

EXERCISE: *Distinguishing feelings from interpretations*

One of the basic elements of honest expression is vocabulary. Having a vocabulary for feelings and needs is a foundation for this work. It's also important to be able to recognize words that seem like feeling words but are not. The words listed below are interpretations of what you think someone is doing to you. These are especially important words to avoid because they tend to trigger defensiveness in the listener and stimulate conflict. Consult your list of feelings and needs. List at least three possible feelings and needs that a person using each word might be experiencing. Don't worry about whether your guesses are "right". The point of this exercise is to become familiar with interpretive words and build a vocabulary for feelings and needs.

abandoned

abused

(not) accepted

attacked

belittled

betrayed

blamed

bullied

confined

cheated

coerced

criticized

discounted

disliked

distrusted

disrespected

dumped on

harassed

hassled

ignored

insulted

interrupted

intimidated

invalidated

invisible

isolated

judged

left out

let down

manipulated

mistrusted

misunderstood

neglected

overpowered

overworked

patronized

pressured

provoked

put down

rejected

ripped off

smothered

taken advantage of

threatened

trampled

trapped

tricked

unappreciated

unheard

unloved

unseen

unsupported

unwanted

used

victimized

violated

wronged