

Family Therapy Activities Quick Reference Sheet

50+ exercises for communication, conflict resolution, trauma, and connection

5 Activities in 20 Minutes or Less

Activity	Best For	How to Do It
Feelings Thermometer	Young children, emotional awareness	Each person colors a thermometer to show emotional "temperature." Discuss what would move it up or down.
Appreciation Circle	Building trust and positivity	Family members share one specific appreciation for another person. No general compliments.
Mirror Exercise	Active listening, reducing misunderstandings	One person speaks for two minutes. The listener repeats back what they heard, including feelings. Switch.
Pause Button	De-escalation during conflict	Anyone calls "pause." Everyone stops for 60 seconds, breathes, and resets before continuing.
Problem-Solving Wheel	Collaborative conflict resolution	Draw a wheel: name problem, list solutions, evaluate, try one, review.

Activities by Age Group

Age Group	Suggested Activities
Ages 4–8	Feelings thermometer, family story building, emotion sculptures, family coat of arms
Ages 9–12	Family timeline, appreciation circle, feelings ball, trust-building games
Ages 13–18	Role reversal, digital detox challenge, conflict mapping, values clarification
Adults & mixed-age	Appreciation circle, conflict resolution mapping, family constitution, win-win solution building

Activities by Goal

Goal	Try This
Improve communication	Mirror exercise, validation practice, active listening games
Resolve conflict	Pause button, perspective-taking circles, problem-solving wheel
Build trust	Appreciation circle, family story building, trust-building games
Process trauma	Grounding techniques, safety planning, strength-based storytelling
Strengthen identity	Family coat of arms, cultural genogram, values clarification

Before You Begin — Safety Checklist

- Explain the purpose clearly
- Get agreement from all participants
- Set boundaries and a pause signal
- Match activity to age and readiness
- Plan time to debrief
- Have grounding strategies ready

Remember: The debrief — the conversation after the activity — is what turns an exercise into a meaningful intervention.

For more activities and guidance, visit: ositaibekwe.com/family-therapy-activities
© Osita IBEKWE | Thinking for a Living