

Naming Emotions



Naming emotions, also known as emotional labelling, involves identifying and labelling the emotions you are experiencing. This practice can be a powerful tool for regulating intense feelings and improving mental clarity, particularly during moments of distress. It is a technique used often as part of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT).

Being able to identify and label your emotions is a core skill for emotional health. When you can name what you're feeling, you can:

- **Reduce intensity** - Research shows that simply labeling a feeling ("I feel anxious") can calm the brain's emotional centers.
- **Increase self-understanding** - You learn your patterns and triggers.
- **Communicate effectively** - You can tell others what you need more clearly.
- **Choose healthier responses** - Once you know what's going on inside, you can respond rather than react.

Tips for Naming Emotions:

- **Be specific** - Instead of using broad terms like "bad" or "good," try to identify more specific emotions, such as "frustrated," "disappointed," or "joyful".
- **Use an Emotion Wheel or Thesaurus** - These resources can help you expand your emotional vocabulary and find the most accurate words to describe your feelings. You'll find an emotion wheel on the reverse of this sheet.
- **Practice Regularly** - The more you practice naming your emotions, the easier it will become to identify and manage them.
- **Don't Judge Yourself** - It's okay if you don't always get it right, or if you feel overwhelmed by your emotions. The goal is to become more aware of your inner world.