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JULY
2017

RESOURCES, NEWS & INFORMATION FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES IN TEHAMA COUNTY

TOGETHER on purpose

Healing from Food Insecurity: Beyond the **STASH**

by Katya Rowell, M.D.

Whether a child is 15 days or 15 years old, feeding and nurturing through shared meals is a critical way to deepen attachment. Dr. Bruce Perry, of the Child Trauma Academy, refers to ideal bonding opportunities as repetitive, relationship-building, pattern-based, and involving the senses—which describes the family meal experience perfectly. But the family table is not always an easy place for adopted and foster children. Indeed, one mom said that her fantasies of pleasant family meals were met “with a slap in the face” when her two children, adopted from Russia, struggled with food anxieties and sensory issues. Unfortunately, conflict around food and eating habits are more common for foster and adopted children due to their past experiences. When conflict defines interactions around food, those bonding opportunities are lost, and trust and attachment can suffer as well.

“We had a 15-year-old boy in foster care with a history of runaway episodes,” Amy recalls. “He was gone for about 30 hours. When he came back, I decided there was no point being upset, so just told him we’d been scared, made sure he was safe and healthy, and quickly threw a box of mac-n-cheese on the stove to get him some comfort food. That floored him, because it turns out that he’d been denied food in his home after his running. I think it ended up bonding him to us much more than anything else could have.”

Parents want to raise children who are healthy and happy. Many try to instill healthy eating habits by enforcing nutrition rules or portion control. But when raising children who have experienced food insecurity, healing the anxiety around food is key to helping children grow up to be competent eaters who can self-regulate and learn to eat a variety of foods.

Food Insecurity Leads to Survival Behaviors

When children are not fed reliably, do not get enough food, or have to compete for enough, they become anxious. When food-insecure children do have access to food, they often don’t understand or trust that it is coming again in adequate amounts. Food insecurity and unsupportive feeding deeply color the initial relationship a child has with food. It can take weeks, months, and even years of reliable feeding for that trust to build and for children to believe they will be fed.

Some children who have been food insecure demonstrate hoarding behaviors. These survival strategies may manifest themselves in the following:

- Eating quickly
- Gobbling or stuffing food
- Stealing or hiding food
- Eating large quantities, even to the point of vomiting

- Becoming upset if someone eats off their plate
- Getting upset if food is limited or taken away
- Getting upset or eating faster if asked to slow down
- Eating only familiar and “safe” foods
- Keeping food in the mouth for hours, known as “pocketing,” which may be behavioral or a sign of an oral-motor problem (or both)

Healing Food Anxieties

Deciding whether to stash or not to stash. Many resources on hoarding advise allowing the child to have snacks in his backpack or carry food in a pocket, or even have containers of food in the bedroom. Anneliese, mother of two boys, one adopted, one biological, recalls that the main feeding advice she got from her social worker was to let her son carry around baggies of carrots all day: “I just didn’t think that was going to help.” Other experts advise parents to avoid the stash and serve regular meals and snacks. The reality is, it is not an either-or or one-size-fits-all answer.

Parents may decide to offer a stash, or not, and see how things go. The stash may help at first, and the child simply loses interest with time. Consider 18-month-old Marcus,

(Continued on page 3)

WHAT'S GOIN' ON? Coming Events & Activities

JULY 2017

18 Together on Purpose Network & Resource Group

Tuesday, July 18, 3:30 - 4:30PM
Alternatives to Violence Counseling Center, 20 Antelope Blvd., Red Bluff (on the corner of Antelope Blvd. & Rio St., in the same complex as the Copy Center). Come meet with professional therapist Scott Howell, MFTI and other Tehama County adoptive families for support, networking and resource sharing. **Free childcare provided on-site.** All adoptive families welcome. For more information, call 530-727-9423 or email acurry@atvrb.org. **We look forward to seeing you there!**

22 Redding Theatre Company's Youth Summer Musical Theatre Program

Saturday, July 22, 7-9PM
Cascade Theatre 1731 Market St, Redding. Redding Theatre Company's youth summer musical theatre program presents the Wizard of Oz at the Cascade Theatre, Tickets are \$14/ adults, \$12/ kids age 12 and under. Tickets available at the Cascade Theatre box office or online at www.cascadetheatre.org.

AUGUST 2017

8 Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Group (FASD) (Chico)

Tuesday, August 8, 9:30-11:30AM, Lilliput Children's Services, 289 Rio Lindo Ave. Chico. Marji Thomas, MA, CCC is facilitating this new support group, focusing on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The FASD Support Group will provide general information, resources, referral information and provide a supportive circle for you and your family. Please join us every month for this new and informative support group. For more information, contact Alice McKee, MSW- 530.828.8731 AMcKee@Lilliput.org.

22 Together on Purpose Network & Resource Group

Tuesday, August 22, 3:30 - 4:30PM
Alternatives to Violence Counseling Center, 20 Antelope Blvd., Red Bluff (on the corner of Antelope Blvd. & Rio St., in the same complex as the Copy Center). Come meet with professional therapist Scott Howell, MFTI and other Tehama County adoptive families for support, networking and resource sharing. **Free childcare provided on-site.** All adoptive families welcome. For more information, call 530-727-9423 or email acurry@atvrb.org. **We look forward to seeing you there!**

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Families

Post Adoption Families
3 Day Training Opportunity

August 4, 11, 18

9:30AM - 4:30PM
at 7204 Skyway, Paradise

EVERY BEHAVIOR HAS MEANING.

- Support then Teach
- Be Emotionally Competent
- Active Listening
- Use Behavior Support Techniques
- Four Questions
- Offer Emotional First Aid
- Avoid Conflict Cycles
- Life Space Interview

**RSVP: LILLIPUT FAMILIES
at 530-896-1920**

Brought to you by Lilliput Families and Youth for Change. Refreshments will be provided. Please bring your own lunch.

Farmer's Markets

Red Bluff:

Saturday Mornings, June 3 to September 30 from 7:30AM-Noon at Red Bluff City Park and **Wednesday Evenings**, June 7 to August 23 from 5-8PM, Downtown Red Bluff at Washington and Pine Streets.

Redding:

Saturday Mornings, April 1 to December 16 from 7:30AM-Noon at Redding City Hall, 777 Cypress Ave.

Anderson:

Thursday Mornings, May 25 to October 13 from 7:30AM-1PM at Factory Outlets

Chico:

Saturday Mornings, year-round from 7:30AM-1PM at the Downtown Chico Municipal Parking Lot and **Thursday Evenings**, April 6 - September 28 from 6-9PM on Broadway between 2nd & 5th Streets.

More Resources for Adoptive Families:

Support Groups:

Yuba, Sutter, Colusa, Glenn Counties

For Support Groups held in Yreka, Mt. Shasta, Orland or Sacramento contact Leslie Damschoder at 530.879.3861

Butte County Post Adoptive Services

Support Group, Drop in Assistance, WRAP Family Support Group ... For info, call Miko: 530-209-0817, Heather: 916-475-7198 or Deborah: 530-896-1920

Education:

Sierra Forever Families

Seminars on topics like Attachment, Understanding Poverty, Understanding Trauma, and more. Leslie Damschoder 530.879.3861

The Attach Place

Center for Strengthening Relationships
3406 American River Drive, Suite D
Sacramento, CA 95864
ce@attachplace.com (916) 403-0588

Beyond the STASH, continued from page 1

who did not want to let go of his biscuit. He certainly can be allowed to hang on to the biscuit for a while, and maybe even have one in his pocket. Follow his lead. If he throws a tantrum when it's taken away, allow him to carry it. But the parent also has to be absolutely reliable about regularly providing food. Parents may need to offer food more frequently at first, perhaps every hour or so.

Three-year-old Arielle, adopted at 11 months, was on calorie restriction and was experiencing intense food anxiety and preoccupation. Mom let her carry food in an attempt to address her anxiety, but Arielle gobbled it up and begged for more. In this scenario, Arielle's actions were not the hoarding behaviors seen when a child first arrives from a place of food insecurity, but were actually symptoms of a feeding relationship disruption due to her food restriction (more below). Letting her have her own stash of food to carry around didn't work in this situation.

To facilitate bonding and food security, food should come from the parents whenever possible. When a child is allowed to get food whenever he wants, he may still feel responsible for getting his own food. It is a missed opportunity to nurture and deepen the attachment with the child. Feeding a child directly shows him that he will be taken care of and builds trust. Meeting his needs, over and over again, is the basis for attachment.

Reassuring the child with words and actions.

One foster mom had a little boy she couldn't keep out of the fridge. He would occasionally eat to the point of making himself sick. Mom didn't want to lock the fridge to restrict his food access. Instead, she assigned him a refrigerator drawer. She stocked it with familiar food and told him that the drawer would always be full, and while he could not take food at random, this drawer was his. He checked the drawer often, with Mom's reassurance that it was his food, and he could help choose from it for meals and snack times. Mom made certain it was never empty, and gradually he forgot about it, mostly because Mom reassured him with regularly scheduled meals and snacks.

Another preschool boy, adopted from

Eastern Europe, loved cereal. He would frantically gobble as much as he could and cry when limited. His parents finally realized that when he saw an empty box, he thought there would be no more cereal, ever. They were able to reassure him, and for a while overstocked the pantry with his favorite cereals. At breakfast, he was allowed to eat as much as he wanted, but simple reassurances and a trip to look at the pantry helped him realize he would get enough. Soon he was eating about the same as his brother and was no longer anxious at meals.

Being reliable about feeding.

While parents can allow a stash if it works for their child, the best way to lessen hoarding behaviors is to lessen anxiety around food.

"Sam had some hoarding issues, but it didn't last long. We let it run its course. We chose not to have food available to the boys all day and night. I didn't think it would reassure them. I fed them regularly and sat and ate with them. They pretty quickly learned to trust they would get fed." — Mia, mother of two boys adopted at age five and seven

Deborah Gray, in *Attaching and Adoption*, wrote about "high nurture, high structure" parenting. This dovetails nicely with feeding in the Trust Model, pioneered by therapist and nutritionist Ellyn Satter. Parents provide regular meals and snacks with balanced and tasty foods, and the child decides how much to eat from what is provided.

Keeping initial hoarding from becoming entrenched food obsession.

Even if a child is labeled as obese or overweight, she can still feel food insecure, and attempts to limit her intake will make her more anxious and prone to overeat. Many children who experienced food insecurity have initial behaviors that scare parents, especially if the child is bigger than average. A foster child may be obese and not regulating food intake due to food insecurity or other factors.

Research tells us that restrictive feeding tends to lead to higher weight and increased eating in the absence of hunger. I believe

food restriction and efforts to control weight lead to more entrenched food obsession, with food-seeking behaviors worsening, not improving.

It is critical to address a child's initial food anxiety with nurturing, reliable feeding, and allow the child to "overeat" while she learns to trust her cues of hunger and fullness. I believe these children's food regulation skills are simply buried, and they can learn to tune in to hunger and fullness cues. What it boils down to is this: with reliable, pleasant, and satisfying meals and snacks, even the food insecure child will learn over time that he doesn't have to worry about when or how much he will get to eat. Parents get to worry or think about the food, so the child doesn't have to.

From *Adoptalk*, published by the North American Council on Adoptable Children, 970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106, St. Paul, MN 55114; 651-644-3036; www.nacac.org

Katja Rowell, M.D. is a graduate of the University of Michigan medical school and served as a family physician in urban, rural, and university student health settings. During her time in practice, she was struck by the prevalence of disordered eating and feeding, and related health problems.



Rowell believes establishing a healthy feeding relationship— in essence— HOW children are fed is the missing piece in addressing disordered eating and weight dysregulation. Dr. Rowell provides personalized solutions and support for parents with feeding and weight concerns, from selective eating to food preoccupation.

Dr. Rowell teaches the importance of a healthy feeding relationship to health care providers, family therapists and childcare staff and consults with corporate clients, nutrition education and public health providers. She has appeared in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, *Betty Crocker Blog*, *Parents Magazine*, *Kare 11 TV*, *Brain Child Magazine*, *The Utne Reader*, *Twin Cities Live* and *Mommy MD Guides*, among others. Her writing has appeared in *LiveWell Digest*, *Huffingtonpost Parenting* blogs, *New Moon Girls Magazine*, and *Adoptive Families Magazine*.

Dr. Rowell's second book, ***Helping Your Child with Extreme Picky Eating: A Step-by-Step Guide for Overcoming Selective Eating, Food Aversion, and Feeding Disorders***, is available on Amazon.

15 Phrases to Use Instead of “You Make Me So Mad!”

by Andrea Nair, MA CCC
(reprinted with permission,
from www.andreanair.com)

When we are at the end of our ropes, it can be incredibly hard to stay calm when our children do or say something that is upsetting. Self-talk can so quickly shout negative messages in our minds like, “I can’t take this anymore,” or “I don’t have time for this!”

It is important for us to not let these kinds of negative messages move from our thoughts to our voice. Doing so is likely to get everyone worked up, and create a sense of **counterwill** in our children. Dr. Gordon Neufeld coined this term, which represents the phenomenon that happens when a person feels an instinctual drive to do the opposite of what they are being asked to do. This drive is inherent in us to keep us safe by not following instructions from someone who might have harmful intentions, but we don’t want to trigger this drive when, for example, we are trying to get out of the door in the morning.

There are two important factors, which reduce counterwill and increase cooperation in children:

- 1) That they feel a positive, loving connection with the person who is giving the instructions, and
- 2) That these instructions are delivered in a clear, supportive, and encouraging way.

One of the best ways to accomplishing these goals when emotions flare is to have phrases ready ahead of time that you can rely on to get you through rough patches. Saying something like, “You make me SO MAD!” might be what we are thinking, but these words are sure to stir upset feelings in your child.

Instead, phrases that acknowledge the child’s emotions (validate), demonstrate you are paying attention (attune), help the child manage his or her feelings (affect management), and problem solve will have a much more positive effect.

When a child feels heard and supported, (s) he can let go of the anger and move into the more deep emotion that triggered the melt-down, which (unless it is due to a compromised state) is often sadness. That shift from anger to sadness will allow the strong emotion to process and everyone to feel better.

These phrases will encourage calming down and rational thinking from everyone. I am grateful that several of my parenting educator colleagues have offered their expertise for this list.

1 “Is that ____ (puzzle, book, tower, banana peel) hard to do? Do you need 1) a break, 2)

to try again, 3) or some help?”

2 “I love you too much to argue/ fight with you about this. I’m going to take a little break until I can calm myself down and then we can talk about solutions whenever we both feel ready.” Amy McCready, author of *The Me, Me, Me Epidemic*.

Katie Hurley, author of *The Happy Kid Handbook: How To Raise Joyful Children in a Stressful World* reminds us that it is important for kids to know that adults have feelings and emotions. Her suggestion is to say:

3 “I feel frustrated and impatient right now. Let’s sit together and take some deep breaths to calm down for a few minutes,” which will help diffuse the anger while normalizing the range of emotions that kids experience.

4 “Let’s both count to ten and then hug. Once we settle down we can talk calmly about how we’re feeling.” –Joanne Foster, co-author of *Beyond Intelligence*.

Rachel Macy Stafford, the New York Times best-selling author of *Hands Free Life* has this suggestion:

5 “Remember, we’re on the same team. Let’s work together on this.” Rachel says this out loud for both her child and herself when they are in conflict. She says this phrase brings compassion, understanding, and teamwork to the frustrating situation. This helps the situation resolve more quickly and more kindly.

6 “Wow, my body feels really tight and tense right now. I am going to go take some deep breaths to calm myself down.” –Casey O’Roarty, the founder of the *Joyful Courage* parenting podcasts. I like that this phrase focuses on the physical reaction of feeling angry. Putting words to the feelings helps it to process through.

7 “I’m feeling too upset to take care of this right now. I’m going to sit down with some tea and calm down. I’ll talk about it later when I’m feeling better.” –Sarah Chana Radcliffe, author of *Raise Your Kids Without Raising Your Voice*.

8 “My anger is getting too big right now,” or “My anger is too big to talk calmly about this right now.” Then focus on getting yourself back to calm (and your anger down to size). –Nicole Schwarz, author of *Positive Parenting for Imperfect Families*.

Dona Matthews, co-author of *Beyond Intelligence* offered this phrase:

9 “I love you, ____ (child’s name). And right now I’m feeling frustrated. I need you to understand that it’s not okay to ____ (problem). Is there anything you need me to understand better?”

Tracy Cutchlow, the author of *Zero to Five: 70 Essential Parenting Tips Based On Science* uses coloured zones to help her children manage their emotions. Her suggested phrase is:

10 “I’m in the yellow zone, and I feel myself heading into the red zone. I’m going to take a break now.” She says this is a simple visual that kids can use themselves, too. Cutchlow also shared that she showed her three-year-old how to do “lion’s breath” and “horse breath” from yoga, in addition to deep breaths.

11 “I hear you saying NO. I understand this is NOT going how you want it. Let’s work together.” –Ariadne Brill from *Positive Parenting Connection*

12 “I see that something is bothering you. Let’s fill up our love tanks and try again.”

13 “I see that you are mad because we have to leave. Do you need some more hugs to feel ready to go?”

One of my favourite empathy-evoking phrases is from Dr. Laura Markham’s book, *Peaceful Parents, Happy Siblings*.

14 “Oh sweetheart, I understand. I’m sorry this is so hard.” When I say this to my boys, pretty much every time they crumple into crying ball. I scoop them up into a hug and stay with them until they are ready to move into a problem-solving phase.

15 “You are mad because I cut the toast the wrong way (broke the banana/ stirred the yogurt/ ____). I cannot change that.” Get down to your child’s eye level, calm your tone and lower your voice. “What can we do now?” I’d even add an “I’m sorry this is hard” in there to help the anger shift.

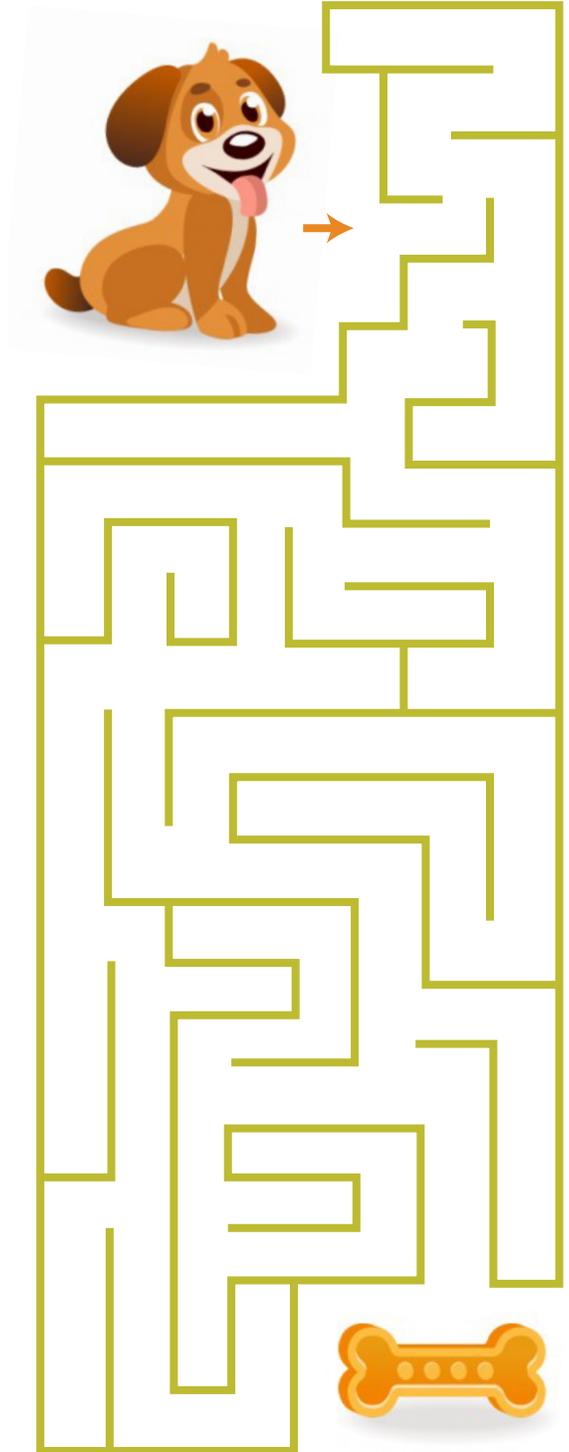
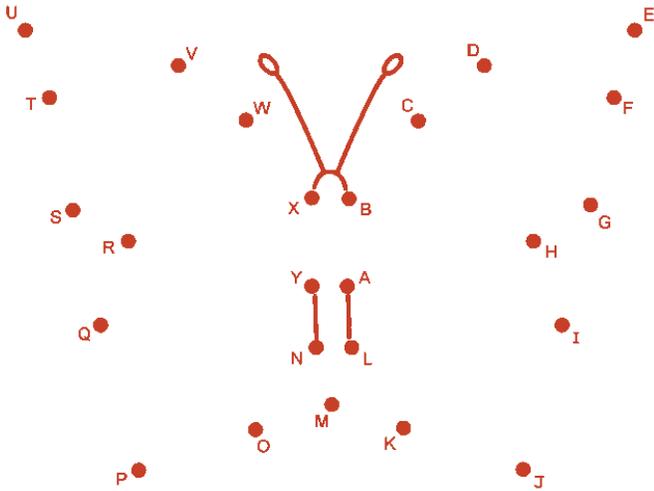
(The last five phrases are from my *Taming Tantrums App*, which you can find in your iPhone or Android App Store.)

Do you have phrases that work well in your family? I’d love to hear those: please post them on my Facebook page!

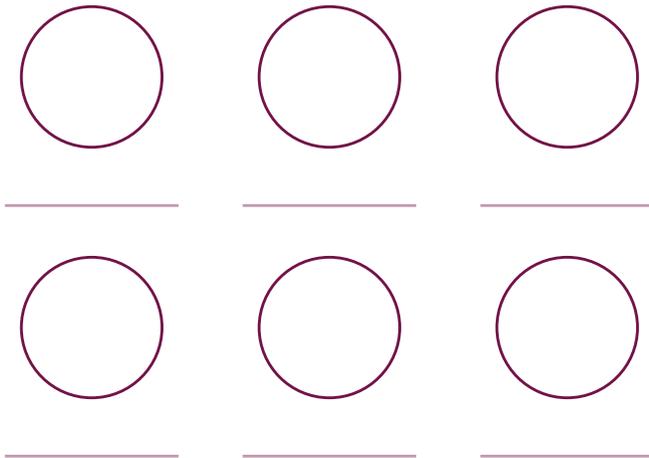
For other valuable tips and articles, visit the author’s website at www.andreanair.com.

BOREDOM BUSTERS

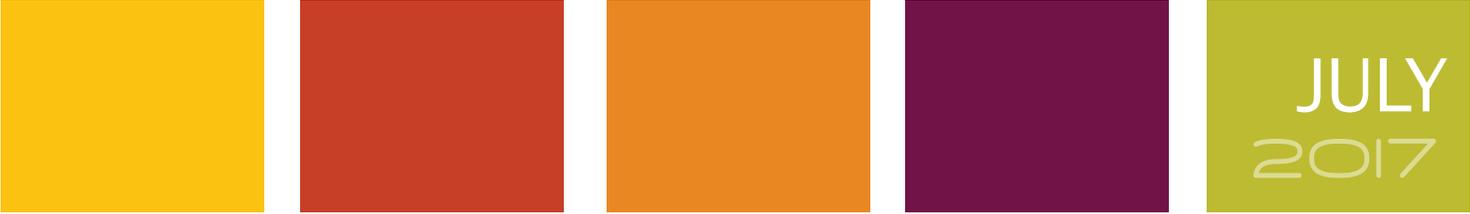
CONNECT THE DOTS - A to Z



FEELING FACES



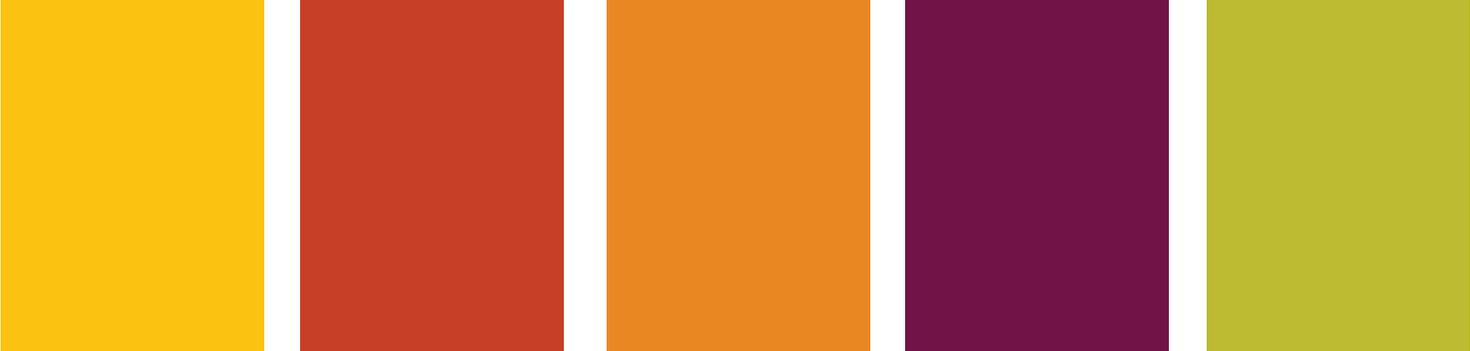
How many FEELING FACES can you make? Think of some feelings you've had before - or feelings that other people might have. Write the feeling on the line, and see if you can make the face that goes with it. If you get stuck, ask a friend or family member to help you think of some feelings so you can draw the faces!



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