



FEELINGS IN ACTION

Emotion in Movement

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS



Every Movement Has a Feeling

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW DIFFERENTLY YOU MOVE WHEN YOU FEEL EXCITED, TIRED, NERVOUS, CALM, FRUSTRATED, OR JOYFUL?

When we are feeling confident, we may stand taller, move more freely, and take up more space. When we are feeling worried or uncertain, our movements may become smaller, slower, or more cautious.

Movement is not just something our bodies do. Movement is also something we feel. In fact, movement and feelings are constantly influencing one another. A deep breath can help us feel calmer. A walk can help clear our thoughts. Celebrating a goal might make us jump, clap, smile, raise our arms, or simply sit back and feel proud. A slow stretch can be comforting. A fast game can be energizing. A favourite song can make us want to move in ways we did not expect.

Feelings do not only change movement. Movement can also change feelings. This is good news because it means movement gives us another way to care for ourselves. You do not need to be an athlete, dancer, or fitness enthusiast to experience this connection.

Whether you are:

- rolling
- walking
- dancing
- stretching
- gardening
- playing
- reaching
- exercising
- breathing

your movements can influence how you feel.



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The goal is not to feel happy all the time. The goal is to become more aware of the relationship between movement and emotion.

Some days movement may help us feel:

- calmer
- stronger
- more focused
- more connected
- more confident
- more joyful

Other days movement may give us a safe way to release:

- frustration
- stress
- worry
- tension
- sadness

There are no right or wrong emotions. There are only opportunities to notice what movement is helping us feel today.

As one participant in our InterActive for Life research shared:

I love moving to music, to sound, and just going with the beat and how it makes you feel. I don't think that we should worry about whether we're doing everything perfectly. I don't worry about it. Just go with it. You make mistakes, you do things not quite correctly. That's the least of your worries- whether you're going to do everything perfectly, right. Just enjoy moving with the music. Everybody has big smiles on their faces when the music is playing.

Her joy is contagious and may be viewed in the [“Joy in Active Aging”](#) YouTube video.

An attitude shift we may adopt after learning about this experience is this: What if movement wasn't something we did to get somewhere? What if movement was also a way to feel something?

The next time you move, ask yourself:

"How do I want to feel?"

Then notice whether your movement helps you get there.

Participant Activities

TO EXPLORE FEELINGS IN ACTION

1

Mood Check-In

Before an activity begins, pause and ask:

- How am I feeling right now?
- What word describes my mood?
- What is my energy level?

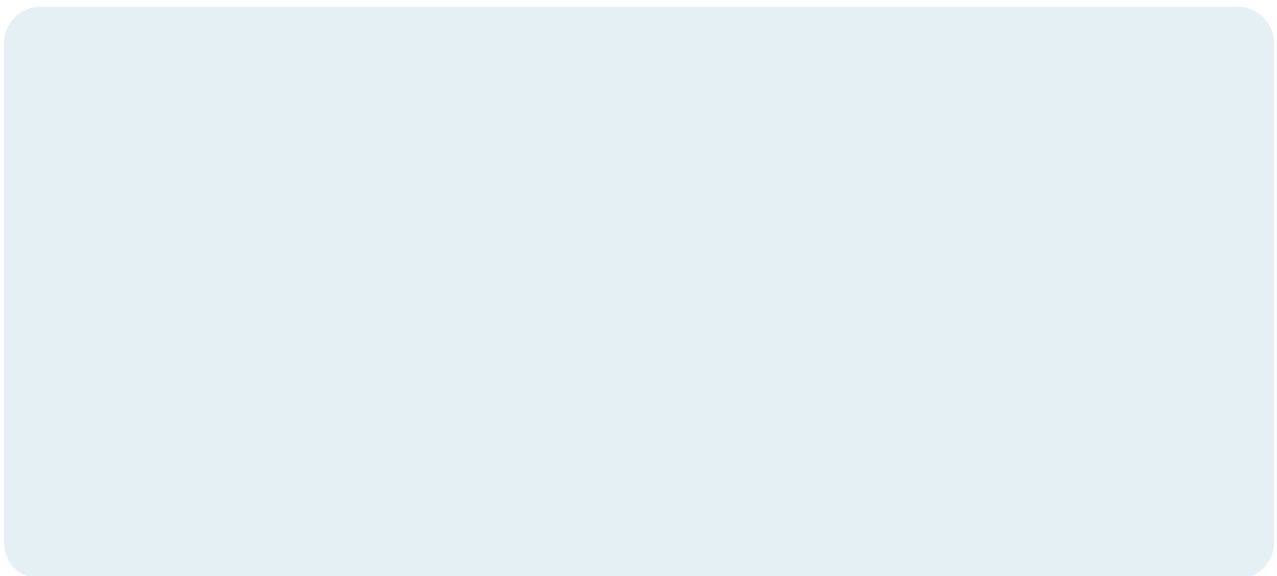
Choose one word:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| • calm | • frustrated |
| • tired | • hopeful |
| • excited | • focused |
| • worried | • stressed |
| • happy | • relaxed |

Challenge

After the activity, choose a word again.

Did anything change?



Participant Activities

TO EXPLORE FEELINGS IN ACTION

2

Change The Feeling, Change The Movement

Try a movement in different ways. Examples:

- slower, then faster
- softer, then stronger
- smaller, then bigger
- quiet, then energetic

Challenge

Notice how each version feels.

Which movement made you feel:

- ☒ Calm?
- ☒ Strong?
- ☒ Energized?
- ☒ Confident?
- ☒ Relaxed?



Participant Activities

TO EXPLORE FEELINGS IN ACTION

3 Move to The Music

Choose a song or rhythm. Experiment with moving in a way that matches the music.

You might:

- sway
- tap
- roll
- stretch
- walk
- dance
- move your arms
- move your head

There is no correct way.

Challenge

Let the music guide your movement instead of worrying about doing it perfectly.



Participant Activities

TO EXPLORE FEELINGS IN ACTION

4

The Emotion Explorer

Choose one emotion:



Joy



Excitement



Confidence



Calm



Hope

Ask yourself:

"What movement matches this feeling?"

Try moving as if you were expressing that feeling through movement alone.

Challenge

How many different ways can you express the same feeling?

A large, light blue rounded rectangle with a subtle pattern of small dots, intended for participants to write their answers or reflections.

Participant Activities

TO EXPLORE FEELINGS IN ACTION

5 My Feel Better Toolbox

Make a list of movements that help you feel good.

Examples:

When I Want To Feel...	Movement That Helps Me
Calm	
Energized	
Connected	
Confident	
Happy	
Focused	

Build your own "Feel Better Through Movement" toolkit.

Movement Challenge

Complete this sentence:

When I want to feel _____, movement helps by _____.





Curious for more?

- [Quick tips for physical activity facilitators](#)
- [Complete the InterActive for Life Inventory](#)



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