



Naming Your Feelings: The Emotion Wheel

An explainer, emotion wheel, and feelings chart in English, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu · Created by Simar Gill Lowther, MACP, RP (CRPO)

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At a glance

- Putting feelings into words can reduce their intensity. Researchers call this "affect labelling."
- People who can name emotions precisely tend to cope better with stress.
- Feelings can be easier to name in the language you grew up with, so this tool is in four languages.

Why naming feelings helps

Brain imaging research shows that labelling an emotion ("I feel anxious") reduces activity in the amygdala, the brain's alarm centre, and increases activity in regions involved in regulation. In plain terms: name it to tame it.

Being specific helps even more. "Bad" is a starting point. "Disappointed," "embarrassed," or "lonely" each point toward different needs and different next steps.

Feelings and language

Many people who speak more than one language notice that some feelings are easier to express in one language than another. Emotions learned in childhood are often most vivid in your first language. Feeling free to use any language, or a mix, can make it easier to understand yourself and to talk with family.

The emotion wheel

Start in the centre with a core feeling, then move outward to find a more precise word.



What the research says

Labelling emotions reduces amygdala response to emotional images, a process called affect labelling (Lieberman et al., 2007).

People with greater "emotion differentiation," the ability to name feelings precisely, are less likely to turn to unhelpful coping during stress (Kashdan, Barrett & McKnight, 2015).

Tool: My Multilingual Feelings Chart

Use this chart to find words for your feelings in the language that feels most natural. Circle the ones you feel often.

English	हिन्दी (Hindi)	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi)	اردو (Urdu)
Happy	खुश	ਖੁਸ਼	خوش
Sad	उदास	ਉਦਾਸ	اداس
Angry	गुस्सा	ਗੁੱਸਾ	غصہ
Afraid / scared	डर	ਡਰ	ڈر
Worried / anxious	चिंतित, फ़िक्रमंद	ਚਿੰਤਤ, ਫ਼ਿਕਰਮੰਦ	فکرمند، پریشان
Lonely	अकेलापन	ਇਕੱਲਾਪਣ	تنہائی
Ashamed	शर्मिदा	ਸ਼ਰਮਿੰਦਾ	شرمندہ
Guilty	दोषी	ਦੋਸ਼ੀ	قصوروار
Hurt	दुखी, आहत	ਦੁਖੀ	دکھی
Disappointed	निराश	ਨਿਰਾਸ਼	مایوس
Frustrated	झुंझलाहट	ਖਿੜ	جھنجھلاہٹ
Overwhelmed	घबराहट	ਘਬਰਾਹਟ	گھبراہٹ
Jealous	ईर्ष्या, जलन	ਈਰਖਾ, ਸਾੜਾ	حسد
Numb	सुन्न	ਸੁੰਨ	بے حس
Calm	शांत	ਸ਼ਾਂਤ	پرسکون
Grateful	आभारी	ਸ਼ੁਕਰਗੁਜ਼ਾਰ	شکرگزار
Hopeful	उम्मीद	ਉਮੀਦ	امید
Proud	गर्व	ਮਾਣ	فخر
Loved	प्यार महसूस होना	ਪਿਆਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋਣਾ	محبت محسوس ہونا

Daily feelings check-in

Day	Feeling (any language)	Intensity (0–10)	What it might be telling me
Mon			
Tue			

Day	Feeling (any language)	Intensity (0–10)	What it might be telling me
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Strategies to try

- **Check in three times a day.** Ask, "What am I feeling right now?" and find the most precise word.
- **Find the body clue.** Where do you feel this emotion in your body?
- **Look for the need.** Sadness may point to loss, anger to a boundary, fear to a need for safety.
- **Allow mixed feelings.** You can feel grateful and resentful at the same time. Both can be true.

Strategies you may not have heard of

These less common, evidence-informed techniques go beyond the usual advice. Try one at a time and notice what works for you.

- **Take the granularity challenge.** Each evening, find three different feeling words for your day. Over time, your emotional vocabulary grows.
- **Describe it as a sensation.** Give your feeling a colour, texture, temperature, and size: "It's grey, heavy, and about the size of a fist in my chest."
- **Notice your language shift.** Try naming the feeling in each language you speak. Some languages may make a feeling feel softer, more intimate, or more distant.
- **Track one feeling's journey.** Follow a single emotion across a day. Notice when it rises, changes, or fades.

Journal prompts

Take your time with these. Write freely; there are no right answers.

Which feelings were welcome in my family growing up? Which weren't?

Which language do I use for my strongest feelings?

Which feeling do I find hardest to name or admit?

What feeling have I been carrying this week without naming it?

When to reach out for support

If emotions feel confusing, overwhelming, or hard to access, therapy offers a safe space to explore them. At Insightful Journey Inc., you can talk through feelings in English, Hindi, Punjabi, or Urdu.

Insightful Journey Inc. offers therapy in person in Oshawa and virtually across Ontario, in English, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu. Direct billing available.

[Book a free consultation](#) · 647-982-2527 (call, text, or WhatsApp)

In crisis? Call or text 9-8-8, or call 911.

This resource is for education and self-reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool and is not a substitute for professional assessment or care.

References

Kashdan, T. B., Barrett, L. F., & McKnight, P. E. (2015). Unpacking emotion differentiation. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24(1), 10–16.

Lieberman, M. D., et al. (2007). Putting feelings into words: Affect labeling disrupts amygdala activity in response to affective stimuli. *Psychological Science*, 18(5), 421–428.

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