

NVC CARD GAMES

For the following games a set or deck of **FEELINGS & NEEDS** (poker) cards is required; regular playing cards size.

Empathy Poker

Decide who would like to receive Empathy from the others and volunteer to be the first Player.

The player briefly describes (in 40 words or less) a conflict or celebration in his or her life (old or current), trying to use facts rather than judgements, evaluations or labels of others.

Spread the FEELINGS cards out face up so they are all visible.

Group members scan the FEELINGS cards and find a feeling or two they think represents the player's emotions. Each person in turn places a FEELINGS card in front of the Player and guesses, "Are you feeling" ?" Go around the group 1-3 times. Player observes without commenting, sensing how the feeling offered 'lands' within themselves. [to shorten play, player selects his/her own FEELINGS cards and shares]

Player then scans the cards offered, selecting 2-3 FEELINGS cards that resonate with his/her emotions, removing superfluous cards.

Spread the NEEDS cards out face up so they are all visible.

Group members scan the NEEDS cards and find a need or two they think represents the player's needs/values. Each person in turn places a NEEDS card in front of the Player and may offer empathy silently or guess, "Are you needing/wanting" ?" Go around the group 1-3 times.

I recommend that the Player does not respond to the cards – just sits there, takes it in and reflects on what is being offered, sensing how the need offered 'lands' within themselves. Others can choose to take it in turn around the circle or offer randomly. Player observes without commenting,

When they are complete, there may be other needs that the Player is now connected with that he/she would like to choose. Player then scans the cards offered, selecting 2-3 NEEDS cards and names which NEEDS most connect with their situation and anything else they want to share about their experience of being heard/understood.

I sometimes like to write those needs down for further reflection later.
This can also work as self empathy. Just to lay the cards out for oneself.

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Random Needs

Each person draws a Needs card randomly. Do not look at it.

Take turns in holding their card out for the rest of the group to see and the others reflect on what situation they might be in to have that Need be up for them. You guess the need . Can also work with feelings cards.

As a “check in”.

Each player draws out 2-4 feelings and 2-4 needs cards randomly.

In turn each person can reflect on these cards as they share with the group what is alive.

Whether it is accurate to the cards they are holding or not.

This can be interesting to reflect on needs and feelings that you may not ever think are up for you.

There's loads more games. Make them up to suit your current learning, fun or empathy needs.

These games have been collated from a few sources.

*Marg Pontin in Western Australia.

*Catherine Cadden and Jesse Wiens in California USA

*Sura Hart – CNVC -USA

*Kate Raffin -Sydney Australia

*Liz Gay – Singapore.

*John Cunningham – USA

*People of the world younger and older.

If you wish to share yours,

Please send them to Kate kate@kateraffin.com

Have fun as well as learn and heal.

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Empathy Poker

This game is attributed to Lucy Leu and described by Cathy Artukovich

You start with two decks :

- First deck has about 20 Feeling cards in one color
- Second deck has 60-80 Needs cards in another color

The group decides who goes first. This person is given the Feelings deck.

Meanwhile, everyone else is dealt Needs cards until they are all distributed.

The person with Feelings deck chooses a situation that triggers them. They go through the Feelings deck and pick out a feeling that comes up in relation to that situation.

* Option at this point

Person with Feeling card may express the feeling on their own face. Ask others to go around and show how it looks on their faces to give people a chance to explore how it might feel on their own face and see how it might look on others.

Continuing, The person with the Feeling card expresses a clear observation in one or two sentences and states their chosen feeling.

After that they are silent until the very end.

In the meantime the rest of the players take turns asking

“Are you feeling (the chosen feeling) because you are needing.....?”

Suggested needs comes from the Need cards they are holding in their hands that they believe might apply to this situation. They take that card(s) and lay them in front of the person whose turn it is until all seemingly relevant needs have been offered. When the players put their decks down, it shows they are finished.

When the decks are all put down, the person whose turn it is will take some time to look at the needs offered. They will chose needs that resonate with them. Then, they restate the observation and feeling, followed by all the needs that resonate with them.

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After all the needs have been picked the cards are redistributed until everyone gets a turn.

The main purpose is to allow players to have a sense of what empathy is, especially about connecting to needs and seeing that there can be many needs involved. It also provides comfort and ease and fun in learning the process.

Empathy War Anyone?

Developed by John Cancialosi and described by Martha Lasley

All the needs cards are dealt to two people. Simultaneously they flip over their top card, they state which card is the "high" card (most prevalent need in this moment) and the most important need card wins.

But if the two people disagree or it's a tie, they have a war (three cards face down, and the fourth is the deciding card). I was asked, "HOW CAN YOU SAY AUTONOMY IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU THAN AIR?" and my answer was, "I have plenty of air right now, but I need more autonomy," which led to more discussion about how we prioritize our needs. This game can be high energy, outrageously funny, meeting needs for connection, playfulness, and irreverence. It's a great way for children to learn about needs!