

Your Guidebook *To Becoming A Feelings Expert*

By Tasha Belix, M.A. Registered Psychologist

This guide when used in conjunction with the book *'What Do You Do With A Feeling'* is a road map to follow, in building an Emotional Tool Kit, so you can manage feelings through a lifetime. Learning what to do with big feelings is an important part of growing into a resilient, brave and beautiful human. In the pages to follow, you will learn how to listen to the stories your body is telling you, so you can make healthy decisions and to take care of yourself, in the present moment and for always.

Feelings are an **IMPORTANT** Part of us

A Letter For Teachers and Parents

In the pages that follow, we are going to learn to be detectives and to be curious about our feelings. **The lessons that follow, dove-tail and deepen the learning from the book, *What Do You Do With A Feeling?*, available on Amazon.com.** There is an invitation to notice clues that give us a hint about what we might be feeling, by noticing thoughts, body sensations, symptoms and behaviours through a new lens.



A magnifying glass makes a great Feelings Finder to help 'physicalize' the topic of feelings and cueing young people to noticing what they feel in their body (Thanks Anna Gomez). I would highly suggest that you have a magnifying glass at hand as you start to make sense of and talk about the stories our bodies are trying to tell us, by scanning from the tip of the head, down the body, all the way to the toes.

As you embark on a journey to support young people to better understand and take care of their emotions, know that it is encouraged for you to share from your own life, how you learned to accept and deal with your big emotions in a healthy way. Characters from favourite novels and movies, as well as people in real life, can also be called upon to illustrate the power of emotions and how virtually endless creative strategies can be used to harness the energy of an emotion to do good.

Please use a tone of curiosity when exploring the activities and messages in the book. The hope is to create a safe place to be uncertain, to make mistakes and to be able to learn as we explore our emotional world and create our own road map to follow. Do not underestimate the non-verbal cues we give to others so be mindful to make these lessons exploratory, fun, validating each person's reflection and focused on finding the wisdom within 'every body'.

When we learn how to notice and feel whatever we feel and to "hear" what our feelings are trying to tell us, we can learn to ask for what we need. Understanding emotions is an essential part of navigating relationship throughout life -within ourselves and with others.

Be creative, make the manual work for your specific child, family or classroom. Know that lots of love was poured into these pages, from many young people who have accepted the mission to understanding their feelings, in their journey to becoming a **Feelings Expert**. Learning what to do with our emotions is not optional learning; it is essential teaching for every child on the planet.

Happy Adventuring!!

XX Tasha

PS Feelings Experts-in-Training may wish to start a Feelings Journal as they journey through the guide book, to have a contained place to record big feelings and also to reflect on their learning after each exercise and activity

The Power Of Breath

Finding many short moments throughout your day, to practice mindful breathing, can help to reduce anxiety, improve focus and help you to ride the wave of a big feeling.

Practicing how to drop down from your thinking brain and into the wisdom of your heart and body, is one way to gain control over how you feel.

Placing an open-hand on our belly, can cue us to make mindful breathing extra powerful; Feel an extension as we breathe in and a lowering of the stomach as we breathe out. Learning how to take care of our emotions and how to calm our thoughts by starting with our breathing, allows us to pause, think and choose how we wish to respond instead of just reacting.

Practice the different exercises below. Which breathing exercises feel the best for you? Remember to write down your findings in your Feelings Journal!



Colour Breathing Technique

Placing an open-hand on our belly, feel the extension as we breathe in and a lowering of the stomach as we breathe out. As you breathe in slowly and deeply, imagine you are breathing in a soothing colour. Choose a colour to represent peace, calm or energy. And as you exhale, deeply and slowly, imagine you are breathing out a different colour. Choose a colour to represent something you wish to release or breath out, such as anger, worry or a yucky feeling. For example:

• Breathe in
When I feel angry (emotion,) **I breath in** sparkly white (colour), peace (meaning)

• Breathe out
And I breath out red (colour), anger (meaning)

Dragon Breathing Technique

Pretend you are a fire breathing dragon as you breathe out and release a big feeling.

- Breathe in for 4
- Breathe out for 4 and make a noise as if you are a dragon breathing out fire.
- Hold a hand in front of your mouth, so you can feel the heat in the air you are pushing out. Make a roaring sound at the back of your throat as you breathe out, to release even more emotion. This is particularly good for anger.
- Repeat.

(Learned from Michael Phelps, who has won 23 Olympic Gold Medals in swimming)

The Power Of Breath

De-Stress Breath Technique

Try this technique by placing your right hand over your heart and then your left hand on top. You might even notice your heart beat. Use your detective skills... Does it change as you do this exercise?

- Breathe in for 4
- Chin to the chest hold for 5 (count 5, 4, 3, 2, 1)
- Slowly bring up the chin as your exhale with sound 'Haaaa'

*Note regarding trauma-informed practice with kids and teens: It's important to promote a sense of predictability and safety at all times. Encourage children to keep their eyes open as they do these breathing exercises so they are more likely to stay grounded in the present moment, instead of 'drifting off' or dissociating. It's also important if you are counting to always count down towards 0, as children who have and do experience trauma, live in a state of distress because they don't know what is going to happen next. Counting down from 5 to 1 is predictable and there is a clear end, getting to 1.

FUN FACT: Mindful breathing stimulates the Vagus Nerve, the messenger between the mind and body. Slow, strong breathing works by turning off the sympathetic nervous system (stress response) and fires up the parasympathetic system (natural rest, recharge response). Breathing deeply and slowly on purpose sends a powerful message to our brain, which triggers the release of the calming hormone, Oxytocin. Oxytocin has the nickname, "the kindness hormone" and it works to send messages throughout the body to turn down the stress response and to support relaxation.

Calming Strategies

Focusing Stone Technique

Take a mindful walk to find a small rock that catches your eye or purchase a smooth stone. It can be fun to add a word that offers an intention to bring to mind as needed or to set an intention for the day. Word suggestions:

**Create, Love, Patience, Breathe, Smile, You are enough,
Find wonder, Joy, Kindness, Forgive**

You may wish to carry your rock with you, to hold at times of distress. Use the sensation of the stone in your hand and the powerful word to anchor your focus by gently massaging the rock clockwise with each breath.

We feel feelings
in our Body



Calming Strategies

The Wet Dog Shake Technique

What does a dog do when it gets wet? You got it, it shakes itself vigorously. Dogs innately know how to take care of themselves, even if they feel stressed, by giving themselves a shake. Pretend you are a wet dog and shake yourself dry. This exercise is learned from QiGong, a form a movement meditation from Chinese medicine that is centuries old. It works to balance the life energy within the body. Research shows that Qigong reduces our Cortisol, or stress hormone levels which works to promote a sense of calmness.

- Begin by shaking your fingers and then your arms, adding your shoulders, head and whole body, all the way down to your feet. Remember to breathe in deeply through the nose, and breathe out through your mouth, with sound, "Haaaa". You might think of the song Shake It Off, by Taylor Swift, as you **'shake off'** your feelings of anxiety, anger, stress, fatigue and boredom'. Do this for at least one minute.
- Notice how your body feels afterwards... be curious about the energy level, temperature, feeling that follows -record your findings.

Butterfly Hug Technique

Safe soothing touch, even when it is given to ourselves, helps to calm the body by sending a message to the brain to release Oxytocin, the kindness hormone. When we give ourselves a butterfly hug and allow ourselves to imagine something that makes us feel happy or peaceful, we are practicing an act of kindness towards ourselves. Learning to be a good friend to yourself is critical in your quest of becoming a **Feelings Expert**.

- Cross arms over your chest or heart center and use your finger to tap on the chest area just below the collar bone, right hand then left hand, back and forth, on opposite sides. It feels like you are giving yourself a soothing hug.



Reduce Anxiety - Karate Chop Technique

Handout Included

See the handout in the Resources section for more information on Magical Tapping Technique. Simply tap the acupressure points with your fingertips while you breathe deeply and give your subconscious a verbal message.

- Over time, the tapping becomes associated with the feeling of calm from the conscious breathing, and it helps trigger the shift to a more relaxed state.



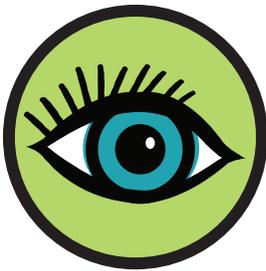
FUN FACT: EMOTION = E-Motion

We need to do something with our emotions, to move them through our body. Remember what Shrek says, "Better out than in".

Calming Strategies

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

Instead of being pulled into the future by 'what if' scenarios or dwelling on mistakes from the past, we can learn to drop into the present moment by practicing grounding exercises. It can be helpful to start with "simply noticing your feet on the ground". This exercise can be especially helpful to practice, if you are experiencing anxious thinking, want to chill out before a test or find yourself having looping thoughts or ruminating about something from the past. When we are grounded in the present moment, we can manage and cope. Practice **5 Things I See, 4 Things I Feel, 3 Things I Hear, 2 Things I Smell, 1 Thing I Taste** often and record the findings in your Feelings Journal.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



1. _____
2. _____



1. _____

Activities to EXPLORE Emotions



Talking Points to Refine Our Detective Skills

Brainstorm names used to describe different feelings, including slang words, such as **"nervous-cited" "cringy" "yucky" "prickly" "spaced-out"**
It's important to develop a rich and diverse language to communicate about feelings.

Sometimes it's hard to describe feelings using words and it just 'feels right' to use descriptors such as Colour, Texture, Temperature, Weight or simply to place a hand on the location in the body where it is most prominent, to gather clues about the feeling. When we can name or describe the feeling with words, it helps to settle the feeling and to make it less mysterious.

- What are some of the things that help a baby to calm big emotions? To feel safe and to build trust with a caregiver? For example: safe, loving touch, eye contact, rocking, soft voice, and singing. Do the same things work to soothe us as we get older?
- What do you need to feel safe and to build trust with an adult in your life, so you might share your feelings? Who is one person in your life you can talk to if you are trying to make sense of your feelings?
- Everyone feels frustrated or angry sometimes. Can you recall a time when you felt really angry? Do you recall the way your body started to tell you that anger was coming for a visit? Was there something you needed? What helps you to feel supported and understood when you are angry? Is there something that you definitely DO NOT find helpful when you are angry?
- Go for a Feelings Visit, using your curious detective lens, to gather further clues in creating your own feelings guidebook. You might wish to visit Sad, Lonely, Worried, Scared, Anxious and even 'feeling like you need to be perfect'? Of course, remember to go on Feelings Visits to lighter feelings such as Happiness, Pride, Kindness, Excitement and Feeling Loved.

It's always best, to get support from another person to understand your big feelings, but if you are alone with a feeling, such as mad, sad, scared or anxious, what might you do to take care of yourself? It's important to have many healthy coping strategies to move feelings through your body, for example, cry it out, write in a journal, listen to music, cuddle a pet, walk in nature.

- In what ways might a body might start to 'talk to us' or show symptoms if we don't allow ourselves to feel our feelings and ignore what our body is trying to tell us? What might kids show? How might it look different in teenagers? When we know how to notice and take care of our feelings, we are less likely to grow into someone that has symptoms that work to cover up what we are feelings, such as playing video games too much, using drugs & alcohol or developing certain mental health symptoms such as depression and anxiety-based disorders.

Remember what Shrek says, "Better out than in"!

Have you ever got a good or not so good feeling about someone or something but didn't have the words to describe it? This 'sense of the body knowing' is called intuition. It is often a wise part of us that is trying to send us a message. Perhaps you met someone and you just knew that you liked him or her. Tell me a story about one of these times?

*Note: these questions can be discussed as they relate to text in the book, **What Do You Do With A Feeling?**, written on cards to be chosen and discuss in small groups, used as written reflections prompts for the Feelings Journal or talking points for students to discuss with their caregiver. Be creative.

feelings need **SUPPORT** (not solutions)

FUN FACT: Listen can be scrambled into the word 'silent'

Activities to EXPLORE Emotions

Jelly Bean Check In

“We all have many feelings, just like all the colours in a bowl of jelly beans”

This game gets the most reluctant young people, engaged in talk about The ‘F word’, feelings.

- Have a bowl of multi-coloured jelly beans (Jelly Belly’s 20 Flavours are my favourite) and invite each person to choose two or three colours to describe some feelings they have experienced today or over the past week.
- Encourage children to choose a colour that helps to describe how that feeling is experienced to them or a colour to help describe the story that goes along with the feelings.

I am always amazed at how quickly groups of young people and teenagers, jump into this simple experiential activity. Be creative and go back to the metaphor often... **“Being human is like having a rainbow of different colours of emotions within us; We need to recognize the different feelings and listen to what each feeling is trying to tell us. Just like jelly beans, some flavours taste better than others and some feelings are easier to experience than others.”**

Be CURIOUS about how you feel

Where I Feel Things In My Body

Handout
Included

Our bodies are trying to tell us stories and to give us information if we learn to recognize the clues. In this activity, we are going to visit different feelings and learn about how each might send us different signals and clues in our body. No feeling is good or bad; each has a place in letting us know we need something to be listened to. Once we know how we feel, we can make different choices to ask for what we need.

It’s important to remember that how we feel is just **part of** who we are, it is not **who we are**. For example, someone can experience anxiety but no one is Anxious all the time. Even kids who experience anxiety sometimes, can also be silly and brave!

Lessons Learned Activity

Handout
Included

There is a pesky habit in most humans, of focusing on the mistake and to sometimes even think the mistake or fail means we are a mistake or fail. This is just not true. Mistakes are simply an opportunity to learn and often a necessary ingredient in learning.

We can say, **“Nice F.A.I.L., first attempt in learning,”** to ourselves after we mess something up, to learn to be kinder instead of critical to ourselves. Finding a strategy to move past mistakes and to be kinder to ourselves, is a skill we will use for our whole life. Unless you were born as something other than a human being, **SPOILER ALERT -YOU ARE NOT PERFECT!** No one is perfect.

This activity helps to uncover the hidden treasures of mistakes, to discover the wisdom that can be extracted and then added to our Feelings Journal. It invites more honesty and deeper reflection, to state clearly from the onset that no one will be asked to share his/her mistake with anyone else. This can be a powerful experiential activity in discovering one’s values and oneself better.

Activities to EXPLORE Emotions

Super-Feeler and Its Super-Power

Handout
Included

Read passage around Super-feelers from the book, *What Do You Do With a Feeling?* to introduce the definition and qualities. A Super-Feeler is someone who feels his/her feelings bigger than other people, often leading to a sense of over-whelm and big reactions that don't look like they match the situation.

- Who here thinks he or she might be a super-feeler?
- What makes you know this?
- Does anyone think they might have a super-feeler in his/her family?
- What makes you think this?
- Is being a super-feeler a bad thing? Learning what we need and having our big people understand this about us is critical, to help turn down the volume on the feelings dial.
- What are some really special qualities about someone who feels their feelings so deeply?

Brainstorm this question as a group, adding others to the list

Note: these questions can be discussed as a group or in a written reflection.

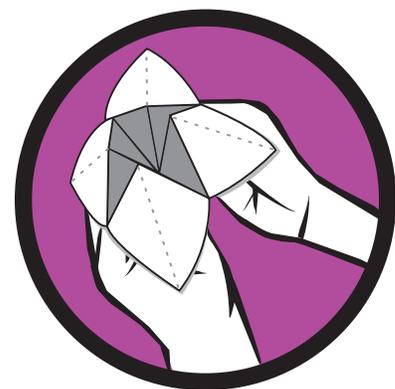


these people are called SUPER-feelers

Fortune Teller

Handout
Included

This activity is a hands-on and interactive way to explore feelings and to explore different strategies that can be used to manage emotions with a friend or classmate. Teachers and parents are encouraged to share their own experience and healthy coping strategies to add to the Managing Emotions Tool Kit.



How to play:

- Have a friend pick a colour, count the number of letters in that colour (for example, **O R A N G E** would be 6).
- Starting with all corners touching the centre you move two finger together at the same time as if making the beak of a bird open. You then bring them back to the centre and open in the opposite direction. Each move counts as 1 move.
- When you have moved 6 you then ask a friend to pick a number in the centre.
- Same as before, count out the number of moves based on the number chosen.
- Get your friend to pick another number. Once your friend picks again, you then open the paper and read the message under that number.

Reduce Anxiety - Tapping Part 1

MAGICAL TAPPING TECHNIQUE

You can use simple Tapping (EFT) techniques to calm yourself & release negative emotions.

Tapping, or Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

is a very simple technique that uses energy meridians from traditional acupuncture, combined with breathing and a mantra. You simply tap the acupuncture points with your fingertips while you breathe deeply and give your subconscious a verbal message. Over time, the tapping becomes associated with the feeling of calm from the conscious breathing, and it helps trigger the shift to a more relaxed state.

You can use EFT to calm yourself and release negative emotions. Breathe deeply when tapping the acupuncture points, noticing any physical sensations or shifts. You may find yourself yawning, which is one of the ways your body releases emotions.

Here's how tapping works:

- Firmly but gently tap either side of the body as shown in the diagrams on the next page using the fingertips of either hand.
- Tap long enough so that you can take three complete breaths in and out.
- You can also simply massage these points.
- As you tap, breathe deeply. You can use the following phrase:



Tap the "Karate chop point" while saying this phrase.
Fill in the blanks using your own words.

Even though I am feeling _____ (insert feeling)
About _____ (describe situation)
And I feel it in my _____ (location in body)
Right here, right now, I'm okay.

Repeat this phrase 3 times.

- Next, say the feeling you identified in the phrase out loud while tapping the areas shown in the diagrams on the next page.

Reduce Anxiety - Tapping Part 2

Name the feeling you identified in the phrase out loud while tapping the 9 areas below.

Don't worry about being exact. Tapping the general area will get the job done. And don't worry about doing all the points, or about following a specific order. Just tapping the "Karate chop point" is often enough to help lessen anxiety. It's a quick and effective way to calm kids, release stuck emotions or trauma, and help them fall asleep at night.



1. **KARATE CHOP:** Outside edge of hand, below the little finger.
2. **CROWN OF HEAD:** Resting open hand, palm down on crown.
3. **EYEBROW:** Either eyebrow, tap on end near bridge of nose.
4. **OUTER EDGE OF THE EYE:** Just at the edge of the eye on the eye socket.
5. **UNDER THE EYE:** About one inch below either eye, on bone.
6. **UNDER THE NOSE:** Above upper lip.
7. **CHIN:** Below the lower lip on the crease where the chin starts.
8. **BEGINNING OF COLLAR BONE:** Inside end of either collar bone, below the throat.
9. **JUST UNDER THE ARM:** Four inches under armpit on side of rib cage.

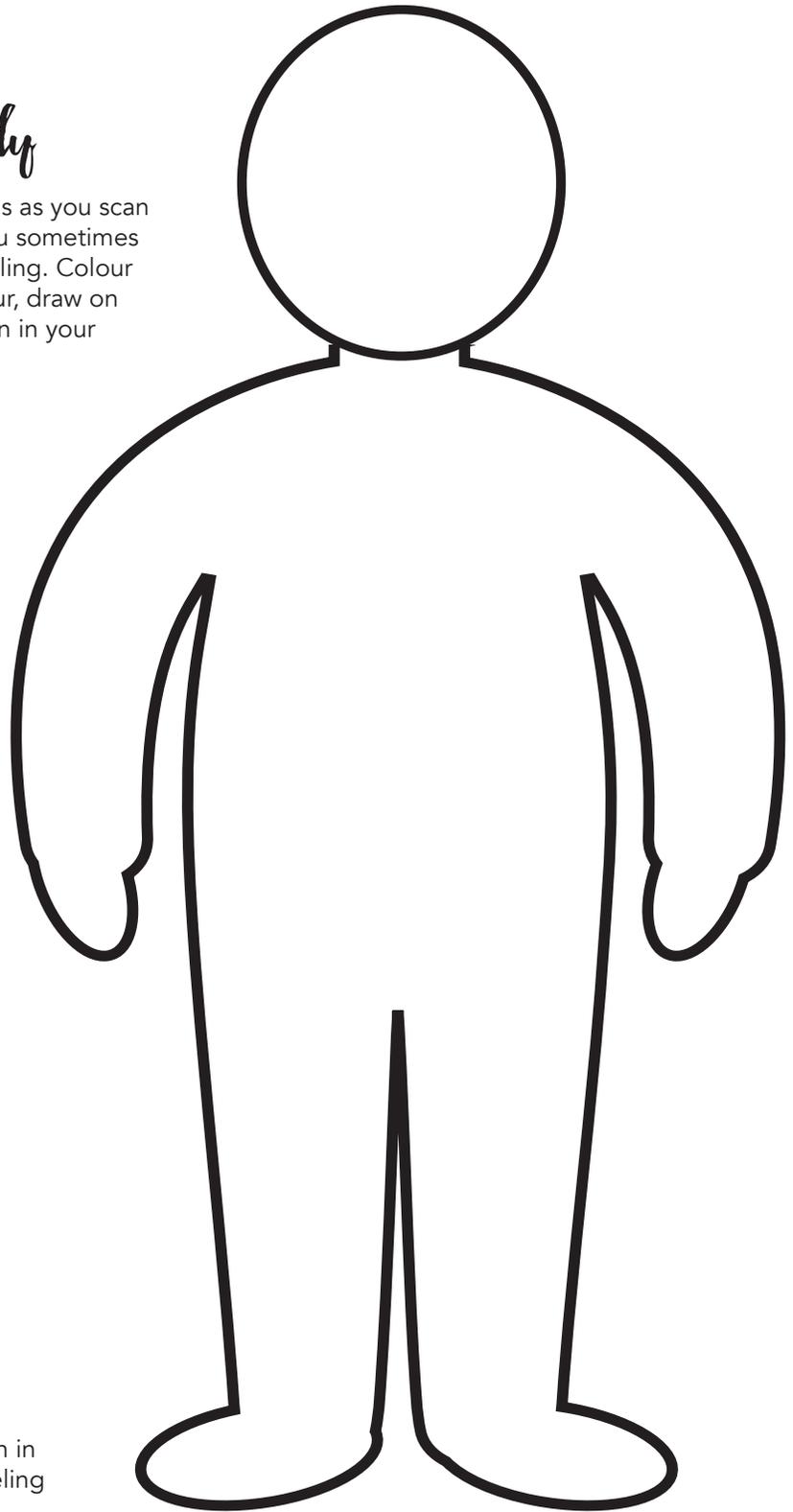


Where I Feel Things In My Body

Imagine that you are a detective and be curious as you scan your body for clues about different feelings you sometimes experience. Use different colours for each feeling. Colour the circle for that feeling. Using the same colour, draw on the diagram below where you feel that emotion in your body. Be curious!



- Anger
- Happy
- Sad
- Scared
- Stressed
- _____
- _____



Now that you know where you feel that emotion in your body, let's talk about how to move that feeling through your body.

Angry

Do 10 jumping jacks (name 2 more)

1. _____

2. _____

Sad

Snuggle something soft (name 2 more)

1. _____

2. _____

Scared

A place you feel safe (name 2 more)

1. _____

2. _____

Lesson Learned Activity

This activity helps to uncover the hidden treasures that come from mistakes and to expose the wisdom that can be learned. If we take some time to reflect and understand the valuable clues, we can learn about who we are and what is important to us. Once complete, cut and add the bottom half to your personal Feelings Journal.

MISTAKE • Write or draw a mistake you have made in your past. (You can choose to keep this to yourself)



LESSON LEARNED • Describe at least one important lesson you learned from this incident. Often these are values that we discover are important to us and can help us make choices that “feel right” for us throughout life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

PUTTING THE LESSON LEARNED INTO ACTION • How do I show this value in my life (describe behaviour)?

This week I will _____

Complete by (date) _____ Date completed _____

Signed: _____

Super Hero, Super Power

Being a super-feeler can be a **super power** once you learn how to manage big emotions and ask for what you need. Design your Super Hero cape. Characteristics, strengths, qualities or behaviours can be written on the cape to emphasize the **power** of a super-feeler, for example;

great friend, loving, intuitive, empathetic, kind, protector of animals and nature



FUN FACT: By striking a **Super Hero Stance** (with fists on hips, spread legs, chest lifted and eyes gazing towards the horizon) you send a message to your brain, and can feel more confident. Give it a try before your next test or performance.

Super Feeler Card

Use your Super Hero cape to help fill out your official super-feeler card. Cut it out then fold it in half to keep in your pocket for when you need it.

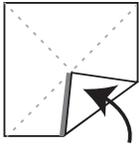
	<p>Hello, I am a super-feeler. This means _____ _____</p>	<p>How to take care of me: _____ _____ _____</p>								
	<p>Things I need you to know about</p>	<p>Thanks for understanding. Please let me know if you have any questions.</p>								
	<table><tr><td>Challenges</td><td>Strengths</td></tr><tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr><tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr><tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr></table>	Challenges	Strengths	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<p>What I offer because I'm a super-feeler (or because of my super-power) _____ _____</p>
	Challenges	Strengths								
_____	_____									
_____	_____									
_____	_____									
	<p>Signed _____</p>									

To Learn more on your journey to become a Feelings Expert:

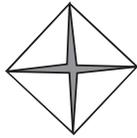
- Book, **What Do You Do With A Feeling?**, by Tasha Belix and Jo-Ann Godenir available at amazon.com
- Check out Youtube, **Tasha Talks To Teens** for more feelings directive tutorials
- Follow Tasha on Instagram **@feelingsexpert**
- Send questions and comments to **admin@tashabelix.com**

Fortune Teller Activity

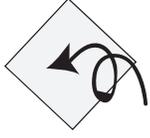
Here is a fun and creative way to explore feelings and to build skills for managing emotions with a friend. Cut out the template to create a square. Flip it over so the blank side is facing up then fold using the instructions.



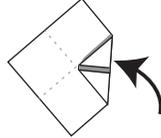
Fold up at four corners so that the points meet in the middle.



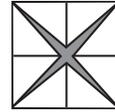
It should now look like this.



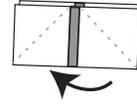
Flip it over.



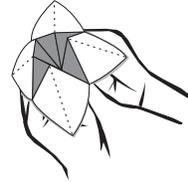
Fold up at four corners so that the points meet in the middle.



It should now look like this.



Fold it.



Work your fingers into the four corner "pockets".

	<p>1</p> <p>Name where you feel SAD, MAD, SCARED.</p> <p>What helps you move feelings through your body? Ex. jump, skip, or pet an animal</p> <p>2</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>"Ride the Wave". Slow deep breaths, in for count of 4, out for count of 4.</p>		<p>6</p> <p>Name 3 things that make you feel better when you are sad or anxious.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>"Name it to Tame it". Name a feeling that you notice in your body right now</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Feelings feel lighter when we share them. Name 2 people you can talk to about your feelings.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>How do you SHOW your friends you are listening to them?</p>
	<p>3</p> <p>Name 3 things that are qualities of a good friend.</p>	