

## Identifying and Expressing Feelings

### Facts about feelings

1. Feelings involve a total body reaction
2. Feelings are influenced by thoughts, interpretations and perceptions.
3. Feelings are not right or wrong – they give us information
4. Feelings can be simple or complex
5. Feelings give us energy and motivate action
6. Feelings often come in groups – sometimes they are opposite emotions
7. Feelings are often contagious
8. Feelings are often subject to suppression

### Why anxiety prone people tend to suppress their feelings

1. Fear of losing control and being judged as out of control
2. Parents having unrealistically high or perfectionistic expectations or being overly critical

### What do I do?

1. Recognize the symptoms of suppressed feelings
  - a. Free floating anxiety
  - b. Depression
  - c. Psychosomatic – headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure, stomach aches
  - d. Muscle tension
2. Tune in to your body
  - a. Physically relax
  - b. Ask yourself What am I feeling right now?
  - c. Tune into that place in your body where you feel the emotion
  - d. Wait and listen, withholding judgment or criticism
3. Discriminate the exact feeling – look at the feeling word list
4. Express your feelings
  - a. Talk it out
  - b. Journal
  - c. Look for the need behind your feelings