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Foundations for Wellbeing

Year 5, lesson 1: Noticing and naming emotions



Noticing and naming emotions

This is the first of five lessons on self-regulation, mental health and emotional wellbeing, for year 5. This lesson focuses on emotional awareness, including how to recognise and distinguish between emotions.

To encourage pupils to use the self-regulation strategies taught in these lessons more automatically, autonomously and effectively, it is important to revisit and reinforce them regularly, as part of a whole-school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. The extension activities are designed to support this (for more information, see the [Teacher Handbook](#)). To learn more, please visit our [self-guided online courses](#), which are available to all School Plus members.

The lesson plan is based on a 45-minute lesson. The timings given are the minimum required to deliver the activities, but you may wish to spend longer exploring each activity.

Learning objective and outcomes

To learn about managing thoughts and emotions in everyday situations.

Pupils will be able to:

- describe and differentiate a wider range of emotions
- describe parts of the brain that help people notice thoughts and emotions
- explain how noticing thoughts and emotions helps someone to manage them

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- A3 paper, pens and post-it notes
- Resource 1: *Andie* [one per student]
- Resource 2: *What emotions?* [one per group]
- Resource 2a: *Emotions* [support option, as required]
- Resource 3: *Managing emotions* [one per pair]
- Resource 3a: *Helping Kayla* [support option, as required]
- Resource 3b: *Managing emotions – teacher copy* [for teacher reference only]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. They include guidance on establishing a safe learning environment, supporting pupils with additional vulnerabilities, using assessment and personal reflection effectively, and embedding the learning. They also outline useful subject knowledge on the theory and evidence informing these lessons, self-regulation strategies and relevant neuroscience.

The lesson plans should be used flexibly, and you are encouraged to adapt them to meet the specific needs and abilities of your pupils. It is also important to consider sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. If safeguarding concerns arise during this lesson, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with your school policy.

Baseline assessment

Introduction (Slides 9-10, 2 mins)

Establish or revisit ground rules. Explain that if pupils have worries or questions during or after the lesson that they do not want to raise in front of the class, they can write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Introduce the learning objective and outcomes. Explain that today's lesson will differentiate a range of emotions (partly by exploring how they might feel different in the body), and how noticing and naming emotions can help someone manage them.

Baseline assessment activity (Slide 11, 5 mins)

Give pupils **Resource 1: Andie** and ask pupils to answer the questions. Take feedback to establish pupils' starting points and consider how the lesson may need adapting depending on any gaps or misconceptions identified, for example spending more time on activity 3 if students struggle to identify how emotions feel in the body.

Core activities

Different emotions (Slides 12-13, 10 mins)

Give small groups **Resource 2: What emotions?** and ask them to identify any emotions the character might be feeling in each scenario (if necessary, explain that an 'emotion' is how someone makes sense of their thoughts and feelings in different situations).

Take feedback. *Pupils may identify a range of different emotions (e.g. frustration, nervousness, happiness, embarrassment, calmness, excitement, disappointment), but should recognise that the characters can experience more than one emotion at a time.*

Next, show slide 13 and ask each group to draw the emotions chart on a piece of A3 (or flipchart) paper. Explain, or remind pupils, that some emotions can be described as more pleasant than others, for example, happiness/feeling happy is more pleasant than sadness/feeling sad, and some emotions make us feel more energised, awake and alert than others, for example, someone may feel more energised if they are excited, than if they are calm. With this in mind, ask groups to decide where to plot the characters' emotions on the chart (emotions could be written directly on the paper, or on post-it notes so they can be moved around more easily). Explain that the most important thing to consider when plotting an emotion is which area of the chart the emotion is likely to go, rather than an exact position, as there is no 'perfect' place for each emotion.

Take feedback, asking volunteers where they have placed one of the emotions on the chart on slide 13, and why they have chosen that position.



Support: Give pupils **Resource 2a: Emotions** and ask them to identify which of the emotions the characters may be feeling in each scenario. These can also be used when plotting emotions.



Challenge: Ask pupils to choose one character and describe a different scenario that could also make them feel the same emotions. They could repeat this for other characters.

My amazing brain (Slides 14–15, 10 mins)

Ask if the class know, or can remember, the parts of the brain that help someone notice emotions. Highlight that the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) helps monitor thoughts and behaviour, and the insula monitors emotionally-relevant feelings in the body. Then, show slide 15 and ask pupils to stand up (or put their hands up) if they are shown something that would be noticed by the ACC and sit down (or keep their hands down) if they are shown something that would be noticed by the insula.

Explain that if we practise noticing our emotions, this can make the parts of the brain that help us to do this (e.g. ACC and insula) stronger. Over time, this makes noticing our emotions easier to do.

Marek and Kayla (Slides 16–17, 10 mins)

Explain that noticing and naming emotions can make them easier to manage. For example, if someone notices they are feeling angry, they can do something to manage this emotion before it 'takes over'. Model this, using the example of Tao on slide 16.

In pairs, give pupils **Resource 3: Managing emotions** and, using either Marek or Kayla's scenario from Resource 1, ask them to complete the boxes.

Circulate during the activity and use **Resource 3b: Managing emotions – teacher copy** to support feedback and discussion once pupils have completed the sheet.



Support: Guide pupils to answer the questions using the additional prompts on **Resource 3a: Helping Kayla**.



Challenge: Ask pupils to pick three emotions from the first activity and discuss how they might feel similar or different in the body. Then, ask them to discuss whether this affects how they manage the emotions.

Reflection and endpoint assessment

Reflection and endpoint assessment (Slides 18–19, 5 mins)

Ask pupils to silently reflect on any emotions they have felt during the day so far, and whether they were pleasant or unpleasant or made them feel energised or not. Pupils could also reflect on how the emotions felt in the body, and how they might manage less pleasant emotions in the future. As this is a personal reflection, pupils should not be asked to share their responses with the class.

Remind pupils of the learning outcomes and ask them to revisit the baseline activity. They should make any changes to their original answers, or add in any new learning from the lesson, in a different colour pen, considering:

- how pleasant or energised Andie's emotions might make her feel
- how Andie can manage her emotions and how her brain helps her do this
- how noticing emotions can help Andie

This will help to evidence pupil progress and highlight any gaps that may need addressing in future lessons.

Check the question box and respond to any remaining questions.

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 20, 3 mins)

Remind pupils that if emotions are difficult (for example, if they're really strong or really unpleasant), it's important they speak to a trusted adult at home or at school. Pupils can also contact Childline: www.childline.org.uk/kids.

Closing the lesson (Slide 21)

Finally, using slide 21, reinforce the key learning by summing up for the class what they have achieved in today's lesson.

Activities to extend and embed the learning

Guess the emotions cards (Slide 22)

Ask pupils to create a set of emotion cards. Each card should have an emotion on one side and include the following information on the other side:

- What someone who is feeling the emotion might look like
- What the emotion might feel like in the body
- Whether the emotion is pleasant/unpleasant and makes the person feel energised or not.

Pupils then play a game in pairs or groups with the cards, whereby one person reads the description of the emotion, and their partner/group must try and guess the emotion being described.

Pausing, noticing and naming emotions (Slide 23)

Ask pupils to pause and notice their emotions three times a day for a week and keep a record. This could also be completed as a class by asking pupils to pause and notice their emotions at various points during the school day. For example, at the beginning of the day, after lunchtime and at the end of the day. Pupils could also use the Emotions Chart to support their reflection. As this is a personal reflection, they should not be asked to share their response.