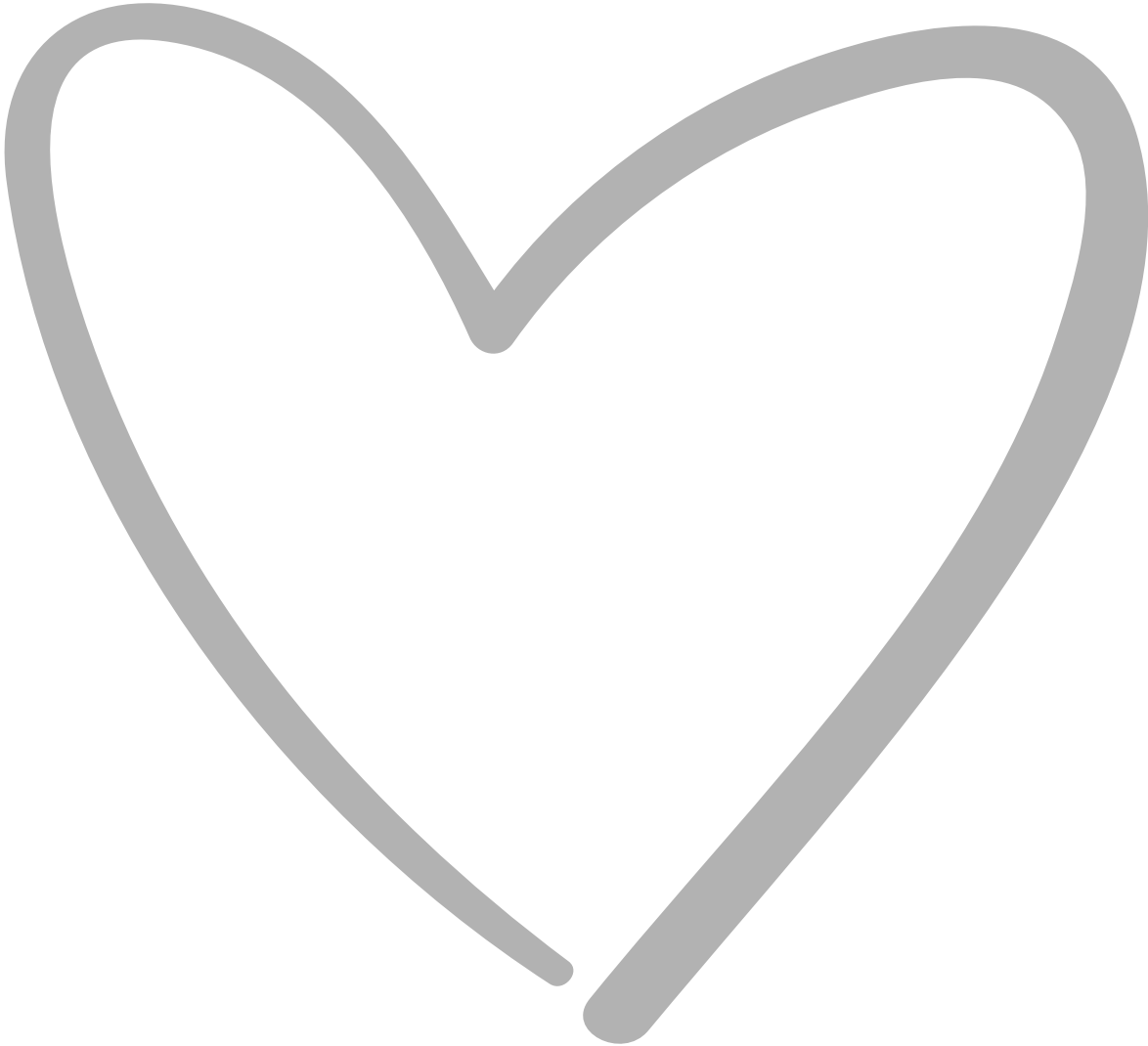


The Colours of My Heart



Feelings Colour Code

Happy

Sad

Angry

Scared

Jealous

Disgusted

The Colours of My Heart



Introduction:

This activity invites children and young people to represent the feelings in their heart through colouring in. Colours have long been linked with feelings. *My Many Coloured Days*, a book written by Dr Seuss is one of many resources that explores relationships sensitively. You might like to have this book available for children as an option as you introduce the activity.



Who might use this activity:

This activity may be useful for practitioners working therapeutically with children and/or young people who have experienced trauma.



What you might say:

This activity is about colouring in the heart shape with colours that show the feelings in your heart.

What colour or colours go with the feelings on the colour code for you? There are no right or wrong answers here. Would you like to draw some colours next to the feeling words?

I wonder how you might use the textas / pencils / pastels / paints to colour in your heart shape with your feeling colours? Will you use dots or stripes or block colouring, or mix the colours, or something else?



Things to note and enquire about:

- What colours did the child choose, and what do the colours mean to the child?
- How did the child approach the activity? Did she/he colour with hesitation, or care, or focus? Did she/he fill the whole heart up, or leave lots of blank space? Did the child colour in block spaces, or use dots, or smudges, or squiggles, etc? You could enquire about the child/young person's approach to colouring in. What did the activity feel like? How does the child/young person feel now looking at their colouring in. You could wonder with the child/young person about how the colours of their heart might have changed over time?
- This activity allows exploration around how the child links feelings with experiences, and how they express their feelings ...how would someone else know what they are feeling?
- You could explore certain situations/experiences and what feelings dominate, recede, or are maybe missing. It can be used as a springboard for exploring calming strategies if fear, anger, worry etc. are dominating.
- You might like to revisit this activity at different times with the child/young person, as a non-verbal tool that many find regulating. This could offer a deeper understanding about shifting feeling states.

This activity emerged from the practice of Katherine Gentle, a Child Psychologist based in Bermagui, Australia. She participated in ACF's Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma. Thanks, Katherine for generously sharing it with ACF and our wider online community.