Art4Wellbeing
Project nr. 2025-2-NL02-KA210-YOU-000368916

SESSION 7

Emotional Awareness: Naming What I Feel

Project nr. 2025-2-NL02-KA210-YOU-000368916

ART FORM USED	Visual Arts + Image-Based Reflection + Drawing and Creative Expression

TOTAL DURATION	MAIN OBJECTIVE	SESSION PURPOSE
90 minutes	To expand emotional vocabulary and help participants recognise, name and express their present emotions through visual metaphors.	To move from noticing a feeling to representing it through stairs, doors, colour and form, while respecting each person's pace and privacy.

Materials

A diverse selection of staircase and door photographs or illustrated cards; A4/A3 paper; coloured pencils, markers, crayons or pastels; sticky notes; optional emotion-word cards; tape; space for displaying artworks; optional quiet background music.

Session at a Glance

NO.	ACTIVITY	TIME	FOCUS
7.1	Choosing My Staircase	15 min	Warm-up: recognise current emotional state
7.2	My Emotional Staircase	20 min	Map, name and explore changing or mixed feelings
7.3	The Door I Choose	20 min	Explore emotional possibilities and choice
7.4	Giving My Feeling a Form	25 min	Main visual arts expression and naming
7.5	One Word to Take With Me	10 min	Integrate learning and close safely

Methodological Basis

The session uses image-based projection, symbolic expression and reflective dialogue. A staircase can represent a present position or emotional movement; a door can represent uncertainty, possibility, readiness or boundaries. The images are prompts, not diagnostic tools. Participants decide what each image means to them.

7.1 CHOOSING MY STAIRCASE — 15 MIN

Purpose

To notice and name the emotions present right now through an accessible visual metaphor.

Instructions

1. Arrange a wide range of staircase images on the floor or tables: steep, winding, broken, colourful, narrow, open, indoor and outdoor. Allow a quiet gallery walk without explanation.

2. Invite participants to select one image that connects with how they feel today. Emphasise that they are choosing an image, not the “best” or most attractive staircase.

3. Ask them to look carefully: “Where would you place yourself on this staircase right now? At the bottom, in the middle, near the top, on a landing, or somewhere else?” They may point, mark the spot on a sticky note or simply imagine it.

4. Invite them to give this position one or two emotion words. If words are difficult, offer emotion cards or ask for a colour, body sensation or metaphor first.

5. In pairs, participants may show the image and complete: “I chose this staircase because…”, “Right now I am at…”, “A feeling I can name is…”. Sharing or passing is always a choice.

Facilitator Prompt

“Look at the staircases without trying to explain them. Which one feels closest to your inner world today? There is no correct place to stand, and you do not need to move upward.”

Reflection / Process Questions

What drew you to this staircase? What does this particular step feel like? Can more than one emotion be present?

7.2 MY EMOTIONAL STAIRCASE 20 MIN

Purpose

To expand emotional vocabulary and visualise emotional movement without treating some feelings as higher or better than others.

Instructions

1. Give each participant A4/A3 paper and drawing materials. Invite them to draw their own staircase with four to six steps, or reinterpret the staircase image they chose.

2. Ask them to assign a feeling to each step using a word, colour, line, texture or symbol. The steps may represent feelings experienced in one day, in different situations, or feelings that coexist.

3. Invite them to mark where they are now with a dot, small figure or symbol. They can place themselves between steps, beside the staircase or on a resting place.

4. Ask them to add something that could help them stay with, understand or move through an emotion: a handrail, landing, window, supportive person, pause or another resource.

5. Offer two minutes of quiet looking, followed by optional pair sharing. Encourage description rather than interpretation: “This is what I chose to show.”

Facilitator Prompt

“Your staircase is not a ladder of success. Sadness is not lower than joy. Use the steps to show the emotional landscape as you experience it.”

Reflection / Process Questions

Which feelings were easiest to name? Which feelings overlap? What might a resting place on your staircase represent?

7.3 THE DOOR I CHOOSE 20 MIN

Purpose

To explore the emotions that arise around uncertainty, possibility, personal boundaries and choices.

Instructions

1. Display diverse door images: open, closed, old, modern, colourful, partly hidden, transparent and mysterious. Invite participants to walk around and select one door that attracts their attention.

2. Ask them to imagine themselves standing in front of it. “What feeling is present as you approach this door?” Invite a precise word or two, such as curiosity, hesitation, hope, fear or excitement.

3. On paper, draw or write two possibilities: “In front of the door I feel…” and “Behind the door there might be…”. These can be realistic, symbolic or imaginary.

4. Offer a choice: open the door, knock, wait, close it, step away or simply observe. Ask them to show that choice in a sketch or a short sentence.

5. In small groups, participants may share the door and their chosen response. Others listen without guessing what the door “really” means.

Facilitator Prompt

“A door does not have to be opened. Sometimes noticing what we feel while standing in front of it is enough. Your choice belongs to you.”

Reflection / Process Questions

What emotion does this door bring up? What changes if you imagine opening it? What would help you feel safe enough to decide?

7.4 GIVING MY FEELING A FORM — 25 MIN

Purpose

To transform a named emotion into an original visual artwork and strengthen expressive confidence.

Instructions

1. Invite participants to return to their staircase or door and choose one emotion that feels important now. They may also select a different emotion that emerged during the session.

2. Ask them to create an image of the feeling using colour, lines, shapes, collage-like marks, symbols or a small scene. It does not need to depict a literal staircase or door.

3. Offer creative prompts: “If this feeling had a shape, what would it be? Would it have a boundary? A movement? A texture? How much space would it take?”

4. Invite participants to give the artwork a title beginning with “Today I feel…” or a personally meaningful emotion word. They can add a second word if feelings are mixed.

5. Create a voluntary mini-gallery or pair sharing. The artist speaks first; listeners may respond with “I notice…” or “I am curious about…”, without interpreting or evaluating the artwork.

Facilitator Prompt

“There is no artistic standard to meet. You are not drawing what an emotion should look like; you are showing what this emotion looks like for you today.”

Reflection / Process Questions

Did the emotion become clearer as you drew? Does the title fit, or would you rename it? What would you like others to understand about your image?

7.5 ONE WORD TO TAKE WITH ME — 10 MIN

Purpose

To integrate emotional awareness, recognise possible shifts and end the session with emotional safety.

Instructions

1. Invite participants to place their staircase, door and final artwork side by side or revisit them mentally.

2. Ask them to notice whether their emotion word has remained the same, become more precise or changed. All outcomes are welcome.

3. Offer a one-word check-out: “Right now I feel…”. Participants may speak, write privately, point to a colour or pass.

4. Close by acknowledging the diversity of emotional experiences and reminding participants that their images and words remain theirs to share or keep private.

Facilitator Prompt

“We are not trying to leave with a positive feeling. We are practising the ability to recognise and name whatever is here.”

Reflection / Process Questions

What word will you take with you? What did you learn about how you name feelings?

Facilitator Principles — Emotional Safety and Choice

Do not interpret images, colours, stair positions or doors for participants. Avoid ranking emotions as good or bad. Never require personal disclosure. Participants can use fictional examples, draw silently, step out or pass. Offer grounding and a calm space if an exercise becomes intense.

Key Messages

Emotions can be named without judgement. More than one emotion can exist at once. Feelings may change, and images can help express experiences when words are not immediately available. Naming an emotion is an invitation to awareness, not a demand to fix it.

Follow-up (Optional)

Invite participants to create a seven-day visual emotion diary: each day, choose a staircase step, door, colour or symbol and add one emotion word. There is no requirement to share the diary.