

PARENTING THROUGH STRONG EMOTIONS



Session 1 Handouts

Superfeeler



Intersect
Youth & Family Services

The Superfeeler Explained:

3 Ws for Superfeelers & Their Loved Ones



What makes a super-feeler?

- Genetics – a super-feeler with a super-feeler parent can be “wired this way”
- Early stress in childhood can also increase the likelihood of becoming a super-feeler

What makes a super-feeler unique? Superfeelers...

- Have a keen sense for emotions in their environment
- Experience emotions very intensely – their own and those of others
- Can pick up on others’ stress and emotions very easily
- Can be more sensitive to perceived threat in the environment
 - (this is why super-feelers become more upset when a parent raises their voice)
- Are often motivated to “rescue” others to protect themselves from feeling their pain (and in doing so – they often deny their own needs). This can include animals too!
- Can feel alone in the world since some people will struggle to understand what it’s like
- Can hide that they are a super-feeler very well – mostly to protect others or relationships

What happens with superfeelers? Super-feelers...

- May try to find ways to reduce pain/avoid emotions -- sometimes with unhealthy behaviors
- Because of this tendency to avoid emotions, superfeelers can be vulnerable to developing eating disorders, anxiety, depression, other mental illnesses, and some chronic health issues, especially if they are exposed to significant or chronic stressors
- Will need support from their environment to manage their emotions until they develop the advanced skills to do so (and until their brain completes its development)
- Superfeelers are highly likely to succeed in the caring professions (e.g. as social workers, doctors, nurses, psychologists), and might perform unusually well in the world once they learn to manage the emotions they sense and feel