

co·wonders



**feelings and needs  
poker**

# feelings and needs poker

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## What is it about:

- This canva focuses on increasing participants' awareness of their feelings and unmet needs, enhancing their ability to understand and articulate both. Through individual reflection, group sharing, and interactive exercises, it fosters skills in empathy, active listening, and Nonviolent Communication principles.

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**source:** Nonviolent Communication methodology, as outlined in the framework by Marshall Rosenberg.

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**domains:** emotional intelligence, empathy and interpersonal understanding, conflict resolution, communication about needs and feelings

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## approach description:

Nonviolent Communication is a way of being in the world that has the purpose is to serve life and to create connection in such a way that everyone's needs can be met through natural care (read more at the CNVC website and NVC circle canva).

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## aim of use:

To develop and practice skills in:

- recognizing and naming one's own feelings and needs
- empathizing with others' feelings and needs
- deepening self-awareness and interpersonal connection
- applying Nonviolent Communication principles in real-life scenarios

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## educational method:

This method is based on:

- experiential learning: participants engage in reflective and interactive
- collaborative learning: sharing in small-groups and discussions which deepen understanding
- practical application: using cards and storytelling for tangible, real-world skill practice
- debriefing and self-reflection: guided questions consolidate insights and learnings



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The activity is divided into two phases:

## Needs vs. Strategies

Participants individually identify and reflect on their current feelings and unmet needs, then share them in small groups. This exercise sets the stage for deeper introspection and connection.

## Feelings and Needs Poker

A structured storytelling and guessing game using Feelings and Needs cards. Participants take turns sharing a personal story and identifying associated feelings and needs, while group members practice empathetic listening and guessing the underlying needs. This interactive method encourages connection, understanding, and insight.

Both phases conclude with a facilitated debriefing session to process learnings.

### Phase 1: Needs vs. Strategies

- **Materials Needed:**
  - List of feelings and needs (printed or digital).
  - Participants' personal notebooks.
- **Instructions:**
  - Participants receive list of feelings and needs.
  - **Step 1 (5 minutes):** Individually, participants write in their notebooks 5 feelings they are currently experiencing or have recently experienced.
  - **Step 2 (5 minutes):** They then choose 5 needs that are important to them but are unmet at this time.
- **Group Sharing**
  - Participants form groups of 4.
  - Each person shares the feelings and needs they identified while others listen without interruption or feedback.

### Phase 2: Feelings and Needs Poker

- **Materials Needed:**
  - A deck of feelings cards and a deck of needs cards for each group of 3-4 people.
  - A flipchart with instructions.
- **Instructions:**
  - **Step 1:** Participants form small groups of 3-4 people.
  - **Step 2:** Each group receives one deck of feelings cards and one deck of needs cards.

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- **Activity Steps:**
  - **Storytelling (3-5 minutes):** one participant, the “Storyteller,” shares a personal story that stirred feelings, choosing a story with a low emotional intensity (1/1.5 out of 10).
  - **Feelings identification:** after telling the story, the Storyteller selects 2-5 feelings cards that resonate with their experience and places them in a line on the floor.
  - **Needs guessing (5 minutes):** listeners take turns guessing the Storyteller’s unmet needs by placing one needs card under a feelings card and phrasing it as a question: “Are you feeling [feeling] because of your need for [need]?”
  - **Reflection by the Storyteller (2 minutes):** after all guesses, the Storyteller selects one or more cards of needs that resonate most and shares their thoughts.
- **Rotation:**
  - The role of the Storyteller rotates within the group until everyone has had a turn.

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## Debriefing and reflection:

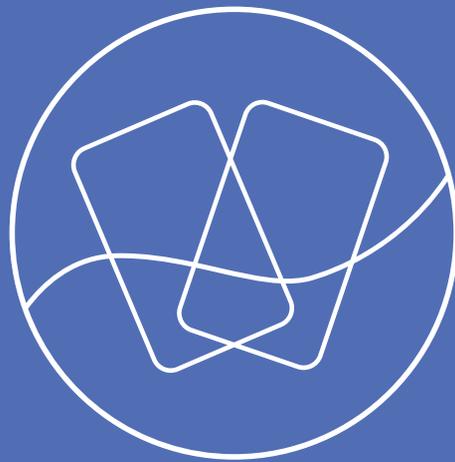
- Participants reconvene as a large group or remain in small groups for guided reflection.
- **Reflection Questions:**
  - What did you notice during the activity?
  - Did anything touch or surprise you?
  - Was it more challenging to identify your own feelings or guess others' needs? Why?
  - As a Storyteller, how did it feel to listen to others guessing your needs? What thoughts or sensations arose?
- **Writing Reflection (Optional):**
  - Participants write their responses to the reflection questions in their notebooks.
- **Group Sharing:**
  - Participants discuss their reflections either in small groups or the full group, as directed by the facilitator.

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## read more:

- **Book:** Marshall B. Rosenberg, Nonviolent communication. A Language of life (2015)
- **Website:** Inventory of Feelings and Needs by the Centre for Nonviolent Communication





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