

## Taking it Further: Naming Feelings

### Resources & Citations:

- [How to Tame Reactive Emotions by Naming Them](#)
- [5 Ways to Know Your Feelings Better](#)
- [Addressing Conflict in Community Engagement Work](#)
- [How to Control Your Emotions in Conflict Resolution](#)

There are a number of strategies you can use to explore and identify your feelings. Use these resources and adapt as needed for age, background, culture, or any other consideration you see as useful.

### Take a Break

To bring people in a community together and make positive changes, those working in community engagement need to be good at communication. This includes being able to listen to and understand your own thoughts and feelings. It's important to start by understanding ourselves before trying to understand others. Labeling our emotions is a great start to knowing how we think and react to potentially stressful events. Research has shown that mere verbal labeling of negative emotions can help people recover their feeling of control.

### Notice and Name your Feelings

Simply pay attention to how you're feeling throughout the day and name for yourself what emotion you're feeling in that instance. For example, you might feel happy when you complete a big task at work or get some unexpected extra free time with your friends. You might feel nervous before a big presentation. If you'd like, you could set a timer on your cell phone to go off occasionally as a reminder to check in with your emotions.

### Track a Single Emotion

Pick one emotion that you are going to track throughout the day. You can track this mentally, write it down on a piece of paper, or maybe note it in your cell phone. Maybe it's an emotion you want to understand better and work on (for example: anger), or it's simply an emotion you commonly experience (for example: relaxed). Make note of:

- ✓ when you feel this emotion; what was happening at the time?
- ✓ how strong was the emotion? (for example on a scale of 1-10 or simply mild, medium, strong)

Making note of when we feel an emotion and what was happening in our lives at the time helps us better understand and work with our feelings.

### Learn More Names for Feelings

Instead of simply "happy", are you joyful, elated, content, cheerful, blissful? Instead of "angry", are you annoyed, irritated, infuriated, unappreciated, resentful? Being able to make distinctions among the nuances and intensity of your feelings can also help you better understand and work with them.

Look at the Feelings Wheel in this toolkit to explore additional language and nuances around feelings.

### Keep a Feelings Journal

Take a few minutes each day to write down how you've been feeling throughout the day and why. The simple act of writing is an excellent way to process your thoughts and feelings and make sense of them.