

All Emotions Matter: *for the Elementary Classroom*



Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.



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The goal of this lesson is to:

- Validate feelings and emotions.
- Teach students to manage their response to emotions rather than change how they feel.
- Understand that we are not our emotions.

To learn more, visit the School Mental Health Resource and Training Center at www.mentalhealthEDnys.org or call 518.434.0439

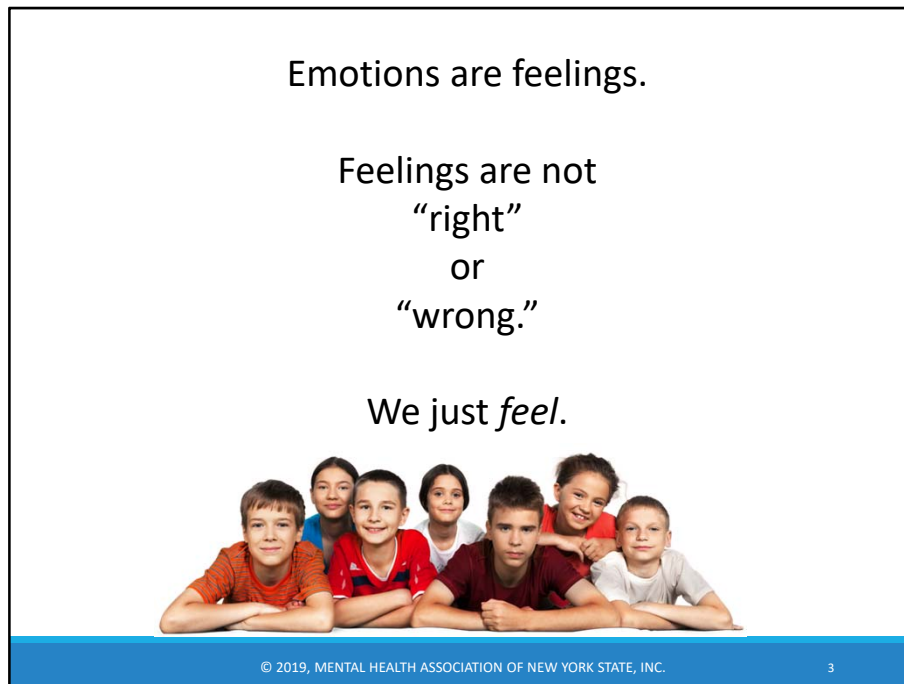
Emotional Literacy



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Talking Points

We are not born knowing how to read and write. Likewise, we are not born knowing how to express our emotions. It is a skill that needs to be taught, and a skill that needs to be practiced. We will have some practice sections shortly.



Talking Points

“You shouldn’t feel sad,” may seem like something you say to a friend to make them feel better. However, it actually invalidates their feelings and can make it seem that their emotions are not correct. We *feel* what we *feel* but we are not our emotions. People are not always in control of how they feel but they can control how they react & respond.

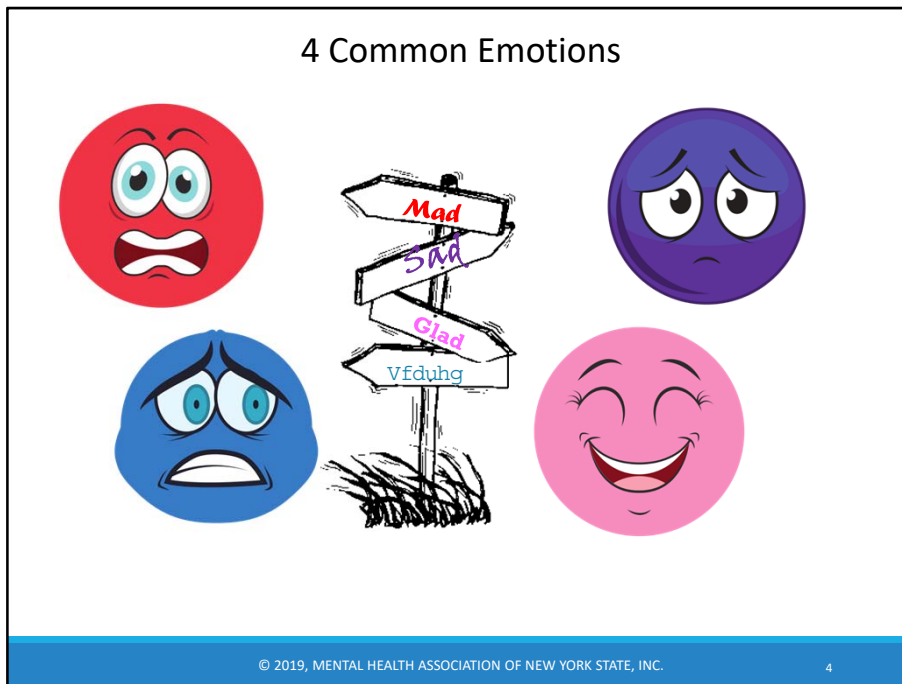
Exercise

Introduce the concept of negative emotions (anger, jealousy, etc.) and positive emotions (happy, peaceful, etc.)

Ask the students if they think that they can manage their emotions and/or their feelings. One response may be: “yes, because when I feel angry I want to hit something but I have learned to walk away or take a few deep breath”.

You might respond with: “did you change how you **felt** or how you responded”

NOTE: for the rest of the lesson, we are going to focus on how to **manage responses** to our emotions, **not change** our emotions.



Talking Points

Ask the class if they can name four common emotions (the images will be mad, glad, sad, scared.)

Please note, the slide will have blank signs until you click. The 'mad' face and word appear on the first click. When you click again, the 'glad' face and word appear. Another click will reveal the 'sad' face and word, and 'scared' will appear with a face and word when you click again. This will give you time to discuss each emotion with the class.

Note for educator: If the children come up with more names, let them know that there are many more emotions in addition to these four common emotions.

Optional Extension Exercise:

The last page of this presentation has a printable slide for drawing the faces of different emotions.

What does your body feel like when you feel mad?



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Talking Points

Anger is not bad and you are certainly not a bad person for feeling angry. We can manage how we react and respond to feeling angry. Remember, we have choices.

Anger is an important alert system notifying you that something feels wrong. Be curious about how you may have contributed to an angry situation. Feelings can provide a lot of information for us and if we can respect and identify their clues, we can allow our feelings to guide us throughout our life.

Note to the Instructor

Be sure to use language indicating “I feel angry” rather than “I am angry” to model that we are not our emotions; emotions are temporary.

Exercise

Ask the class to identify what this child might be feeling. Consider asking them if they think it is “bad” to feel angry.

Ask the class to provide any physical responses or senses they notice when feeling angry.

Some examples may include:

- Eyebrows furrowed
- Shoulders tense
- Shallow breathing
- Breathing quickly or not much at all
- Hands clenched

What does sadness feel like in your body?



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Exercise

Say to the class: Sometimes being sad seems like it will never end. Just because you are feeling sad does not mean that you will always feel sad. Everyone feels sad from time to time.

Ask the class to provide any physical responses or senses they notice when feeling sad. Again, be sure to use language indicating “I feel sad” rather than “I am sad.” We are not our emotions.

Some examples may include:

- Sagging shoulders/slouching body posture
- Tears/Crying
- Upset stomach
- Tired eyes
- Feeling small
- Feeling withdrawn

What does happiness feel like in your body?



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Exercise

Ask the class to provide any physical responses or senses they notice when feeling happy. Again be sure to use language indicating “I feel happy” rather than “I am happy” so that it becomes clear that we are not our emotions.

Some examples may include:

- Smiling face
- Uplifted feeling
- Feeling light
- Awake and alert
- Relaxed shoulders
- Calm mind
- Relaxed
- Deep breathing



What does feeling
scared feel like in
your body?

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Exercise

Ask the class to provide any physical responses or senses they notice when feeling scared. Let them know that it is OK to feel scared. Again, be sure to use language indicating “I feel scared” rather than “I am scared.” We are not our emotions.

Some examples may include:

- Feeling small
- Crying
- Withdrawing
- Not talking to anyone
- Tight chest
- Sweating
- Heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath

Body Scan



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Talking Points

Sometimes we might not be able to tell what we are actually *feeling*. For example, I may not recognize that I am feeling mad until I realize that my shoulders are up to my ears and I'm getting sweaty.

This is a good time to practice a body scan. Mindfulness does not mean to be still and not have any thoughts. It is about just noticing what is going on, without judgment. Let's notice what is going on in our bodies.

Exercise: The Body Scan

Purpose: To get in touch with our bodies and our feelings. This can also be a relaxation strategy. If you'd prefer, visit [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search "body scans for students". You will find examples posted by GoZen, Mindfulness for Kids and many others.

Lead the students through the following steps:

- Allow your body to get into a comfortable position (sitting, standing or lie down) and make sure you are arm's length away from your neighbors.
- If you are comfortable, you may close your eyes, or just let your eyes feel soft.
- Take a few deep breaths as you get into your body. Breath in through your nose (count to 3 slowly) and out through your mouth (count backwards from 3).
- Start to sense your body and how it feels on your chair, or on the ground. Is it heavy or light? Warm or cold? Begin to sense what your clothes feel like as they touch your skin.
- Become aware of the top of your head. What do you feel? Maybe stillness, or a light breeze?
- Bring your attention to your ears. What do you sense? Do you hear anything? Can you hear a clock ticking?
- Now traveling down into your jaw. Is your jaw firmly closed or open slightly? See if you can let your facial muscles soften.
- Begin to sense your shoulders. Are they tight and close to your ears, or relaxed?
- Now notice your chest. You can put one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Notice any movement in your body as you breathe. Does your chest rise and fall? Do you feel your stomach move when you breathe? Is the air warm or cool? Remember, there are no "right" answers. We are just noticing.
- Bring your attention into your stomach. Is it tight? Maybe there is no particular feeling there. That is OK, too.
- Now notice your hands. Are they clenched into fists? Are they relaxed?
- Begin to sense your feet on the ground. Feel your feet inside your shoes. What does that feel like?
- Now bring awareness to the whole body, and take another deep breath through your nose (counting up to 3) and breathing out your mouth (counting back from 3.)

What have we learned?



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Talking Points

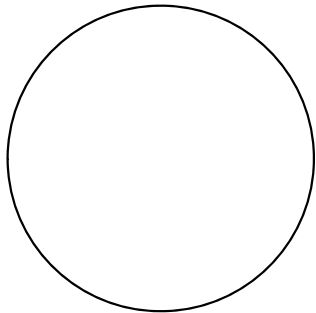
What have we learned so far today?

If they need suggestions:

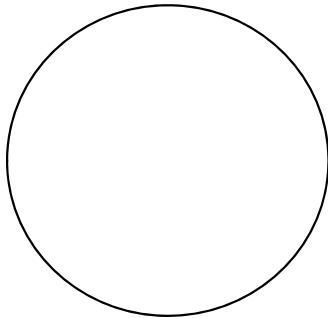
- We have learned that our feelings are important (all emotions matter)
- It is not 'wrong' to feel one way or another
- We have learned how to be responsible for how we react
- We understand that we are not our emotions

All Emotions Matter

Name:
Date:



This is what _____ looks like.
This emotion makes my body feel...
Sometimes I feel this way when...



This is what _____ looks like.
This emotion makes my body feel...
Sometimes I feel this way when...

Extension Exercise (Printable)

Create 2 emotions in these circles, like Emoji's. Describe what the emotion is (mad, sad, glad, scared, etc.) Write down a few words about how your body feels when you have that emotion.

Now write down when you might feel that way.

Directions for Printing the Homework Page

1. Go to File
2. Go to Print
3. Make sure to have the settings set to "Full Page Slides"