

Feeling Faces Cards

Overview

Motivation. Everyone wants to know what causes people to act. We have long suspected that powerful forces lurk behind most actions. We have experienced the magical feeling when someone is transformed rather than informed. But what caused the change?

Science-based research has revealed that emotions—not logic and facts alone—are the root of motivation and human behavior.

Because emotions drive behaviors, it makes sense to start with emotions when talking with WIC clients. The Feeling Faces are a fun, easy and quick tool to uncover the emotions clients feel about any topic. Knowing how clients feel allows you to engage them in potentially life-changing, emotion-based conversations.

Objectives

Use the Feeling Faces Cards to identify how a parent feels about any topic. When the WIC staff member validates the client's feelings, the stage is set for a deep and meaningful conversation. As with all tools, probing beyond the first answer takes you closer to real issues that can then be woven into amazing core conversations.

The Feeling Faces Cards can be especially helpful when talking about sensitive topics, for instance a child's weight. Allowing parents to share how they feel helps educators approach the topic.

Activities

1. After greeting the client warmly, place the Feeling Faces Cards on a flat surface so clients can easily see them. Ask the client to select a face that says something about how they feel about a particular topic. Continue to repeat the directions as the client selects a picture that represents their feelings or if the client looks confused. Note: It is better to have the pictures positioned so the client can pick the picture up and hold it rather than point to it on the wall or door.
2. Ask the parent to show you their picture. Probe, using words like these: "Tell me more" or "So what about (the topic) makes you feel that way?" or "Help me understand. What about (topic) makes you feel frustrated?"
Note: All emotions are valid, so we must accept every shared feeling without correction or comment.
3. If the parents share positive feelings: Recognize positive feelings like happiness first, celebrating successes and victories. Then, using the same Feeling Faces Cards and process, ask about a different topic.
4. If the parent shares negative feelings: Assure parent that it is common to have negative feelings about their child's progress with (topic). If it is indeed the case, you might state that you shared those same feelings when you had children.
5. Get to specifics through probes like these: What is something that really frustrates you about (topic)? What happened in the last week that made you feel especially worried about (topic)? Help me understand the situation better by sharing a story about mealtimes at your house and how they make you feel sad.
6. Use the client feelings and their specific responses to engage in an emotion-based conversation about the topic. Always ask permission before sharing simple, practical and relevant tips that might change the situation for the parent and lead to positive feelings. When possible and for extra credibility, attribute the tips to other mothers.

"The Feeling Face Cards can be used with parents on any topic. They're our "go to" tool when we want to get parents talking."

Debi, Chickasaw Nation WIC Manager

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7. You can end the session by picking up and showing the “happy” face card to the client and saying: “Do you feel the tips we talked about today will lead you to feeling like this? What will you do first to lead you to that big smile?”

Adaptations

The Feeling Face Cards can be used with individuals or in a group. Establish a safe environment for sharing before asking mothers to share their feeling faces with others in the group.

Here are ways to use the Feeling Faces to generate group discussions:

Pick a face that says something about how you feel about the way your child eats or moves. Everyone have a face? Who would like to go first and show your face? What about the way your child eats makes you feel that way?

If parents share positive feelings: “Share with us a practical tip that makes you feel happy and content.”

If parents share negative feelings: “Who can share a practical tip for Susan so that she can feel happy rather than frustrated by mealtime with a toddler?”