

# 1

# Emotional literacy

## AIMS

### Activities will assist students to:

- Recognise and identify their own emotions
- Describe situations that may evoke these emotions
- Compare their emotional responses with those of their peers.

## EVIDENCE BASE

Research shows that students who participate in rigorously designed and well taught social and emotional learning programs demonstrate more positive social behaviour, are less likely to engage in risky and disruptive behaviour, and show improved academic outcomes.<sup>1-4</sup> Collaborative learning activities help students to build their social skills.<sup>5</sup> Building a large vocabulary for emotions helps to increase emotional literacy, build self-awareness and empathy for others.

## ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

### Personal and Social Capability

- Students show an awareness of the feelings and needs of others
- Students identify and describe personal interests, skills and achievements and reflect on how these might contribute to school or family life
- Students demonstrate ways to interact with and care for others

### Health and Physical Education

- Students understand how emotional responses impact on others' feelings
- Students demonstrate positive ways to interact with others

### English

- Students listen to others when taking part in conversations using appropriate interaction skills
- Students listen for particular purposes

## CURRICULUM TABLES

Curriculum tables for the following activities can be found on pages 77–79.

## COACHING POINT

As you deliver the activities, we recommend you write the learning intentions on the board in student-friendly language. This will help you and the students to intentionally practise these skills during the activity and allow you to review the learning intentions at the end.

# 1

## Emotions statues

TIME: 15+ MINUTES

## Learning intention

- Students name some of the commonly experienced emotions
- Students identify the ways in which emotions are shown in body language

## Equipment

- Pictures sourced from the internet or magazines showing a variety of facial expressions
- Room to move

## Method

- 1 Announce that the class will play a game which will help us to talk about different emotions. Ask students to walk around the room and freeze when you make the signal. Then ask them to make themselves into a sad statue. They will hold this pose for the count of five, then relax.
- 2 Ask one half of the class to remake their sad statue. Ask the others to say what they notice about how the statues look. Reverse roles and repeat.
- 3 Ask all students to go back into being a sad statue and to think of what sorts of things make people feel sad. Ask the students to sit and share their ideas.
- 4 Repeat this process with different emotions, including:
  - Excited
  - Angry
  - Proud
  - Scared
  - Happy

- 5 Show some pictures of faces with different emotional expressions. Ask the class to work out what emotions these people may be experiencing.
- 6 Ask students what they can do to try to work out what their friends' emotions might be or how their family members might be feeling. Point out that the skill of noticing how other people feel is important.

#### COACHING POINT

If you have students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder in your classroom, it is also helpful to point out that people often find it hard to figure out what people are feeling, and get it wrong. Reassure students who struggle in this area that it is normal to get confused sometimes, and affirm their efforts.

## Review

Invite students to review the learning intentions. Ask how the activity helped them to learn some different emotions words. Ask how the activity helped them to read/look at other people's body language to think about how they might be feeling.

## 2 Emotion triggers

TIME: 25+ MINUTES

### Learning intention

- Students identify experiences that can trigger particular emotions

### Equipment

- Paper and drawing materials

### Method

- 1 Ask students to choose one of the emotions from the statues game. (List them on the board and review the meanings of the words.) Ask them to think about some of the experiences that can cause this emotion.
- 2 Ask the students to draw a picture of themselves showing the experience, then to write the word for their emotion on the top of the picture.  
Encourage them to write an explanatory sentence on their picture. E.g. *I felt excited when it was my birthday. I felt angry when my brother took my ball. I felt sad when no one played with me.*
- 3 Ask those who felt they learnt more about each other from the activity to put their hands up. Remind them that learning about how others feel is a good friendship skill.
- 4 Ask those who felt they learnt more about emotions from the activity to put their hand up. Affirm that learning about emotions is an important life skill.

## Review

Ask how the activity has helped them to identify experiences that lead to particular emotions. Invite a few students to give examples.

#### COACHING POINT

Use circle time to build students skills in listening respectfully and supportively to each other. As each person finishes their presentation, they can call on the person next to them by name to make their presentation. Encourage them to thank each other for their contributions.

### 3 Acts of friendship

TIME: 35+ MINUTES

#### Learning intention

- Students identify emotions in others
- Students empathise with others
- Students suggest ways to help others

#### Equipment

- Room to move

#### Method

- 1 Read out the following scenario, or make up your own:  
Kristin had a bad day. Her friends said, 'We don't like you. Your hair looks funny. You can't play with us'.  
Choose volunteers to role play the scenario.  
Ask: *What feelings might Kristin have had when her friends told her she could not play with them?* Write these emotions on the board.

- 2 Bring some volunteers out to stand next to the character Kristen. Ask them to make statues to show the way these different emotions might all be present at once. Point out that people can have more than one emotion at the same time – like anger and sadness and fear. Ask: *What could other children nearby do to help Kristin?*
- 3 Place some additional volunteers to be students playing nearby. Ask them to show how they could help out. Take it in turns to show how to do these different acts of kindness. Ask: *What feelings might Kristin have when these children are friendly to her?* Ask the statue volunteers to make new statues to show these new emotions and add them to the list on the board.

#### Review

Invite students to review the learning intentions. Ask: *How did the activity help us learn to recognise emotions in others? How did it help us to think about what we could do to help someone who might be feeling a negative emotion (such as sadness or fear)?*

### 4 Sharing stories about acts of kindness

TIME: 35+ MINUTES

#### Learning intention

- Students identify times when they have shown an act of kindness to a peer or family member
- Students describe what emotions they felt at this time
- Students suggest emotions that others might feel when people show kindness to them

#### Equipment

- Paper and drawing materials

#### Method

- 1 Ask students to think about the different friendship acts they saw in the previous role play. Invite them to close their eyes and remember a time when they were friendly to another child or to someone in their family. (If they can't remember one, they can use their imagination to help them think of one that they can do very soon.) Ask them to open their eyes and share their memory (or intention) with a person next to them. Ask some students to share their partner's memories with the class.

- 2 Once the sharing is done, ask students to choose a friendship act they have done and to draw a picture of it. Assist students to make a caption or short story to go with their picture.
- 3 Assist students to make a caption or short story to go with their picture. Share these pictures and stories in circle time.
- 4 Arrange a 'gallery walk'. The students form two parallel lines, facing each other, holding their picture. Walk along the gallery and point to a picture, and ask the person holding that picture to explain it. Choose several pictures.

#### Review

Encourage the students by celebrating their acts of kindness. Review the learning intentions by inviting students to reflect on what they have learned. Ask students to give examples of how friendly and kind actions can make people feel. Collect the pictures to display, or assemble them into an 'Acts of Friendship' book for the class.

#### COACHING POINT

Students develop awareness of their strengths by sharing stories of themselves initiating kind actions. This sharing builds a sense of pride and recognition of the importance of caring in friendship and families.

## Topic 1 Further resources

### Reflecting on everyday practice

- What patterns did you notice in the emotional expression and regulation of the students across the last week?
- Was there a pattern in the types of emotions you experienced over the course of the week?
- What are your significant triggers?

### Extension activities

- When reading stories to the class, ask them to identify the emotions that the key characters might be experiencing.

### Talking further

- Arrange for students to share the 'Acts of Friendship' Book with their families.