

FREE your FEELS™

START THE SCHOOL YEAR STRONG

New classes. New friends. New experiences. Starting a new school year can bring excitement, nervousness, confidence, stress -- or all of the above! Taking time to check in with your emotions can help you have a healthier school year.

UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS

Every feeling has a purpose. Feelings are your mind and body's way of giving you information about what's happening around you. Some feelings are comfortable (happy, calm, excited). Some feelings can feel uncomfortable (nervous, frustrated, disappointed). All feelings are normal and important.

It might be helpful to remember that there aren't "good" or "bad" feelings — only healthy and unhealthy ways of responding to them.

EMOTIONAL CHECK-IN

Ask yourself:

- What am I feeling right now?
- What happened that may have caused this feeling?
- What do I need right now?
- Is there someone I can talk to?

Even a 30-second check-in can help you better understand your feelings. In fact, the more words you know for your feelings, the easier it is to express them. Sometimes we say we feel "fine" because we don't know exactly how we're feeling. Try using more specific feeling words!



Big Feelings → More Specific Feelings

Happy	Nervous	Angry	Sad
↓	↓	↓	↓
Excited	Worried	Frustrated	Lonely
↓	↓	↓	↓
Proud	Uncertain	Annoyed	Disappointed
↓	↓	↓	↓
Grateful	Overwhelmed	Irritated	Discouraged
↓	↓	↓	↓
Hopeful	Anxious	Upset	Hurt

The more specific you can be about your feelings, the easier it is to understand what you need and ask for support.

ACTIVITY:

Can you name three different emotions you've felt this week?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

BUILDING SAFE SPACES & ASKING FOR HELP

WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE?

A safe space is a place where you feel:

- Respected
- Supported
- Heard
- Accepted
- Comfortable being yourself

Safe spaces can include:

- Home
- School
- Extracurricular clubs
- Sports teams
- Afterschool programs
- Community groups

Safe people might be:

- Parents or caregivers
- Teachers
- School counselors
- Coaches
- Trusted relatives
- Friends

EVERYONE NEEDS HELP SOMETIMES.

If you're struggling with strong feelings, stress, or problems at school or home:

- Talk to a trusted adult
- Tell someone how you're feeling
- Ask questions
- Reach out before things feel too overwhelming

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

"Can I talk to you about something?"

"I've been feeling stressed lately."

"I'm not sure how to handle this."

"I could use some support."

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HANDLE EVERYTHING ON YOUR OWN.

ACTIVITY:

Write down three trusted people you can talk to:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Follow for more resources!

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**CHECK OUT MORE RESOURCES AT
FREEYOURFEELS.ORG**