

Feelings

People have many kinds of feelings. Happiness, sadness, fear, anger, jealousy, relief, and disappointment are just a few of the feelings people have. All these feelings are normal, including

anger. In order to handle feelings well, people—including teens—have to be able to recognize their feelings and to put them into words.

Swallowing Feelings

Many people do not put their feelings into words; they may not even admit to themselves that they are having a feeling. These people swallow feelings down by minimizing, denying, or burying them. People who do this may get depressed, or they may get physically sick, or they may explode at something else.

Some people are afraid of feelings. They may fear the pain that accompanies feelings, especially feelings of sadness. Some

people fear they will be overwhelmed by their feelings; or they may fear they will lose control: they may fear that if they let themselves feel anger, they will not be able to control their behavior. However, no matter how afraid people are of their feelings, the feelings don't go away. Sometimes they show themselves in physical aches and pains; or people may act out their feelings by fighting or by using alcohol or other drugs; or they may turn their feelings in and become depressed.

Feelings Are Temporary

Many people think that when they get a feeling, they will have it forever—many people make suicide attempts when they are very depressed and think the depression will last forever. Very angry people may commit acts of violence, not realizing that eventually their anger will die down.

Feelings are really temporary and fleeting; they don't last forever. Feelings come, but then they go. So, teenagers can just wait until a difficult feeling passes. Teens can also do something to make themselves feel better.

People Can Do Things to Feel Better

Most people do not understand they can do something about some feelings they might have. For instance, teenagers who have fights with their parents often feel better when they call their friends and complain about their parents. Some days, people wake up in an "up" mood, when they feel happy. But other days, people wake up in a "down" mood; they may feel

angry or sad. It's important for teens to learn what they can do to help themselves feel better if they wake up in a sad or an angry mood. Teens might play sports, listen to music, dance, call their friends, or write a poem to help themselves feel better. It's important for adults to have fun things to do as well.

Anger Is a Normal Feeling

Adolescents may have intense feelings that can be very difficult to have. Some teens live in families where they feel intense anger, even hatred for their parents; they then often feel guilty and ashamed because they think they are bad to hate their parents. Anger is not a bad feeling; feelings are not good or bad; they just are. But, feelings like anger, hate, rage, and even sadness, panic, and grief can be very difficult to have. They are normal feelings that most people

have at least some of the time.

People can't control what feelings they get, so they have to learn to accept them. But they are responsible for their behavior, which they can and should control. So it is okay for teens to feel anger, or even hate; but it is not okay for them to act in violent ways. It is okay for adolescents to feel very angry at their parents; but it is not okay for them to hit their parents.

Three Components of Emotion

Feelings have three components: feeling, thinking, and behaving. Teenagers who act out a lot in school—talk back to teachers, break school rules, fight with peers, skip school, don't do school work—are probably not putting thinking between their feeling of anger and their behavior. They may be feeling angry about something like their parents' divorce or a parent's alcoholism, but they may not be aware of the feeling. They may just be acting it out. Some teens may feel very sad, or even depressed. Their behavior

might be to feel exhausted and lie around and do nothing.

Sometimes teens need to look at their thinking before they can handle their feelings. They may need to see if their thinking is straight or if it is incorrect. They may realize they have negative thinking, for instance, always expecting the worst or putting themselves down. They need to realize that their thinking is incorrect, or a false belief, or a misconception.