

Stage 3 | Ages 11-12 yrs



Angry



Excited



Happy



Frustrated



Worried



Disappointed



Proud



Lonely



Sad



Uneasy

Materials required

For the Activity: • 10 feeling card A4 printouts • Body Map (included for download) • selected read aloud book
• post-it-notes

For the Mental Health Month Connection Challenge: • A4 Connection Challenges list digital file/printed
• pipe cleaners/chenille sticks (approx 5 per student)

Activity: We all feel feelings in our bodies in different ways (Activity 30-40 minutes)

Learning about our own feelings helps us to better understand ourselves.

This knowledge helps us connect with other people and our environment which is important for our wellbeing.
Do this activity before the Mental Health Month Challenge

- Teacher selects two of the feeling cards, **displays the first one** (e.g. Disappointed) and invites students to suggest what they notice about the expression shown. Suggestions might include, the eyebrows are frowning, the eyes are wide and looking down, the lips are curved down or pressed together, etc.
- Teacher displays the feeling card and invites students to **copy the expression**. Teacher asks: "What happens to your eyes, eyebrows, lips, teeth when you try and show this feeling?" Suggestions might include: "My eyebrow muscles move down, my mouth goes down, my eyes get wide", etc.
- Teacher invites students to **stand up, shake their arms and legs, raise their arms up and down** and even gently and quietly bounce on their feet for one minute. Teacher asks: "What do you feel in your body after that movement activity?" (Students may respond: "My heart is beating fast, I feel warm, I'm breathing faster, my face is red, I'm breathing loudly, I can feel my pulse", etc).
- Teacher says: "We can **feel feelings in our bodies as well as show it in our faces**. When we feel (disappointed) our face might feel warm and go red, our tummy might feel strange too." "What else might happen?" Student responses may include: "My eyes have tears, I feel like my tummy drops (discuss descriptions e.g. tingly, sick, etc), my chest feels funny." (discuss descriptive words e.g. tight, warm, hot, cold, out of breath, etc).

- 5 Teacher invites students to **show how the feeling** might look like in their body and actions. Students may have slumped shoulders, move slowly with their heads down, etc.
- 6 Teacher selects a **second feeling**, (e.g. Proud) and invites students to copy the expression, discuss what happens to their face- eyebrows, mouth, lips, cheeks, etc. Teacher reminds students: *"We feel feelings in our bodies as well as show it in our faces. When we feel (Proud) our face might feel warm, our cheeks turn pink, our tummy might feel tingly, shoulders go up, I sit or stand straighter, I walk taller"*, etc.
- 7 Teacher distributes **post-it-notes** – one colour for one feeling, a different colour for the other. Invite students to select one of the feelings discussed today (e.g. Disappointed, Proud) that they have felt at some time. Invite them to place the post-it-note on the Body Map where they feel that feeling.

- 8 Teacher **invites students to share**: *"What do you notice about the yellow post-it-notes?"*, *"What do you notice about the green post-it-notes?"* Students may say that, where they felt a feeling was different to where others felt it.

Teacher highlights that not everyone will feel the emotion in their bodies in the same way because everyone is different.

Extension activities

- Repeat the activity- invite students to work in small groups, selecting any two feeling cards and repeating the steps 1-5. Groups then report back to the class.
- Start a Feelings vocabulary poster starting with the descriptive words discussed.

- 9 Read aloud book. There are many great books about feelings which help students to gain different perspectives of emotion through a character's journey. Teacher could select one of the books below or a book recommended from the school or local council librarian. **Teacher invites students to listen** out for clues as to how a character felt (what did they say, feel in their body, what was their posture, movement etc).
Some Days You'll Have Days Like These by Josh Pike, *Afloat* by Kirli Saunders, *Walk of the Whales* by Nick Bland, *In My Heart: a Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek, *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig, *My Brain Is a Home* by Orlando Bettison, *Dear You, Love From Your Brain* by Karen Young . **Teacher invites students to share reflections** about the feelings different characters in the story may have felt and how their feelings changed throughout the story.

Activity wrap up:

We all have feelings. We may show our feelings in our facial expression, our posture and the way our bodies move. Our feelings may cause different sensations in our bodies. Knowing that we all feel our feelings differently helps us better understand ourselves and each other. Connecting with each other and our environment is important for our overall wellbeing. **Teacher could invite** students to share something they've learned through this activity.

You may choose to complete the Mental Health Challenge Stage 2&3 next.

A little
Connection
goes a long way

I feel...



disappointed

A little
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I feel...



excited

A little
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I feel...



frustrated

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lonely

A little
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goes a long way

I feel...



proud

A little
Connection
goes a long way

I feel...



sad

A little
Connection
goes a long way

I feel...



uneasy

A little
Connection
goes a long way

I feel...



worried

A little
Connection
goes a long way

I feel...



angry

Stage 2 & 3 | Ages 8-12 yrs

Mental Health Month Challenge – A Little Connection Goes a Long Way

Teacher: ***This challenge will help us better understand ourselves, other people and nature. The way we connect with others and with nature is an important part of our wellbeing.***

This activity has two parts.

Part 1: Class creates a **Connection Sculpture** (60 mins)

Part 2: Class undertakes the **Connection Challenge** (20 mins introduction, 20 mins mid challenge catch up + 1 week to carry out challenge).

1 Connection Sculpture

Teacher provides each student 3-5 pipe cleaners/ chenille sticks. Teacher invites each student to these to **create a shape** to represent them. The students will then join their shapes together to make a sculpture collage representing the class. Teacher invites a discussion of **shape ideas**, circle, heart, twist, animal, star, colour, etc.

Students create their shape and then **join their shape** to their classmates at their table group, then they join their combined shapes with those of another table group.

The larger joined shapes are further combined to **form the class collage sculpture**. The artwork could take the form of a framed 3D picture, or a hanging mobile etc.

2 Teacher invites students to discuss- *How did you join the pieces together?* Suggestions may include how they joined two shapes together (with an extra pipe cleaner, creating a loop on both shapes etc, joining similar sized shapes or colour or looking for contrasts, etc).

What did it feel like to join two pieces, then four, then six? etc. Suggestions may include: joining them together makes them stronger. Joining them makes them look impressive.

“How does our sculpture represent us both as individuals and as a group?” Students may suggest each piece represents one person but looking at the sculpture together we are made up of a lot of different pieces, connected together.

3 Connection Challenge

Teacher: *Our connection with each other is important for our wellbeing. This week we are taking a challenge for this year's Mental Health Month. We have a list of challenges to choose from. Some of the challenges relate to connection to other people and some relate to connection to nature.*

Teacher reads out the individual MHM Connection Challenges (A4 printout/digital file).

Teacher invites students to choose two of the challenges and then select one of these to do over the coming week.

Teacher: This week we are going to complete one of the connection challenges we selected. We'll have a check in mid week to see how we're going.

4 Mid-week check in: *“How are we going with our connection challenges?”* Suggestions might include, I forgot, I'll do it tomorrow, I did it and it made me feel good, I think I surprised the person, etc.

5 On the final day of the challenge, Teacher invites students to share their experience of connection – either about the class made connection artwork, or the connection challenge with another person or nature.

Connection Challenge

- **Give someone a compliment** – You could say something you noticed like: *“Your teamwork was great on that task; You were so helpful; You made a lot of effort with that artwork etc”*
- **Focus on the positive**– take notice of the little things, the sun shining, a rainbow, a cool breeze, your friend waving, a delicious meal and *tell someone about it.*
- Learn something about your own or **someone else’s culture**– *ask about their favourite recipe, how to say Hi...*
- **Celebrate small wins**–solving a problem, finishing something tough, asking for help. You could say, *proud of you for getting through that, you worked hard on that- good job*
- **Ask someone**, *What was one thing that went well today?*

- **Kindness challenge**, do one kind thing for someone without being asked. Maybe open a door for them, offer to help, say hello, hold a place for them etc



- **Help someone out:** offer to help with work, packing up, or explaining something.



Say thank you, notice a helper – thank them for something they do (e.g. librarian, classmate, teacher, cleaner, etc).

- **Notice the good:** tell someone what you think they did really well today.
- **Do something for yourself**–have a bubble bath, dance, sing, go for walk or a run. You can bring more to your connection with others when you care for yourself.

Connection to Nature Challenge

(during lunch break or after school)



- **Look at the sky** for one minute and notice clouds, colours, movement.
- When outside, think of **five** things you can see, **four** things you can hear, **three** things you can touch, **two** things you can smell and **one** thing you can taste.
- Sit quietly for 2 minutes outside and **count how many** bird sounds you hear or count how many birds you can see.
- **Create a picture** from objects you collect from your garden- leaves, flowers, buds, twigs, bark and stones or objects you collect at the beach- sand, shells, driftwood, leaves.

- **Count** how many different types of trees in your street. What makes them different- leaves, bark, scent, seeds, flowers etc



- **Stand still** in a place in nature like the school oval, a local park, your backyard or a nature reserve and count how many different colours you can see in nature.
- When you are outside, **find something** that is:
 - green
 - soft
 - smooth
 - rough
 - tiny