

Exercise 13.1: How well developed is your emotional vocabulary?

Let's start with some basic feelings. Can you think of a time during the last week when you experienced any of the feelings described in the table below? Tick the box for each feeling you recognize in the *last week*.

Happy	Sad	Hurt	Anxious	Confused
Caring	Angry	Lonely	Guilty	Inadequate

Was it easier to think of examples of some feelings than others?

Each of the headings in the table represents only one of the words you could use to describe these types of feeling. You might have chosen a different word to capture your feelings. For example, you might have said ‘miserable’ or ‘empty’ instead of ‘sad’, or you might have chosen ‘interested’ or ‘loving’ instead of ‘caring’, etc. Changing the word can subtly change what you are communicating and gives you an opportunity to describe your feelings more carefully. If you would have chosen a different word to describe any of these feelings, copy the table below into your notebook and add your alternative words in the empty boxes.

Happy	Sad	Hurt	Anxious	Confused
Caring	Angry	Lonely	Guilty	Inadequate

- What do you notice about the words you have added?
- Do they describe stronger or milder feelings than the words we started with?
- Copy the table below into your notebook and add three words under each heading to describe different intensities of the feelings e.g. ‘happy’

could change to 'content' (mild), 'cheerful' (moderate) or 'delighted' (strong).

- Which of these words best describe your experience in the last week?
- Ask someone else for ideas if you find it difficult to think of examples for each feeling.

	Happy	Sad	Hurt	Anxious	Confused
Mild					
Moderate					
Strong					
	Caring	Angry	Lonely	Guilty	Inadequate
Mild					
Moderate					
Strong					

- Which additional 'feeling words' would you add to capture the full range of your current feelings? These feelings might not have been captured at all by the previous lists. Some examples have been suggested in the table below.

Expand the table in your notebook and try to add as many more feeling words as you can. To prompt yourself, try to think about all the feelings you can remember having over the last two weeks.

Interested			Embarrassed	
				Pleased
		Bored		
	Comforted			

By completing this exercise you will already have started to develop quite a full emotional vocabulary. Take some time to think about each of the feelings you have identified and think about how each feeling has featured in your experience of depression. Think about each of the feelings you recognize in turn, and write your answers to the questions below in your notebook.

- Have you experienced this feeling recently more or less often than you typically would ?
- Would you like to feel this way more or less often?
- Have you felt more or less in control of this feeling recently than you typically would?
- Have you told anyone else that you feel that way?
- Who would it be useful to tell?