



FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

Shared Exertions & Expressions

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS



Feelings Move Through Movement

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW DIFFERENT IT FEELS TO MOVE BESIDE DIFFERENT PEOPLE?

Perhaps you were walking with someone whose pace felt natural and comfortable. Without discussing it, you gradually matched one another's speed. The conversation flowed more easily. The walk felt smoother. Time seemed to pass more quickly.

Or perhaps you have experienced the opposite. One person wanted to walk quickly. The other preferred a slower pace. One person stopped often. The other wanted to keep moving. The rhythm never quite matched.

Suddenly, you became aware of something important: Movement is not experienced in isolation. It is experienced in relationship. We encounter this every day. A parent and child walking to school. Friends walking through a neighbourhood. People shopping together. Neighbours gardening side by side. Coworkers crossing a campus. Two people carrying a table. Friends paddling a canoe. Participants moving together in a class.

In each situation, people are constantly responding to one another. We shorten or lengthen our stride. We slow down or speed up. We coordinate effort. We find a rhythm. We discover a pace that works. Or we learn that a rhythm is difficult to find.

Over time, many of us become more intentional about where we place ourselves and who we move beside. Not because we are comparing ourselves to others. Not because we are competing. But because some people help us enjoy movement more. Their pace feels comfortable. Their effort feels steady. Their focus helps us concentrate. Their enthusiasm makes participation enjoyable. Their commitment encourages us to stay engaged.

Many experienced participants intentionally position themselves near people who help them move well. In a walking group, it may be someone whose pace feels just right. In a yoga class, it may be someone whose focus helps them settle into the practice. In a dance class, it may be someone whose rhythm strengthens their own. In a drumming circle, it may be someone whose timing helps everyone stay together.

Feelings Move Through Movement

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW DIFFERENT IT FEELS TO MOVE BESIDE DIFFERENT PEOPLE?

Movement qualities such as rhythm, pace, effort, timing, focus, balance, enthusiasm, and persistence are not experienced alone. We experience them with and through other people.

One participant in our InterActive for Life research described her favourite class this way:

When a good song comes on, my feet start moving... torso swaying, feet tapping, head nodding... I feel good. It is my favourite class.

Notice that she does not describe a feeling first. She describes movement. Her feet move. Her torso sways. Her head nods. The feeling emerges through the movement.

As movement relationships expand beyond pairs and small groups, another phenomenon sometimes emerges. A walking group settles into a comfortable pace. A pickleball rally continues longer than expected. A drumming group locks into a rhythm. A yoga class becomes deeply focused and still. A pickup game develops flow and momentum. A volunteer team works together so smoothly that the task begins to feel effortless.

No single person creates these experiences. They emerge through shared effort, shared timing, shared attention, and shared participation.

We often think of feelings as something that happens inside us. Movement reminds us that feelings can also be experienced through action. You can feel another person's determination. You can feel another person's steadiness. You can feel another person's joy. You can feel another person's focus.

- Movement is not only something we do.
- Movement is something we share.
- And through that sharing, feelings emerge.



Feelings Move Through Movement

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW DIFFERENT IT FEELS TO MOVE BESIDE DIFFERENT PEOPLE?

InterActive for Life Reflection

The question is not only:

"How do I feel?"

It is also:

"How are the people around me influencing the way movement feels?"

A Challenge for Reflection

The next time you move with others, ask yourself:

"Whose movement helps me enjoy this experience?"

And:

"What qualities am I contributing to the people around me?"

Examples might include:

- rhythm
- focus
- steadiness
- enthusiasm
- effort
- persistence
- calmness
- playfulness
- joy



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

1

Notice Feeling in Motion

Observe:

- smiles
- laughter
- sighs
- effort sounds
- celebration
- concentration
- playfulness

Reflection

What feelings were visible through movement today?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

2 Create Opportunities for Shared Rhythm

Look for moments that encourage:

- shared timing
- coordinated effort
- movement responses
- rhythm
- cooperation

Examples:

- walking together
- partner challenges
- passing activities

Reflection

When did participants appear most connected through movement?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

3 Encourage Shared Expression

Help participants feel comfortable expressing themselves through movement.

Notice:

- smiles
- gestures
- celebration
- effort
- laughter
- eye contact

Reflection

How did participants express enjoyment, effort, or engagement?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

4

Help Participants Find Their People

Many people begin activities because of the activity.

Many continue because of the people.

Create opportunities for participants to:

- learn names
- work with different partners
- welcome newcomers
- build movement friendships

Reflection

Who formed a new connection today?

Who may still be looking for a movement friend?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

5

Ask Movement-Feeling Questions

- ✓ "What did you notice?"
- ✓ "When did movement feel most shared?"
- ✓ "Who influenced your experience?"
- ✓ "What helped you stay engaged?"

Reflection

How did these questions change the movement experience?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

6 Notice What You Praise

Do participants hear recognition for:

- effort?
- focus?
- rhythm?
- encouragement?
- responsiveness to others?

Examples:

- ✓ "I noticed people supporting one another."
- ✓ "Your rhythm helped the group."
- ✓ "I appreciate the positive energy you brought."
- ✓ "Your focus helped others stay engaged."

Reflection

What movement qualities did I recognize today?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

7 Shared Expression Audit

Observe your next session.

Ask:

- When did people seem most connected?
- When did rhythm emerge?
- When did people respond to one another?
- When did momentum build?
- When did shared expressions appear?

Reflection

What helped create those moments?

How can I intentionally support more of them?



Instructor Tips

FOR FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

Tip #1: Feelings Are Experienced Through Movement

People often express enjoyment, effort, confidence, and focus through action.

Tip #2: Shared Rhythm Strengthens Connection

People often feel more connected when they find a common pace or rhythm.

Tip #3: Connection Is More Than Conversation

Eye contact, gestures, timing, effort, and shared action all contribute to interaction.

Tip #4: Help People Find Their People

Supportive movement relationships often increase enjoyment and participation.

Tip #5: Shared Expressions Create Atmosphere

The atmosphere of an activity emerges through the ways people respond to one another.

InterActive For Life

REMINDER

Key Takeaway

Feeling is not separate from movement.

We experience feeling through:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| ✓ pace | ✓ gestures |
| ✓ rhythm | ✓ expressions |
| ✓ timing | ✓ shared movement |
| ✓ effort | ✓ interaction |

When we move with others, we often learn how they are feeling through the way they move.

And they learn something about us through the way we move.

The goal is not simply to complete the activity.

The goal is to notice, share, and respond to the feelings that emerge through movement.

Congratulations!

You have explored ways to:

- ✓ Notice feeling in motion
- ✓ Recognize shared rhythm and timing
- ✓ Build movement friendships
- ✓ Respond to others through movement
- ✓ Contribute to a positive movement atmosphere
- ✓ Experience the power of moving and feeling together

InterActive for Life Reminder

NOTICE. CONNECT. RESPOND.

Pay attention to rhythm.

Share your effort.

Express yourself through movement.

Notice who helps you move well.

Become someone others enjoy moving beside.

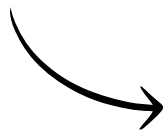
Feelings are not only experienced within us. They are shared through movement.





Curious for more?

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



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