feel free to be creative and use metaphors if you need to. For example, you might describe a very strong, powerful emotion as being “like being hit by a huge wave”, or a more faint emotion as “like a whisper”.

After describing the intensity of the emotion, briefly describe the overall quality of what the



emotion feels like. Again, feel free to be as creative as you need to be in your description. If you are nervous, maybe it makes you feel like your “knees are made of jelly.” Or if you are getting angry, it might make you feel like “water that’s about to boil.” Be as accurate as you can in your description and be as creative as you need to be in order to convey your feelings.

Next record any thoughts that arise due to your emotion. But be clear that what you describe is a thought and not another emotion. For example, don’t choose any of the words in the list above to describe your thoughts. Those are emotions, not thoughts. Your thoughts should be able to finish the following sentences: “My emotion makes me think that...” or “My emotion makes me think about...” It’s important that you begin separating your thoughts and your emotions because this will give you better control over both of them in the future. Here are some examples of thoughts that can arise from emotions. If you are feeling confident, a related thought might be that you think you can ask your boss for a raise, or it makes you remember other times in your life when you felt confident and were successful. Or if you are feeling fragile, a related thought could be that you think you can’t handle any more stress in your life, or it makes you think about how you’re going to struggle with future problems if you don’t get stronger.

Finally, think about what purpose your emotion might serve – in this situation or in other situations when you might feel the same way. For example, if you feel anxious the purpose might be to prepare your body to escape from something dangerous. If you feel angry the purpose might be to motivate you to solve a problem you have in a relationship.