

EXERCISE: *Distinguishing feelings from interpretations*

One of the basic elements of honest expression is vocabulary. Having a vocabulary for feelings and needs is a foundation for this work. It's also important to be able to recognize words that seem like feeling words but are not. The words listed below are interpretations of what you think someone is doing to you. These are especially important words to avoid because they tend to trigger defensiveness in the listener and stimulate conflict. Consult your list of feelings and needs. List at least three possible feelings and needs that a person using each word might be experiencing. Don't worry about whether your guesses are "right". The point of this exercise is to become familiar with interpretive words and build a vocabulary for feelings and needs.

abandoned
abused
(not) accepted
attacked
belittled
betrayed
blamed
bullied
confined
cheated
coerced
criticized
discounted
disliked
distrusted
disrespected
dumped on
harassed
hassled
ignored

insulted
interrupted
intimidated
invalidated
invisible
isolated
judged
left out
let down
manipulated
mistrusted
misunderstood
neglected
overpowered
overworked
patronized
pressured
provoked
put down

rejected
ripped off
smothered
taken advantage of
threatened
trampled
trapped
tricked
unappreciated
unheard
unloved
unseen
unsupported
unwanted
used
victimized
violated
wronged