


Recognizing Your Feelings

- ▶ People often tell me they don't know how to notice their feelings. They are either over complicating it, or they cannot notice their feelings due to defences (unconscious barriers that block the awareness and experience of feelings).
- ▶ We know that children as young as two are able to label and identify emotions such as “**happy**” “**sad**” and “**angry**” and use this to accurately describe how they are feeling.
- ▶ Researcher Paul Ekman identified six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. We know that these feelings are universal, and occur across every culture that has been studied
- ▶ For simplicity and ease you might like to use the list below as a guide

 | Happiness

 | Surprise

 | Sadness

 | Guilt

 | Anger

 | loving feelings?

- ▶ Feel free to add some more feelings to this list. If there are other feelings you'd like to substitute (e.g., joy for happiness) go right ahead. Remember it's always easier to make decisions when there are fewer options rather than many. If a feeling can be encapsulated in the above list then take the simpler route.

For example, rage could be a more extreme version of anger, whereas annoyance is a more milder form. You could keep anger as the feeling but just use terms such as “**low level anger**” or “**mild anger**” if describing irritation or annoyance.

The overall goal is to be able to quickly identify feelings rather than to spend time debating over whether it could be irritation, frustration, annoyance or anger.