

# R U L E R

Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, Regulating Emotions in Families

*Tips we can all practice to help families feel better and build stronger relationships.*

1. **Pay attention:** We all have feelings all the time - they come, they go - they're all okay. Emotions are signals we can learn from; they carry important information and can help us connect with each other.
2. **Feel your feelings:** Our feelings make us human. Noticing and naming our feelings helps us know ourselves better and make smarter decisions. We can all be better about enhancing feelings that make us feel better, versus the ones that don't.
3. **Talk about your feelings:** Engaging in conversations with family members about feelings helps us understand and feel closer to one another. Sometimes conversations help us untangle why we feel what we do, and get clarity about what to do next.
4. **Listen:** to understand: not to judge, deny, or dismiss one another's emotions.
5. **Be curious:** Being curious "emotion scientists" about ourselves and others can lead to discoveries that enliven our relationships and help us understand our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Getting at the underlying feeling and its cause is critical to providing the best possible support.
6. **Show empathy:** We all want to feel understood. While we may not agree with one another's actions, it is important that we try to accept and understand one another's feelings. When we do this, we build emotional safety, trust, and closeness.
7. **Choose your response wisely:** Having feelings is different from acting on our feelings. We don't have to react immediately to something that someone says or does, or be derailed. We can slow down (breathe), feel our feelings, think about our best self, and choose a response that we feel proud of, rather than regret.
8. **Remember there's more than one view:** We often feel we're right, but there might be another way to look at it, without necessarily making our view wrong. Sharing different points of view within a family can be healthy.
9. **Stay connected:** Take time every day to reach out to loved ones to let them know you are thinking about them.
10. **Have the courage to repair:** After an argument or being disappointed in a loved one, don't be afraid to be the first to reach out. Say you're sorry if you know you've hurt someone's feelings.
11. **Add a dose of kindness:** Your relationships will be warmer, and when you look back on your life, you'll be glad you were kind and compassionate to one another.

- ✓ Validate all emotions
- ✓ Use a more elaborate "feeling word" vocabulary
- ✓ Be a role model!