

Emotion Thermometers

Writing and drawing project to help children to increase awareness of rising emotions and intervene effectively

By Joel Shaul, LCSW

BIG, AWFUL FEELING!
FURIOUS!

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
Problem got too big before I could work on it and make it smaller!

MY BRAIN THINKS:
Aahhh @!!!!

MY BODY FEELS:
Head exploding. Hit stuff.

HOW TO MAKE IT BETTER:
People who are this upset need someone's help to calm down.

WAYS TO GET HELP:
At school:
• Let teacher help you.
• Calm down room.
At home:
• Go to mom or grandpa.
• Go in basement if you have to scream.

The next strongest feeling
ANGRY

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
Plans change & CHANGE! My stuff is LOST! Work is WAY too hard. Sister wins video games all day!

MY BRAIN THINKS:
I will NEVER get thru this. It's IMPOSSIBLE! I'm a LOSER!

MY BODY FEELS:
Fist clenched. Want to cry. Throat tight.

HOW TO MAKE IT BETTER:
THINK:
You have gotten through this before. You could try tomorrow. You will win another time.

DO:
Play different game. Go outside. Go lie down. GET HELP!

TO CALM DOWN BODY AND BREATHING:
Run if you can. Chew gum if you can. Take a shower if you can.

The next strongest feeling
ANNOYED

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
Plans change. Can't find something. Stuff is hard. Video game fail.

MY BRAIN THINKS:
I hate that change. It's LOST. I can't do it! I always lose!

MY BODY FEELS:
Tense. Voice whiny.

HOW TO MAKE IT BETTER:
THINK:
You can deal with it. You can deal with it. You'll find it. Keep trying. Sometimes you DO Win.

DO:
Slow down. Take a break. Drink of water. Listen to music.

TO CALM DOWN BODY AND BREATHING:
Stretch. Walk. Deep breathe.

CALM

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
Stuffed animals. Going on swing. iPad.

MY BRAIN THINKS:
I like this.

MY BODY FEELS:
Body loose.

TO KEEP CALM THOUGHTS:
do fun and relaxing things when I can.

TO KEEP BODY AND BREATHING CALM:
Remember homework later. Get to stop sometime.

My Name: *Alex P.*

BIG, AWFUL FEELING!
PANIC!!!

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
The worries build up faster than I can fight them.

MY BRAIN THINKS:
Can't think straight. Danger.

MY BODY FEELS:
Crying. Can hardly talk.

People who are this upset need someone's help to calm down.

GETTING HELP AT SCHOOL:

GETTING HELP AT HOME:

The next strongest feeling
Worried

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
Mom is late to pick me up. Mom working late. A crowded place where I can't see the exit.

MY BRAIN THINKS:
Something happened to Mom! I'm trapped! I'm lost!!

MY BODY FEELS:
Breathing hard. shakiness.

A PICTURE OF ME GETTING EVEN MORE UPSET:

ME WORKING TO CALM DOWN AND FIX MY PROBLEM:

The next strongest feeling
a little worried

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
I don't know where Mom is. I can't go anywhere crowded and loud.

MY BRAIN THINKS:
What happened to Mom? What if I can't stand all these people and noise?

MY BODY FEELS:
My tummy hurts. A little hot and sweaty.

A PICTURE OF ME WHEN I START FEELING LIKE THIS:

A PICTURE OF ME WORKING TO MAKE IT GET BETTER:

CALM

I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:
I am in my bed. Riding my bike with. Reading books. Etc.

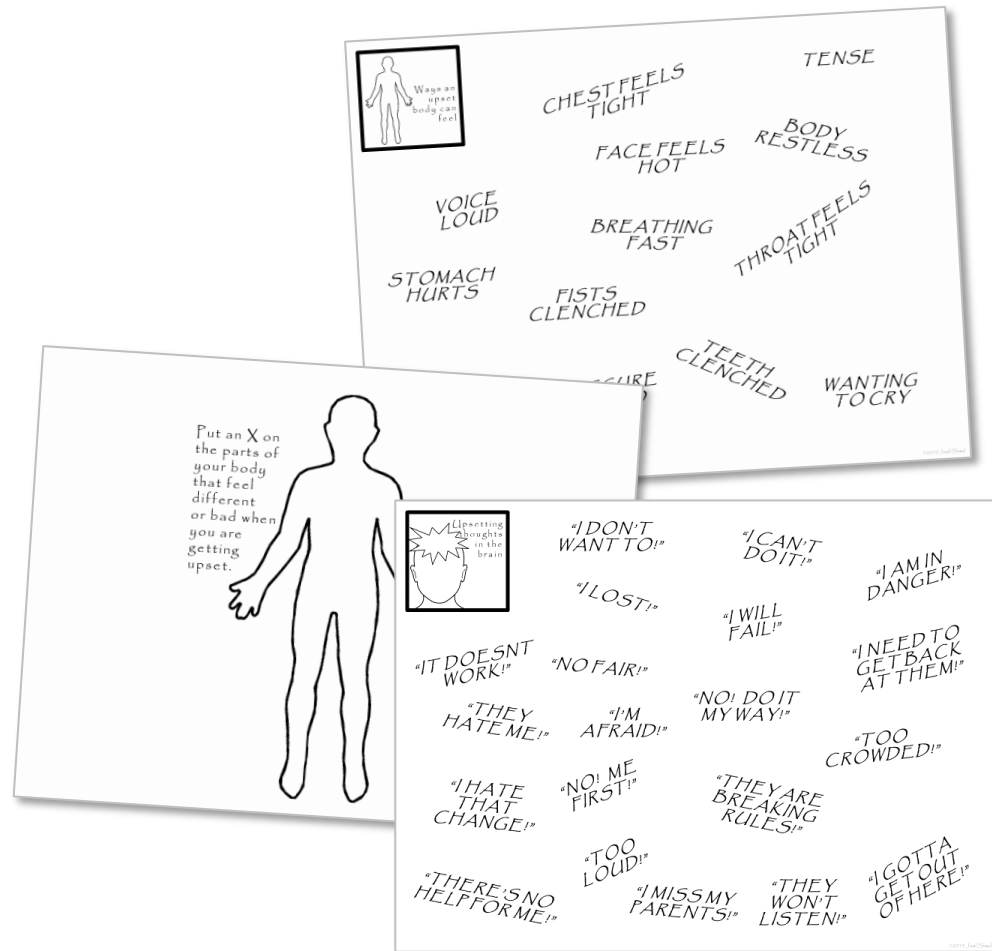
MY BRAIN THINKS:
This is so nice!

MY BODY FEELS:
Like my heart is floating.

A PICTURE OF ME FEELING CALM:

ANOTHER PICTURE OF ME FEELING CALM:

My Name: *Morgan*



Contents:

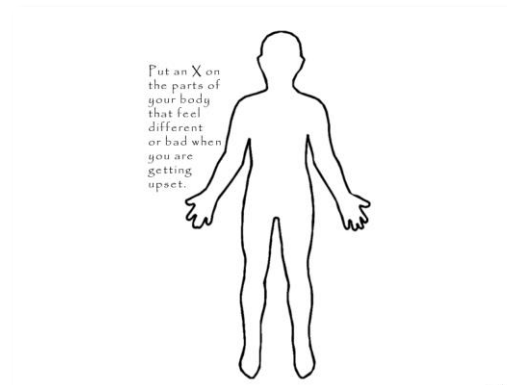
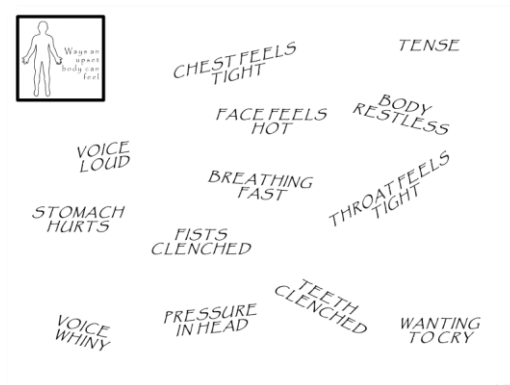
Emotion thermometer, text version. A child with adult assistance, assesses their rising levels of emotional arousal in brain and body, and determines self-help at each level. (pages 5-8)

The image shows four pages of a text-based emotion thermometer. Each page represents a level of arousal: CALM (blue), First upsetting feeling (yellow), The next, stronger feeling (orange), and BIG, AWFUL FEELING (red). Each page has sections for 'I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:', 'MY BRAIN THINKS:', 'MY BODY FEELS:', 'HOW TO MAKE IT BETTER:', 'THINK:', 'DO:', and 'WAYS TO GET HELP:'.

Emotion thermometer, text / draw-picture version. Choose one or the other. (pages 9-12)

The image shows four pages of a text/draw-picture emotion thermometer. Each page represents a level of arousal: CALM (blue), First upsetting feeling (yellow), The next, stronger feeling (orange), and BIG, AWFUL FEELING (red). Each page has sections for 'I FEEL THIS WAY WHEN:', 'MY BRAIN THINKS:', 'MY BODY FEELS:', and a large box for 'A PICTURE OF ME...'.

Sheets to guide identification of upsetting thoughts and bodily manifestations of stress. (pages 12-14)



Suggested language
for introducing and
explaining this
project:

Old-fashioned thermometers looked like this [show them a picture]. As the temperature gets warmer, the colored liquid in the glass tube goes higher and higher.

Our upsetting emotions are something like this. Our feelings can get more and more upset – worried, angry, sad – just like a thermometer gets hotter and hotter.

Here is a project called The Emotion Thermometer. It is to help you learn more about the way your brain and body get upset. The most important part of this project is to learn more about the early stages of getting upset, so you can calm yourself back down – before you get to the “meltdown” level.

MY BODY FEELS:

Crying. Can hardly
talk.

The next,
stronger feeling:

Worried

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

Mom is late to pick me
up. Mom working late.
A crowded place
where I can't see the exit.

MY BRAIN THINKS:

Something happened to Mom!
I'm trapped! I'm lost!!!

MY BODY FEELS:

Breathing hard.
shaky.

A PICTURE OF ME
GETTING EVEN
MORE UPSET:

ME WORKING TO CALM
DOWN AND FIX MY
PROBLEM:

First
anxiety feeling

a little
worried

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:
I don't know where
Mom is.
I am going someplace
crowded and loud.

MY BRAIN THINKS:
What happened to Mom?
What if I can't
stand all the
people and noise?

MY BODY FEELS:
My tummy hurts.
A little hot
and sweaty.

A PICTURE OF ME WHEN
I START FEELING
LIKE THIS:



A PICTURE OF ME
WORKING TO MAKE IT
GET BETTER:



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Filled-in work shown here and previous page are simulations

You use these three sheets to help focus on the thoughts and feelings that affect you the most.

Upsetting thoughts in the brain

"I DON'T WANT TO!"

"I CAN'T DO IT!"

"I AM IN DANGER!"

"I LOST!"

"I WILL FAIL!"

"I NEED TO GET BACK AT THEM!"

"IT DOESN'T WORK!"

"NO FAIR!"

"NO! DO IT MY WAY!"

"THEY ARE AFRAID!"

"TOO CROWDED!"

Put an X on the parts of your body that feel different or bad when you are getting upset.

VOICE LOUD

BREATH FAST

TH

STOMACH HURTS

FISTS CLENCHED

TEETH CLENCHED

WANTING TO CRY

VOICE WHINY

PRESSURE IN HEAD

Other suggestions for using this resource

1

Do the writing on the sheets jointly, adult and child. Or, consider having the adult do the writing while the child dictates. This helps move the work along.

2

Consider using this free resource in combination with other free resources on this website.



RESOURCE



CLICK ON LINK

Remote Problem Fixer

<https://bit.ly/37UDFMC>

CBT Worksheets

<https://bit.ly/2qRwZxS>

CBT YouTube Videos for Kids

<https://bit.ly/34zy5NG>

CBT Thought Bubbles

<https://bit.ly/2QZvBE0>

Anime Emotion Coloring Worksheets

<https://bit.ly/33s7MHB>

CALM

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

TO KEEP CALM
THOUGHTS:

TO KEEP BODY AND
BREATHING CALM:

My Name: _____

First
upsetting feeling

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

HOW TO MAKE IT
BETTER:

THINK:

DO:

TO CALM DOWN BODY
AND BREATHING:

The next,
stronger feeling:

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

HOW TO MAKE IT
BETTER:

THINK:

DO:

TO CALM DOWN BODY
AND BREATHING:

BIG, AWFUL
FEELING!

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

HOW TO MAKE IT
BETTER:

People who are this upset need
someone's help to calm down.

WAYS TO GET HELP:

CALM

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

My Name: _____

A PICTURE OF ME
FEELING CALM:

ANOTHER PICTURE OF ME
FEELING CALM:

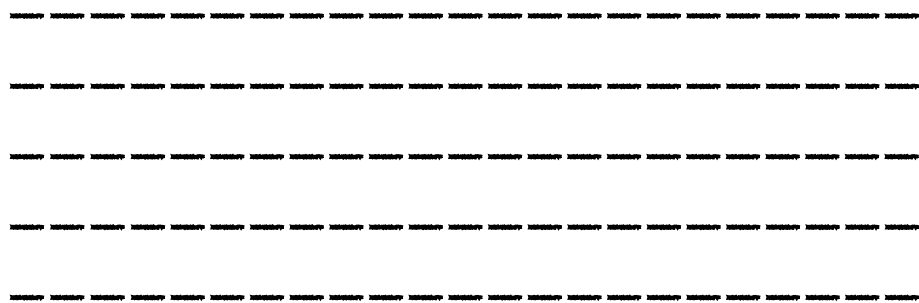
First
upsetting feeling



I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:



MY BRAIN THINKS:



MY BODY FEELS:



A PICTURE OF ME WHEN
I START FEELING
LIKE THIS:



A PICTURE OF ME
WORKING TO MAKE IT
GET BETTER:



The next,
stronger feeling:

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

A PICTURE OF ME
GETTING EVEN
MORE UPSET:

ME WORKING TO CALM
DOWN AND FIX MY
PROBLEM:

BIG, AWFUL
FEELING

I FEEL THIS WAY
WHEN:

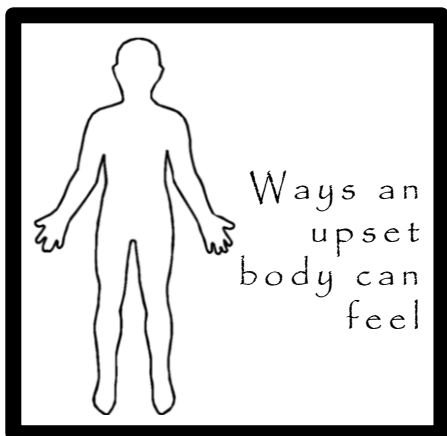
MY BRAIN THINKS:

MY BODY FEELS:

People who are this upset need
someone's help to calm down.

GETTING HELP
AT SCHOOL:

GETTING HELP
AT HOME:



CHEST FEELS
TIGHT

TENSE

FACE FEELS
HOT

BODY
RESTLESS

VOICE
LOUD

BREATHING
FAST

THROAT FEELS
TIGHT

STOMACH
HURTS

FISTS
CLENCHED

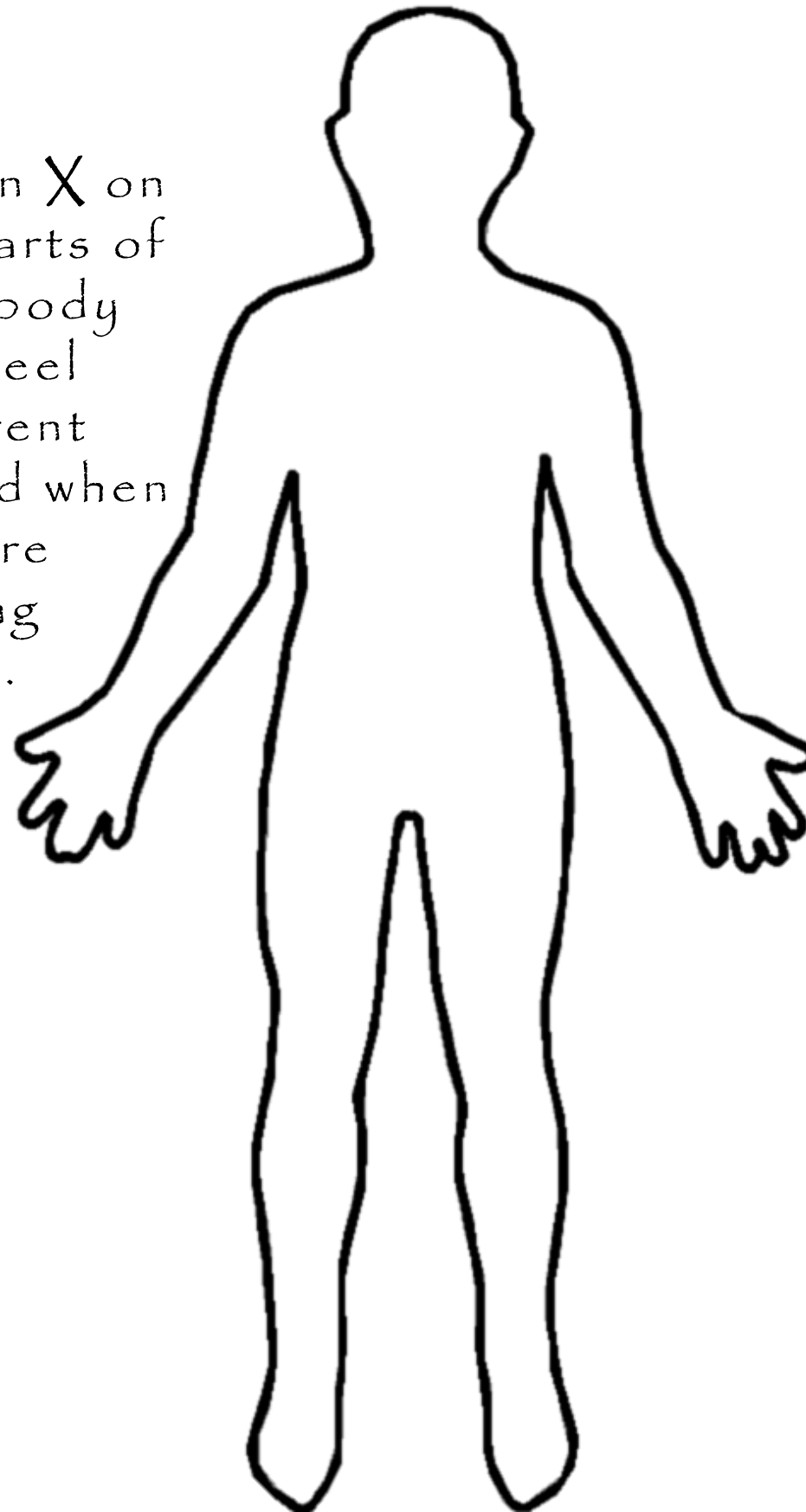
TEETH
CLENCHED

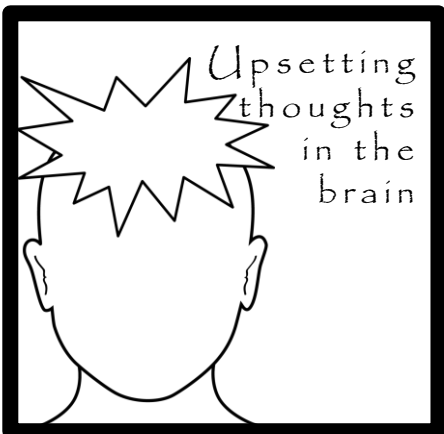
WANTING
TO CRY

VOICE
WHINY

PRESSURE
IN HEAD

Put an X on
the parts of
your body
that feel
different
or bad when
you are
getting
upset.





"I DON'T
WANT TO!"

"I CAN'T
DO IT!"

"I AM IN
DANGER!"

"I LOST!"

"I WILL
FAIL!"

"IT DOESN'T
WORK!"

"NO FAIR!"

"I NEED TO
GET BACK
AT THEM!"

"THEY
HATE ME!"

"I'M
AFRAID!"

"NO! DO IT
MY WAY!"

"TOO
CROWDED!"

"I HATE
THAT
CHANGE!"

"NO! ME
FIRST!"

"THEY ARE
BREAKING
RULES!"

"TOO
LOUD!"

"THERE'S NO
HELP FOR ME!"

"I MISS MY
PARENTS!"

"THEY
WON'T
LISTEN!"

"I GOTTA
GET OUT
OF HERE!"