



FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

Shared Exertions & Expressions

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS



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



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

1

The Rhythm Connection Challenge

Notice moments in your day when people naturally connect through:

- pace
- rhythm
- timing
- breathing
- coordinated effort

Examples:

- walking together
- paddling together
- passing a ball
- dancing together
- drumming together
- carrying something together

Reflection

When did the shared movement feel most connected?

What happened?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

2

Shared Expressions Challenge

In your next group activity, notice the ways people acknowledge one another through movement.

Examples:

- eye contact
- smiles
- nods
- thumbs up
- laughter
- applause
- shared rhythm
- slowing down so someone can join
- waiting for a walking partner
- celebrating a success

Reflection

What shared expressions did I notice?

How did they affect the atmosphere?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

3 Choose Your Place

When joining an activity, notice where you place yourself.

Who do you choose to stand beside, sit beside, walk beside, or move beside?

Is this person someone who is:

- welcoming?
- focused?
- steady?
- encouraging?
- energetic?
- enjoyable to move with?
-something else?

Reflection

Who did I choose to move beside today?

What did I appreciate about moving near them?

How did they influence my experience?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

4

Choose Your Place

Many people continue an activity because of the relationships they develop.

During your next activity:

- ☐ Introduce yourself to someone new
- ☐ Learn someone's name
- ☐ Ask what they enjoy about the activity
- ☐ Move beside someone different
- ☐ Invite someone to join you

Reflection

Who did I connect with?

One thing I learned about them was:

Would I enjoy moving with this person again?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

5

Use the Movement Mood Barometer Together

Before an activity ask:

“How would I like to feel while moving with others?”

Examples:

- connected
- confident
- joyful
- energized
- relaxed

Reflection

Before moving I hoped to feel:

After moving I felt:

What movement experiences helped create that feeling?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

5 Use the Movement Mood Barometer Together

Resource: Movement Mood Barometer:

<https://function2flow.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Movement-Mood-Barometer.pdf>

CLASS COLOUR CODE	ICON	E-MOTIONS
Red Aggressive		Quick/Aggressive/Competitive Activities that offer an outlet to release stress, feelings of aggression or frustration. <i>Examples: cardio boxing, pickleball, HITT training, cardio drumming</i>
Yellow Uplifting		Uplifting, Joyous, Ecstatic, Energizing, Invigorating Activities that offer opportunities to move joyfully to music with or without partner that promotes fun and laughter with options for freestyle flow or moving in unison. Class promotes feelings of success (graduated progressions). <i>Examples: freestyle dance, synchronized movement (i.e., clapping, tapping, cardio drumming/ body percussion, belly dancing)</i>
Light Green Grounded		Predictable/Grounded Activities that follow consistent format designed to promote a mindful, rooted flow with repeated sequences. Attention is directed to breath, feeling body movement and feeling very present. <i>Examples: Mindful walking, Tai Chi, Yoga, range-of-motion exercises, meditation classes, mindfulness training</i>
Orange Cognitive Challenge		Cognitive Challenge-Dual Tasking Classes that complexify the experience that combine physical activity with cognitive challenges, i.e., counting, naming, problem-solving while engaged in movement. <i>Examples: "Simon(e) Says" games, Cross-Crawl</i>
Blue Restful		Slow/Peaceful/Relaxing Activities/ Classes that offer progressive relaxation, stretching/range of motion movements, mindful breathing. <i>Examples: Tai Chi, Yoga, Range-of-motion exercises, meditation classes. Mindfulness training</i>
Purple Spontaneous		Spontaneous/Creative Activities or games that offer variations in intensity, speed (quick bursts and holds), equipment/props (i.e., scarfs, beach balls, rubber chickens). <i>Examples: cooperative/modified games, i.e., chair volleyball, pool noodle games; partner dance; ping pong, scarf juggling</i>



Participant Tips

FOR FEELINGS IN INTERACTION

Tip #1: Feelings Can Be Seen in Movement

Effort, joy, focus, confidence, and determination are often visible through action.

Tip #2: Notice Shared Rhythm

Shared timing and shared effort can make movement feel easier and more enjoyable.

Tip #3: Pay Attention to Where You Place Yourself

The people around you can influence your experience.

Tip #4: Find Your Movement People

Many people return because of the relationships they form through movement.

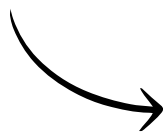
Tip #5: Become Someone Others Enjoy Moving Beside

Your effort, focus, enthusiasm, and encouragement can positively influence others.



Curious for more?

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



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