

*Tools:* *The Talking Tree* (book and CD... for Part 2: “The Historical Roots of Violence”)

*Goal:* To help children understand where feelings come from... and to help children engage their thought process...

*Objectives:* • To help children see their feelings objectively... • to help children understand their feelings in an 'historical' sense... • to provide a space to allow children to express their feelings without judgment...

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Guidance for teachers... suggested opening explanation to children:

“Before we begin let me say this: because each one of us lives separately – in a different place – from our classmates... we tend to think no one else is feeling what we are feeling... but really we all feel the same things... but we never get to share our feelings with each other... so that we can see this... and see that we are not alone.

“So if you feel able to share out loud with your classmates what you remember about your feelings when I ask for those memories... it will help us all feel less alone.

“Please share only when you really want to.

“I will be asking some questions over and over during... and after... each discussion... so that we can see if... as we listen to our classmates... our understanding starts to grow.”

To Teachers: This is an opportunity for children to voice feelings with their classmates without adult judgment. It's important that teachers listen without comment to what the children share.

Each discussion focuses on a feeling. The same sequence of questions are asked about each feeling discussed. The questions in Step 3 (below) are repeated at the beginning of each discussion.

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*Step 1:* Let the children know we will be making two lists. For the first one ask the children to name all the feelings they can remember having felt. Let them know that the lists they make are for their use only and will not be collected. After they have made their first list... ask them to make a second list that names other feelings they know of... but which they have never felt.

*Step 2:* Ask the children to call out... one by one so you can write them on the board... the feelings on their first list. Each of these feelings will be the subject of a discussion. This is Part 1 of the curriculum: “Discussing Feelings...”

*Step 3:* Take the first feeling that you have written on the board (e.g. 'happy'...) and ask – “When do you feel happy?... the children share without adult comment. (These thoughts are not written on the board. The teacher models attentive listening to the thoughts of others.) When no other thoughts are shared about the feeling being discussed... ask: “When do you feel 'not happy'?... and then again allow them to express without comment. When no other thoughts are shared... ask: “Why do you think we're here... on the earth? Why do you think we're alive?”

When the children have no other thoughts to share let them know that you appreciate their courage in sharing their memories of... and thoughts about... their feelings... and ask if anyone has anything else they want to add about the discussion.

This is the end of the first discussion on the first feeling named on the board.

After each feeling on the list has been discussed (each discussion should occur on a separate day...) the second part of the curriculum begins: a discussion of *The Talking Tree*.

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