



Emotions Wheel

The Emotions Wheel is a visual tool created by psychologist Gloria Willcox in 1982 to help people identify and communicate emotions more clearly. It supports emotional awareness, mental health, and is often used in counseling or relationship settings.

The wheel has three circles:

- The inner circle shows broad emotions like “happy” or “sad.”
- The middle circle expands these into more specific feelings such as “playful” or “lonely.”
- The outer circle provides the most detailed emotions, like “amused” or “inadequate.”

Sometimes it’s hard to put our emotions into words. Many of us tend to lump uncomfortable or negative feelings into one big category. For example, anger may be the first emotion you notice, but underneath it you might also feel let down, betrayed, sad, hurt, or disappointed. Naming these more specific feelings—and noticing the differences between them—can make it easier to decide how to react, respond, and cope.

The emotions wheel can help by breaking down broad emotions into more precise ones. For example:

- Fear might show up as rejection or embarrassment.
- Sadness might feel more like shame or inferiority.
- A sense of power could actually be confidence, intelligence, or importance.

It’s also helpful to remember that emotions aren’t mutually exclusive. We often experience more than one at the same time. After a breakup, for instance, you might feel rejected or guilty, while also feeling fearful about the future, nervous, or even panicked.

