

# Lesson 11 – Social Skill: Understanding the Feelings of Others



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## Summary and Rationale

This is the first social skills lesson following the **cognitive self-change** component of **Thinking for a Change**. As such, it serves as a transition and bridge between the two components. Immediately preceding the lessons on **cognitive self-change** was the lesson, **knowing your feelings**. Group members have just completed a detailed exploration of the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs that can lead trouble. This social skill, **understanding the feelings of others**, builds on what was learned in **knowing your feelings** and directs participants' thinking away from themselves and towards others. It is the foundation for the social skills to be taught in the next four lessons.

## Concepts and Definitions

The **feelings of others** are emotions and physical sensations felt by others. The ability to recognize the feelings of others is a basic requirement for effective communication in nearly every situation.

**Objectives** – As a result of this lesson the group members will:

1. Describe the importance of **understanding the feelings of others**.
2. Perform the steps of **understanding the feelings of others** during the lesson.
3. Perform the steps of **understanding the feelings of others** in real life situations.

## Major Activities

**Activity 1:** Homework Review

**Activity 2:** Overview of Social Skill

**Activity 3:** Model the Skill

**Activity 4:** Discuss Modeling Display

**Activity 5:** Group Members Role  
Play Skill

**Activity 6:** Discuss Role Play

**Activity 7:** Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with  
all Group Members

**Activity 8:** Assign Homework

**Activity 9:** Wrap-up

# Supplements

**Charts** – Make before facilitating lesson. (See supplement section in each lesson for full text of chart page.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



**Handouts** – Make copies before lesson. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



H-11-1-Pocket Skill Cards  
H-11-2-Homework Sheet

**Presentation Slides** – Make transparencies if projector is not available. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



P-11-1-Lesson Title  
P-11-2-Homework Review  
P-11-3-Knowing your Feelings Definition  
P-11-4- Knowing your Feelings Skill Steps  
P-11-5-Understanding the Feelings of Others Definition  
P-11-6-Understanding the Feelings of Others Skill Steps

Equipment	Supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easel (chart stand)</li> <li>▪ Projector to show presentation slides</li> <li>▪ Projection screen or suitable surface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chart paper</li> <li>▪ Markers</li> <li>▪ Masking tape</li> <li>▪ Copies of handouts</li> </ul>

## References

*Aggression Replacement Training: A Comprehensive Intervention for Aggressive Youth*. Third Edition: Revised and Expanded. Glick, B. and JC Gibbs. 2011. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

*Skillstreaming the Adolescent (Revised Edition)*: Goldstein, AP and McGinnis, E. 1997. Champaign IL: Research Press.

## Activity 1: Homework Review

Hello again! Today we are going to switch gears, back to learning more social skills. But we are going to incorporate everything we have learned about cognitive self-change. Since our last social skill lesson, you have had an opportunity to:

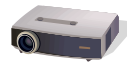
- Explore how thinking controls how you act and;
- How to pay attention to your thinking by writing objective reports about your thinking; and
- In those reports, you also paid attention to your feelings and attitudes and beliefs.

Let's begin today, as we do most lessons, with a review of your homework. Your homework was to write a thinking report about a time when you experienced thoughts or feelings that had some degree of risk for you. You were then to be prepared to give a thinking check-in on that situation.

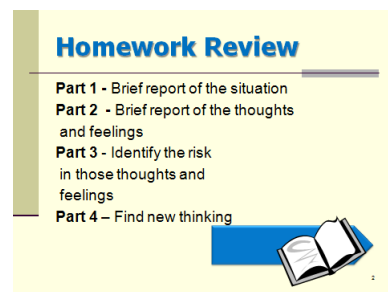
In keeping with the spirit of thinking check-ins, let's keep this homework review quick. Who would like to start us off today?



P-11-1



P-11-2



## Activity 2: Overview of Social Skill: Understanding the Feelings of Others

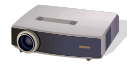
Before we learn a new social skill, **understanding the feelings of others**, let's briefly review the last social skill you learned, back in lesson 5: **knowing your feelings**. Remember **knowing your feelings** was about the steps you use to tune into what is going on inside of you that makes you think or act in a certain way.

There were several steps to effectively using this skill. Will someone tell us the steps? Here is a slide to help refresh your memory.

*(Answer: Tune in to what is going on in your body that helps you know what you are feeling; Decide what happened to make you feel that way; Decide what you could call the feeling.)*

Today, you will learn another social skill for

Have group members practice giving brief, objective thinking check-ins. Keep the process moving to emphasize that this should be easy.



P-11-3

### Knowing Your Feelings - Definition

Steps we use to tune into what is going on inside of us that make us think or act in a certain way



P-11-4

### Knowing Your Feelings

1. Tune in to what is going on in your body that helps you know what you are feeling
2. Decide what happened to make you feel that way
3. Decide what you could call the feeling

getting along with others, either individually, or in a group: **Understanding the feelings of others**. What does **understanding the feelings of others** mean to you?

*(Example answer: Trying to figure out what other people feel about my actions or about things in general.)*

Why might it be an important skill for you to learn?

*(Example answer: It requires you to identify specific feelings of others. This helps you empathize with others by thinking from the viewpoint of the other person's position.)*

### Define the Skill

**Understanding the feelings of others** means being able to observe another person and identify what they may be feeling by looking at their actions or listening to what they are saying.

We will have an opportunity to talk more about what **understanding the feelings of others** means to you and how you might use it in a little bit.

Then Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ and I will do a brief



P-11-5

#### Understanding the Feelings of Others - Definition

Ability to observe another person and identify what they may be feeling by looking at their actions and listening to what they are saying



vignette that shows you the steps of the skill, **understanding the feelings of others**. After you have had a chance to watch us model, you will talk about times when you may have to or want to use the skill in the near future.

### **Review Action and Thinking Steps**

#### **Definition**

Remember when we talked about how every skill is made up of a number of steps? Each of the steps is either a “thinking” step or an “action” step.

What was a thinking step about?

*(Answer: A thinking step is something that you say to yourself and that can't be seen.)*

What are you supposed to do when you do a thinking step?

*(Answer: Point to your head to show people that what you are saying is to yourself and is going on inside your head.)*

And the second type, the action step, what was that about?

*(Answer: It is called that because you can actually see the person doing that skill step.)*



### Skill Step Identification

Step 1, “Watch the other person,” is that a thinking or an action step?

*(Answer: Action.)*

Step 2, “Listen to what the other person is saying.” A thinking step or an action step?

*(Answer: Action.)*

Would *(group member name)* read step 3 of the skill? Is it a thinking step or an action step?

*(Answer: Figure out what the other person might be feeling. Thinking.)*

“Think about ways to show you understand what he or she is feeling,” is step 4 of the skill.

*(Group member name)*, tell us if that is a thinking step or an action step.

*(Answer: Thinking.)*

Take special note that step 4 is another case where it is critical to use alternative thinking: coming up with more than one way to accomplish something.

Would *(group member name)* read step 5 of the skill and tell us if that is a thinking step or an



P-11-6

#### Understanding the Feelings of Others

1. Watch the other person
2. Listen to what the person is saying
3. Figure out what the person might be feeling
4. Think about ways to show you understand what he/she is feeling
5. Decide on the best way and do it

Be sure to take every opportunity to read the steps of the skill – don’t just say the number when assigning the steps or referring to them.

Thank each individual and provide positive feedback for participation.

action step?

*(Answer: “Decide on the best way and do it” is both thinking and an action step.)*

That’s right; this last step is a tricky one, isn’t it? “Decide on the best way” definitely requires thinking. But when you add, “and do it,” action is required. This step requires both thinking and action.

### **Hand out Pocket Skill Cards**

Here is a card that lists the steps of the skill. You will use it later to help when practicing the skill (during the session and in real life situations).

### **Activity 3: Model the Skill: Understanding the Feelings of Others**

Now Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ and I will model the skill for you.

Here is the situation.

#### **Modeling Display Option #1 – For institutional settings, adult or youth:**

You are on the same work detail as Paul. Today Paul was excited to get a visit from his mother, who he had not seen in over 3



H-11-1

### **Pocket Skill Cards, Understanding the Feelings of Others**

The purpose of a modeling display is to demonstrate the steps of the skill.

Use one of the three options suggested in the lesson plan to make sure that you do that correctly.

Select the situation which applies to your group setting: Youth, adult, probation, parole, or

months. When he came back from the visit, he was quiet and kept to himself. (She never showed up.)

**Modeling Display Option #2 – Probation or parole settings:**

Your friend had a positive urine test for drug use. His P.O. wants to see him at 3:00 p.m. tomorrow. He seems anxious because he thinks his probation/parole may be revoked.

**Modeling Display Option #3 – Generic setting for youth:**

A member of the group is agitated because he just got a phone call from his girlfriend. She said she was no longer interested in seeing him.

incarceration.

It may be appropriate to change some details of the situation to meet the circumstances of your audience but the core elements should stay the same.

Tell group members which facilitator is modeling the skill.

Tell group members to observe the steps of the skill in general. They will be assigned specific steps to observe during the role play.

Model the skill: Follow the steps of the skill exactly as you expect the group members to use them. It is *imperative* that facilitators rehearse the modeling display before class begins.

Be sure to point to your head and talk aloud when performing a thinking step. (steps 3, 4, and the first half of 5)

As you model the steps exaggerate the qualities of each. For step 4, it is important to model alternative thinking by coming up with at least three ways to show you understand what the other person is feeling. For example, in Modeling Display Option #3, you could: Tell your friend that you've "been there" and you know how much it hurts when someone breaks up with you; tell your friend that he/she looks sad, confused, or even angry; say, "Ouch, that hurts"; say, "it looks like this has really shaken you up."

**Activity 4: Discuss Modeling Display**

Note that each of these options demonstrates a step in the skill of **understanding the feelings of others**, and NOT “fixing the problems of others,” or “giving advice to others.” This may be a difficult concept for group members. Many people immediately jump into trying to help others solve their problems. This lesson, by contrast, is about understanding feelings. The group facilitators must be clear about this difference, and must model the skill accurately. Be especially precise with how you model steps 4 and 5.

After the modeling display, group members are asked to discuss what skill steps they observed.

The modeling display

In step 1, “Watch the other person,” how did \_\_\_\_\_ model that? What evidence did you see or hear?

In step 2 did \_\_\_\_\_, “Listen to what the person was saying”? What evidence did you see or hear?

Did \_\_\_\_\_, “Figure out what the person might be feeling” in step 3? What did \_\_\_\_\_ figure

must be a picture perfect representation of the steps of the skill.

Therefore, the only answer to these questions about performing the steps is always, “yes.”

When a group member answers “yes,” prompt them by asking; “What evidence did you see or hear?”

*(Answer: He/she pointed to his/her head and said...)*

Facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

Group facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

Facilitators should solicit answers from group

out?

In step 4, did \_\_\_\_\_ “think about ways to show he/she understood what \_\_\_\_\_ was feeling? How many ways to show understanding did \_\_\_\_\_ think of? What were the different ways?

And step 5, did \_\_\_\_\_ decide on the best way and then do it? Which option did \_\_\_\_\_ choose? How did \_\_\_\_\_ do it?

### **Group Members Identify a Specific Situation**

Now that you have seen a model of the skill, what is a current or immediate future situation in which you might use this skill?

Think of something that is likely to occur before the next session.

This is important because what you identify and role play here, you will practice in your homework for the next session.

Be as specific as possible. Include:

- The current or immediate future

members that are specific to the modeling display.

Group facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

Facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

Be sure that all group members identify a specific current or immediate future real life situation, identifying specific information such as: Who, when, and where.

It is critical that you get the group members to be as specific as possible.

situation.

- With whom will you practice the skill?
- When will you practice it? (Specific time and day.)
- Where will you practice it? (Specific location.)

### **Transition**

Great, everyone has had the opportunity to describe the situation where they will use the skill.

### **Identify Role Player**

I would like one group member to volunteer to do a role play.

Remember, everyone in the group will have an opportunity to try out the skill during this lesson.

## **Activity 5: Group Members Role Play**

### **Skill**

#### **To the Main Actor**

Whose feelings will you be trying to

Once everyone has had the opportunity to describe the situation where they will use the skill, have one group member volunteer to do a role play.

Remind the group that everyone will have an opportunity to try-out the skill during the session with the situation he/she has described.

Designate the volunteer as the main actor, and ask him/her to choose a co-actor (someone who may remind the main actor of the person with



understand?

### **Set the Scene**

Where will you be when you are using this skill?

How is the room furnished?

Are you standing or sitting?

Try to follow the steps of the skill as best you can. Remember to point to your head for each thinking step, saying aloud what you would be the thinking for that step.

### **To the Co-actor**

Try to play the part as best you can. Say and do what you think \_\_\_\_ would do when (*main actor*) follows the steps of the skill.

whom the skill will be used in the real life situation).

Set the stage for the role playing, including props, arrangements, and set description.

Prepare the main actor to follow each of the steps of the skill. For example, you might say to the main actor: "Be sure to point to your head for each thinking step."

Ensure that the main actor has a Pocket Skill Card and is facing either a chart or a screen that has the skill steps on it.

Have the main actor brief the co-actor by giving him/her information about what to say or do (background information to do the role play.)

### **Assign Each Group Member a Skill Step**

#### **To Group Members**

Watch carefully how well (*main actor*) performs the skill, because afterwards, we will discuss it.

In fact, (*group member name*), you watch step 1 to see how he/she watches the other person.

(*Group member name*), you look for step 2 and see if (*main actor*) listens to what the person is saying.

(*Group member name*), look for step 3 and see if (*main actor*) figures out what the co-actor might be feeling.

For step 4, (*group member name*), see if (*main actor*) thinks about ways to show he/she understands what the co-actor is feeling.

(*Group member name*), watch to see if (*main*

Be sure that the role play emphasizes the steps of the skill and does not become a dramatization of the situation that leads up to the use of the skill.

Each group member will have a step in the skill to observe. You may need to ask more than one group member to observe the same skill step. The important thing is to have all of the group members observing a step.

The facilitator can divide

*actor*) decides on the best way and does it (step 5).

### **Begin Role Play**

Let's start. Remember, this should take just 1 or 2 minutes.

### **Activity 6: Discuss Role Play**

responsibility for this step in two, if desired, having one group member watch for the thinking part of the step, and another group member watch for the action part.

Begin the role play, ensuring that the main actor follows the steps of the skill exactly.

If he/she doesn't, **stop** the role play, provide coaching, and begin again.

The role play should last no more than 1- 2 minutes.

After the role play is completed, invite feedback from the group. The purpose is for group members to state, objectively, whether the role player followed the steps of the skill, and not how well he/she acted.

**To the Co-actor**

How did you feel about playing the role?

Do you have any other things you would like to say about your part as the co-actor?

**To the Selected Group Members**

Who was looking for step 1 “Watch the other person”? Tell us if (*main actor*) did that? What evidence did you see?

Who had step 2? Did (*main actor*) “listen to what the person was saying”? What evidence did you observe?

Who had step 3? Did (*main actor*) “figure out what (*co-actor*) might be feeling”? What feeling did (*main actor*) identify?

Who had step 4? What did (*main actor*) do to show that he was “thinking about ways to show that he/she understood what (*co-actor*) was feeling”? What ways did (*main actor*) think about?

And step 5, did (*main actor*) “decide on the best way and then do it”? What did (*main actor*) decide to do? What did (*main actor*) do or say to show he/she understood how the

Be sure that each assigned group member describes in detail what they saw and heard to support the main actor’s role play of the skill step. For example, “yeah, he did step one”, or “he did the step” does not provide specific detail.

For action steps in the skill, have the group member identify specific behaviors that he/she observed the main actor do that confirms the main actor completed the step of the skill.

For thinking steps in the skill, have the group member identify

other person was feeling?

specific thoughts  
he/she observed the  
main actor report as  
part of his/her self-  
talk (fingers pointing to  
his/her head) that  
confirms the main  
actor completed the  
step of the skill.

**To the Main Actor**

How well do you think you followed the steps?

**To the Co-facilitator and Group Members**

What additional feedback do you have for the  
role player?

**Facilitator Feedback**

**Sample Feedback Statement:** Just as  
everyone has said, you DID follow the steps.  
If you can do it here you can do it with your  
homework, in a real life situation.

At this point the main  
actor will have followed all  
the steps. The facilitator  
should ensure that the  
main actor has received  
positive reinforcing  
statements; “You have  
followed the steps in  
order, as modeled.”

Adjust the sample  
feedback statement in the

### Activity 7: Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with all Group Members

Now, who would like to go next? Okay, (*group member name*) as I recall, your situation was...

### Activity 8: Assign Homework

I am now going to give you a new type of homework sheet that we will use for the remainder of our social skills lessons.

This homework sheet looks very similar to the one we used in earlier social skills lessons:

- It has a place for you to put your name and the date you practiced the skill.
- It has places for you to write the skill to

lesson plan as needed according to the specific role play.

Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with each group member, using the situation he or she identified in Activity 4 (Discuss Modeling Display).

Every group member must try out the steps of the skill as the main actor in a role play situation.



H-11-2 - Homework Sheet

practice and the steps to follow.

- It has a box where you describe the anticipated situation specifically detailing when, where, and with whom you will use the skill.

However, this homework sheet incorporates what we learned in cognitive self-change by adding a thinking check-in for the situation.

Then it returns to the social skills homework we remember, with the steps you actually followed, what happened, how well you did, and finally identifying another situation where you could use this skill.

What questions do you have about this new homework sheet?

Now that you have had an opportunity to try the skill of **understanding the feelings of others**, when, between now and the next lesson do you think you can practice it?

Here is your homework:

- Complete the top part with your name, date, skill to practice and the anticipated situation. Do that now.

Answer all questions.

Completing the homework assignment is critical.

It is an opportunity for each group member to transfer the skills he/she has practiced in the session to real life situations.

- Remember, the anticipated situation is the one you just role-played and where you tried out the steps of the skill.
- You do need to write down each of the steps of the skill in the appropriate space.
- Each of you will individually complete the second shaded part after you practice your skill, given the situation you have described and tried out.
- Remember, from now on your social skill homework will include a thinking check-in.

As he/she completes the homework, the new skills begin to integrate into his/her thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs, and behavior.

### Activity 9: Wrap-up

Next time, you will have an opportunity to review your homework (using your new homework sheet) and see how well you did practicing the skill, **understanding the feelings of others**. Then we will learn a new skill. See you then, and take care.