FEELINGS ACTIVITIES

The three activities outlined in this resource are designed to help children explore their emotions and feelings, and think about the situations that might trigger those emotions.

Prior to delivering any of the following activities, please read the Mentally Healthy Schools guidance for teaching staff on delivering mental health activities.

We have suggested adapting these activities for:

- younger children: children aged 5 to 7, or those with special educational needs
- older children: children aged 8+

MENTALLY HEALTHY SCHOOLS
Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

Activity 1:

Things that make me feel...

This activity could form part of a series of work around a number of named emotions.

This could be done with a whole class as part of circle time, or in small groups as an intervention.

The intention is for children to understand a range and scale of emotions, and relate them to their own and others' experiences.

Activity (15-20 mins)

Begin by either brainstorming a range of emotions (best for older children) or working from the provided list of appropriate feelings to work through (best for younger children, or children with special educational needs).

Gratitude	*Surprise*	*Boredom*
Happiness	*Calmness*	*Sadness*
Disappointment	*Worry*	*Confidence*
Anger	*Frustration*	*Pride*
Jealousy	*Optimism*	*Excitement*

Together, explore one of the emotions further. *What do we mean by that word? What words or images come to mind when we hear that word? How might someone feel if they are experiencing this emotion? Where might they feel it in their body?*

It might be useful for the adult leading to model this for the children. You could also suggest the children answer these questions in their head, unless they want to share.

Children should share their own experience in pairs or contribute to the class, if they feel comfortable to do so.

For each emotion you will then explore the experiences around it further by completing the below worksheet. There is a worksheet for younger children and a worksheet for older children.

Model this for the children first - name the emotion and share an experience when you felt that emotion. For example, **gratitude** – I remember feeling grateful to the doctor who helped me when I broke my leg.

You could expand on this to discuss some of the above, how it was a scary time, that you needed help and support which the doctor provided, they made you feel comfortable, so you were grateful. Add this to the activity sheet as an example. Children can then think of other potential situations or if appropriate share their own experience in pairs or within a small group.

Children should then complete their experiences of the emotion.

Note

The teacher's discretion should be used regarding the emotions to focus on. If the focus of the lesson is on an uncomfortable emotion, it is advisable to spend some time talking about self-help strategies and signposting to support children with these feelings before closing the activity.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Things that make me feel...

Emotion:

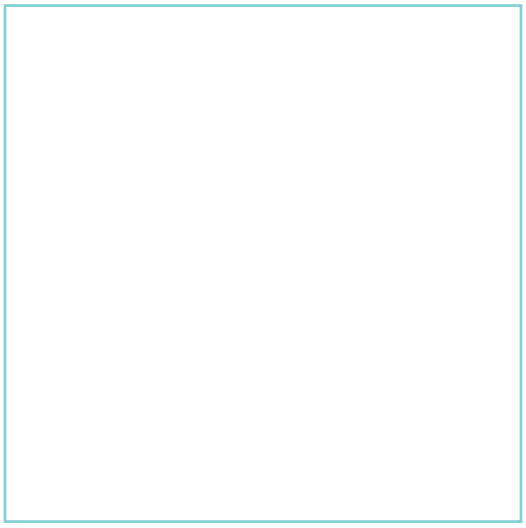
_____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Things that make me feel...

Emotion:

_____



- When?
- What happened?
- Who?
- Why did you feel this way?
- What can we do to help us deal with this emotion?

Activity 2:

Matching emotions and actions

(Matching pairs 5-10mins, worksheets 10-15mins)

This activity is best done in a small group or in pairs. Remind the children of the previous work completed on our feelings/emotions - that we all have emotions, that there is a range of emotions, some are big or small, nice or uncomfortable. Spend some time recapping this and introducing the vocabulary of feelings again.

Perhaps go through the list of emotion cards and ask the children what each image might represent before revealing. Share an image of a situation, for example getting a new puppy. What emotions/feelings might we be feeling in this situation? Would we only be feeling one thing? Might we have slightly conflicting emotions e.g. happiness and nervousness?

Reiterate to the class that we all feel a range of emotions and that we might feel differently to others in the same situation.

Repeat this activity with a different situation, then share the activity most appropriate to the group.

Younger children

Give out the matching pairs cards to children in small groups or pairs. The children then match the situations to emotions. This could be done like matching pairs, laying them out face down and selecting two at a time.

You could also have the emotions and situations in two piles which the children pick from, with the aim of the matching a situation with an appropriate emotion.

Ask the children to discuss the reasoning behind this before making a decision. Allow children to select either the prevalent emotion or multiple emotions for each situation. Make sure to reinforce that there is no right or wrong emotion, and that it is okay for the children to have differing responses.

Older children

Give the children a set of the situation cards. They select one from the pile and discuss it in their pair. What emotion(s) would someone be feeling in this situation? Complete the worksheet explaining this. More able pupils could create their own situations and describe the related emotions.

Once the worksheet has been completed, you may want to discuss coping strategies with the children. Ask questions like: what could someone do in this situation? Who could they speak to?

Emotion cards



WORRIED



SURPRISED



CALM



SCARED



EMBARRASSED



SAD



HAPPY



CONFUSED



ANGRY

Situation cards

Falling over

Losing your favourite toy

Arguing with a friend or family member

Getting a reward for working hard

Playing your favourite game

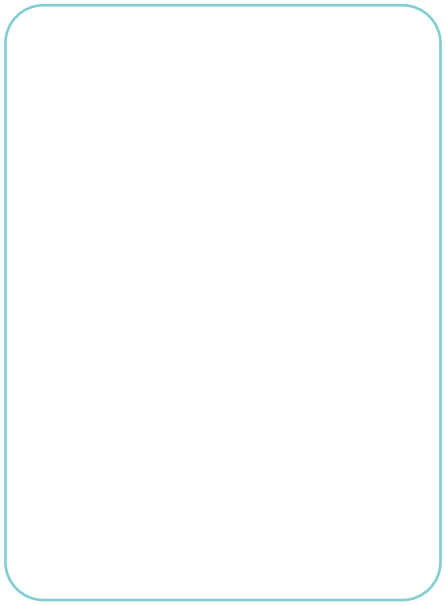
Having a birthday party

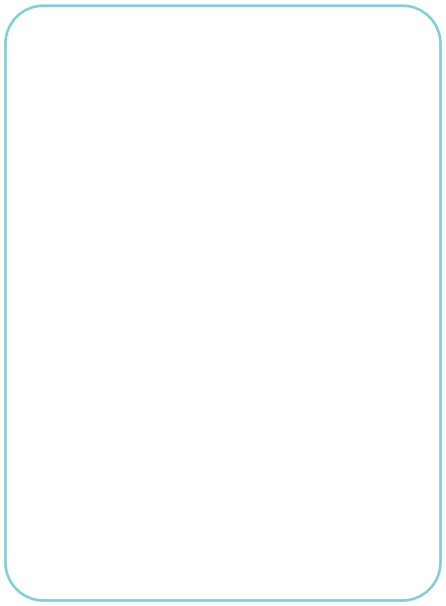
Not finishing your homework on time

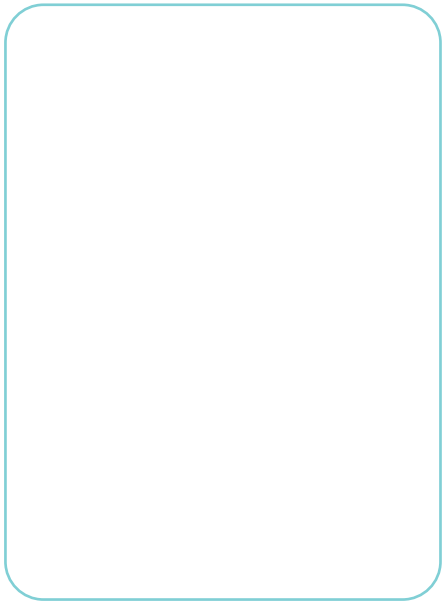
Being told off

Missing your favourite club

Blank cards (to be filled in)







Activity 3:

Emotion chart

This activity supports children's understanding of their own and others' emotions and feelings, as well as helping them to name those feelings. They will develop an understanding of what feelings may present in certain situations, and how different people will feel differently in the same situation. This activity can be used in a number of ways including:

- with a whole class to develop emotional intelligence and inference from a story (activity 1)
- individually, to support a child's own reactions to situations (activity 2)

Introduce the chart as being similar to a pictogram that you would see in maths, and explain that you are going to use this chart to track feelings and emotions.

Model the chart using a story known to the class, such as *Cinderella*, and have five or six key events picked out from the story. Explain that you are going to map these on the chart. Frame the first situation and note this on the bottom left axis of the emotion chart.

Ask the class:

- *What feelings might this character have at this point?*
- *How would you describe this emotion?*
- *Do you think this would be a strong emotion or quite small?*
- *Are there any additional emotions they might be feeling?*
- *What colour/shape would this feeling be?*

As a group decide:

- *how you will pictorially display this emotion*
- *how it will be represented*
- *whether it should be multiple icons*
- *where on the chart it should sit i.e. the scale of each emotion*
- *will you include more than one emotion here?*

Draw this on the emotion chart. When children are suggesting ideas ask them to explain their reasoning - e.g. anger should be red because..., happiness should be a smooth shape because... Complete the key to show which emotions are represented by which icons. Repeat for a different event in the story.

Activity 1 (30-45 mins)

The children complete the emotion chart for the character, or create a new chart for a different character in the story. Older children can create their own axis and key on graph paper.

Activity 2 (10 mins daily)

For a child who finds expressing emotions difficult, this activity could form part of a daily emotional log of their week completed one-to-one with a trusted adult.

You could begin with introducing this via a character, but then ask them to relate the chart to their own feelings at their own pace.

This could be used to express emotions after an incident or as a daily record. This will provide a good opportunity to discuss appropriate emotional responses and coping strategies. Keeping this log could build into a way of identifying particular stresses that need support or strategies that have worked.

Never force a child to talk about their feelings, and be sure to reinforce to the class the internal and external support pathways which are available, should they need or want to talk to someone.

Emotion chart

