

36 - Basic vocabulary to express opinions and emotions

Aim: To provide resources for activities to help refugees express basic opinions and emotions.

The importance of expressing opinions and feelings

It is important that refugees can express opinions and feelings in the target language. However, it is often an interculturally and personally delicate task to discuss or demonstrate feelings, particularly in a group situation. It is not intended to ask refugees to talk about their feelings but to be able to express their feelings when they choose to do so. For example it is a good idea to ask a group how they feel at the end of a session. Are you happy? Confused? Tired? Energised, etc. It is also good to be able to enquire how a person feels if they have been absent from sessions due to illness.

Introducing the vocabulary for feelings and emotions

It is useful to begin by introducing adjectives such as 'happy', 'sad', 'surprised', 'confused' and so on. Then the refugees choose pictures or symbols to indicate feelings. Smiley faces, which are commonly used in texting, allow you to introduce the concept at a very general level.

For example:

- distribute a set of pictures (gathered from magazines, newspapers, internet etc.) which show faces expressing either pleasure and joy or sadness and ask the refugees to match pictures with an appropriate smiley face/ word.
- ask the refugees to choose other pictures to illustrate these feelings.
- everyone can help to explain, mime or use shared languages to help with any words that may not be understood or recognized.
- refugees then practise further in pairs by picking up random cards, saying the word and demonstrating the opinion/feeling.
- some of the group may be able to make simple sentences (*I feel happy; she is sad*).


Indicating feelings without any language

Refugee language learners who have no competence in the target language and for whom language learning is a great challenge can become excluded from a language support group as others make progress in learning. It is good to include such learners by asking them how they are feeling. For example, use a 'question mark card' and show this to the refugee. Mime your question and indicate on a card how you are feeling – happy or tired or hot etc. Then indicate that the refugee should choose a card to show his or her feelings.

1. Expressing pleasure and joy

<p>That's wonderful I'm very happy for you Fantastic</p>		<p>happy</p>
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2. Expressing sadness

<p>I am sad / unhappy That is bad news</p>		<p>sad</p>
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Examples of smiley faces for different feelings:



scared



surprised



tired



angry



confused



hot / cold

To find more images

Magazines, newspapers (particularly sports images), comics and the internet are all good sources of pictures that show feelings or emotions. If searching on the internet look for 'faces with feelings'. Remember to check copyright before copying any images for use in activities.

For more expressions

See Tool 33 [A list of expressions for everyday communication](#) for a collection of useful expressions.