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## The Emotions Memo

With the Emotions Memo, you can quickly get into the world of emotions. In this way, you can help children and young people to better recognize and name their feelings. It is not always easy to talk about or name one's feelings. This special selection of 30 pairs of pictures shows the most important emotions. Here, not only the beautiful, positive feelings are depicted on appealing picture cards, but also negative emotions. As a therapist or counselor, you can use the pictures and situations depicted to quickly and confidently enter into a conversation with your patient or client about a wide range of emotions and thus successfully offer and develop solutions for dealing with difficult emotions as well.



The Emotions Memo cards make it easier for your patient or client to describe diffuse »gut feelings« better and more easily: With the help of the Emotions Memo cards, you can playfully encourage your patients / clients to perceive, name and / or interpret their own moods.

### How to work with the Emotions Memo cards

You can use the Emotions Memo cards in therapy and counseling as a quick and good introduction to each session. But also during the therapy session you can let your patient share his or her feelings at any time with the help of the picture cards placed openly on the table. Or you can work together on feelings that your patient may

not yet be able or willing to name. The end of a session, too, can be a suitable moment to use the Emotions Memo cards to show how the mood is compared to the beginning of the lesson.

### Function of the Emotions Memo cards

- ▶ Icebreaker
- ▶ Introduction to the patient's/client's emotional world
- ▶ Psychoeducation
- ▶ Follow-up of the time between therapy sessions
- ▶ Making one's own feelings visible
- ▶ Recording of feelings at specific times
- ▶ Representation of life events (e. g., as markers when working with lifelines)
- ▶ Quick visualization
- ▶ Visual report of experienced feelings
- ▶ Assignment of certain feelings to certain persons or situations
- ▶ Nonverbal medium
- ▶ Fun and distraction



### The therapeutic use of memo cards

Especially in the first therapy sessions, verbalizing and precisely describing certain feelings may not be so easy or may still be too difficult. At this point, it is particularly

helpful to discuss the feelings together with the help of the memo cards.

If necessary, you can also use a hand mirror to check or clarify facial expressions, which you can hold up to your patient or give to her.

Another way to use the cards is to discuss a particular situation. For example, you and your counterpart can first place one or more cards on the table, face down, to assess how you feel about a situation, then you can talk about the situation together and see if your assessments of the feelings about the situation match.

The cards also work well in combination with circular questions.

Adapt the number and motives of the memo cards to the cognitive abilities of your patient or the topic to be discussed.

### Double benefit of the Emotions Memo cards

In addition to its pure play function, the Emotions Memo is also suitable for many other areas of work and use! Additionally to the use in (psycho-) therapy, the Emotions-Memo can also be used in many other areas:

**In kindergarten.** As a teacher, e.g. in kindergarten, you can work on the world of emotions with children from the age of about three. Ask the children to describe their feelings, to form opposing pairs, or to sort the feeling cards into positive and negative. Use the cards to discuss specific situations or to retell an event (e.g., an argument between two children). Another option is to learn, differentiate, and experience new expressions of feelings.

**In school.** As an educator in school or school counseling/social work, you will experience a faster and also deeper entry into conversations that you might not have had in such a brief time so far.

Group work is much easier with the cards, as words can be dispensed with when describing feelings at first.

**Other places to use.** Furthermore, the Emotions Memo cards can also be used in work with self-awareness or self-help groups or groups on specific topics, e.g., grief groups.

In systemic counseling and family therapy the cards can be used excellently.

### Client / patient spectrum

The Emotions Memo can be used in work with a very wide range of clients, such as people with intellectual or learning disabilities or people with autism spectrum disorders. You may also find the memo very useful



when working with clients or patients who speak another language than yourself.

### Game instructions

To begin, all the cards are shuffled and then placed face down on the playing area. After that, the first player turns over two cards and puts them face up for all players to see. Then the cards are turned over again. The next player also turns over two cards and tries to find cards with the same motifs. It is important that the position of the cards is not changed while turning them over. If a player succeeds in uncovering two identical pictures, she may take this pair of pictures out of the game and place them in front of her on her pile of cards. After finding two identical motifs, the player may turn over two more cards and show them. The game is played until all the matching pairs of pictures have been found. The player with the most pairs of cards is the winner. Since there can be a tie at 30 pairs of pictures, there are then either two winners or a new round!



If you are short of time, you can vary and speed up the game by always leaving one of the shown cards face up.

### Game variations to the classic memo game

We have divided the Emotions Memo cards into two categories for you, which differ in color: with a green rim for positive emotions and with a red rim for negative emotions. This way you can easily pick out the positive or negative cards if you want to use the respective category separately. Here is a selection of game variations:

**Pantomime Memo.** All memo cards are spread face down on the table. The first player turns over two cards so that only he can see them. Then he pantomimes the feeling depicted on the cards. All players now try to remember both the position of the cards and the feelings depicted on them. If the first player has found two identical cards, he can take the pair out of the game and place it on his pile of cards. Then it is the next player's turn to turn over two cards invisible to the other players and to pantomime them. Otherwise, the rules of the »classic« memo games apply. The player with the most pairs wins.

**The never-ending memo story.** Depending on the game time, all memo cards or only the basic memo card set are laid out face down on the table. The first player may now choose three cards and tell her own story based on the three visible pictures. The cards are placed in the appropriate order. The next player in line chooses three new cards and extends the story. The game ends when all the cards have been turned over and used for the picture story. This variation is also very suitable for working with groups.

**The feelings panel.** The Emotions Memo cards are spread out face down on the table. Then the first player takes a card, shows it to the other players and says something about the feeling depicted. For example, when and if he once had this feeling and what triggered it. Each Emotion Memo card that the player already owns can be placed in front of him on the table, and he can then unconsciously deal with the variety of his feelings.

**Guessing feelings.** The Emotions Memo cards are spread out face down on the table. Then the first player takes a card, represents the feeling pantomimically, and the other players are allowed to guess which feeling is currently being portrayed. The first player to correctly name the feeling receives the memo card. Then it's the next player's turn. The player who has identified the most feelings at the end of the game is the »Feelings Master«!

**Yesterday, today, tomorrow.** This exercise is always particularly suitable whenever it can be used in a ritualized way, e.g., in the morning round or during group meetings. For this purpose, all memo cards are spread open on the table or floor. Then the therapist can ask typical progress questions, such as:

- ▶ How did you feel yesterday, how do you feel now, and how do you want to feel tomorrow?
- ▶ How did you feel at the beginning of the lesson, during the lesson, and now at the end of the lesson?
- ▶ How were your feelings during the week?
- ▶ How are your feelings looking back before, during, and after the incident?

Ask your patient/client to pick out and name the appropriate cards for the question.

**Describe situations.** There are two different options here: Either you as the therapist choose certain cards and turn them over one after the other or the patient turns over the card herself. After the card has been turned over, the player tells a situation in which she had a similar feeling. Then it is the turn of the next person in the round.

**Find someone ... (group exercise).** The memo-picture pairs are separated. Depending on the number of players, enough memo cards are distributed face down so that each group member has one memo card. Now it is a matter of reenacting the feeling on one's own card and at the same time finding the group member who has received the same feeling as a card and is also showing it pantomimically while everyone goes around the room. Afterwards, each of the pairs that have now found each other can also describe a situation related to the corresponding feeling.

**This is what I look like when ...** It is not always clear to people how they look and affect other people when they are in a certain mood and have a certain feeling. To do this exercise, ask your patient to recreate the feeling card drawn from the face-down pile of cards and look at themselves



in the mirror while doing so.

**Next to me shall sit ... (group exercise/movement game).** This group exercise is especially suitable for use in a circle of chairs. The memo cards are distributed among all group members. Everyone receives one or more cards. The group member, whose turn it is, may choose one of his cards and show it to the group. It is said: »I would like the following feeling to sit next to me because ...«. Then the person with the matching card sits down on the empty chair. Alternatively, the desired feeling can also be pantomimed and the group member with the corresponding feeling memo card then sits down with it. Here, of course, it must still be verified whether the right pair has now been found.

**Compliments-Rain-Memo (group exercise).** The therapist selects all positive feelings from the entire set and distributes them to the group members. Each group member now shows his or her (first) card in turn and thinks of a suitable compliment for the »card holder« that has a connection to the card.

### The authors



**Dipl.-Psych. Melanie Gräßer** is a psychological psychotherapist (behavioral therapy) for children and adolescents and for adults in Lippstadt. She has many years of professional experience in child and adolescent psychotherapy and pediatrics. She is a book author and developer of therapeutic games and materials. Her goal is to provide patients and therapists with appropriate tools for an even better and easier therapeutic approach.



**Annika Botved** grew up partly in Denmark and France. After school she lived in Switzerland for three years and attended a hotel school there. After a few years in the industry and additional studies in Germany, she ended up in Hannover. »My school notebooks and textbooks have always been full of little drawings. Painting has always been a lot of fun for me.« After a few stints in academic professions, she started further training in new media and two years later took the plunge into self-employment by founding penimals. »Finally I get to paint and draw all day long and my children are good advisors and inspiration at the same time.«



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