

# Exploring Our Emotions Through Gratitude & Journaling

A 45-minute session for primary school students aged 12-18 years.



## Objectives

- Learning about emotions and gratitude.
- Increasing the knowledge of different strategies to manage uncomfortable emotions.
- Practicing early intervention strategies that support expressing emotions in helpful ways.

## Resources

- **Activity 1 Teachers Resource:** Emotions Flash Cards
- **Activity 4 Worksheet:** Feelings Wheel
- Pens
- Journal or exercise book.
- Scissors and glue.
- Post-It Notes

Session Times	Session Activity	Resources
15 minutes	<p><b>Activity 1 - Feelings Check In</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Have at least 1 set of 'Emotions Flash cards' printed and cut out.</p> <p><b>Step 2a:</b> Ask students in pairs or small groups to match the emotion with the photo that they think best matches. Some are open to interpretation and can fit into more than one, for example 'creative' images could also match with 'content', or the 'disappointed' images could be seen by some as expressing 'loneliness'. Young people can share and discuss why they matched them the way they did.</p> <p><b>Step 2b (Optional):</b> Young people may discuss different events that could lead to different emotions. This conversation would be kept general and in dot-point form.</p>	<p><b>Activity 1 Teachers Resource:</b></p> <p>Emotions Flash Cards</p>
5 minutes	<p><b>Activity 2 - Managing Emotions</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Explain that as we have seen, emotions are varied and people can express them differently. Experiencing all the emotions, even bad ones, are normal and part of being human. Even the 'bad' emotions or feelings will pass and can even help us to appreciate when we are feeling good, energetic, or appreciative of something.</p>	<p><b>Activity 2 Teachers Resource:</b> Feelings Wheel</p>

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When feelings become a lot to handle and someone is unsure how to cope with the feelings, they may feel like being hurtful to someone else or themselves. This is when another trusted adult needs to be approached for help and support.

Usually, as we get older we get better at recognising when we are not feeling good emotions (i.e. stomach ache, or heart feels like it's racing) and we also learn which things work best for us to help us feel better (i.e. going for a walk, listening to music or talking to a friend).

5 minutes

### Activity 3 - Gratitude

Post-It Notes

**Step 1:** Ask the students if they know what gratitude is and let them try to describe it.

**Step 2:** Explain that gratitude is...

Recognising what you are grateful for can remind us of all the little yet wonderful things that are happening in our lives. Being grateful is about giving thanks and appreciating something. Showing gratitude to others is also important and can make another person feel important and appreciated. Practicing being grateful for 3 things each day is scientifically shown to help people make more friends, have better health and mental strengths aka resilience (which we will talk about more) and more lasting happiness than from other things.

**Step 3:** Give 3-4 minutes for young people to write down 3 things they are grateful for today. They can be shared on a wall and reflect on how it can lift our emotions. You may need to give examples to start.

20 minutes

### Activity 4 - Journaling

Pens

**Step 1:** Describe the benefits of journaling and challenge them to spend time reflecting on their feelings and using their journals outside of the group. This may also be in the form of writing, drawings or even poetry. Journaling can also be great for people who tend to think a lot before going to sleep or those who struggle with sleep, as it can be used to get your feelings down on paper and to clear your mind.

Discuss the benefits of journaling:

- There is no judgement - no one should read it unless you want them to.
- Writing can help you unmuddle what you are thinking or feeling.
- It can make you feel better to get things out of your head and onto paper.
- It's a great way to make note and remember positive events, big or small.

**Step 2:** Allow young people to decorate their journals how they like.

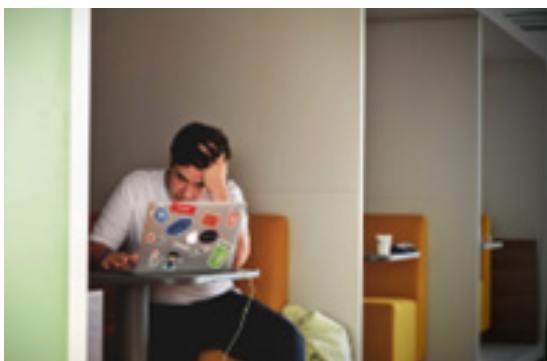
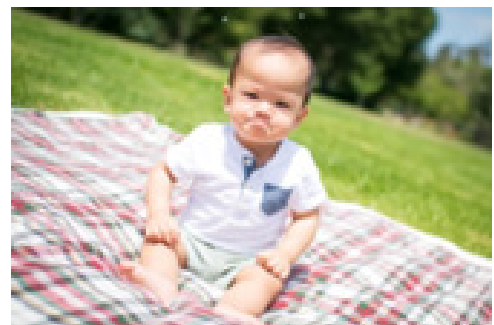
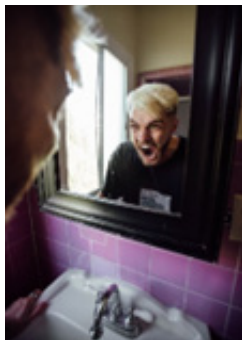
**Step 3:** If students need prompting you can include the following questions:

- What are your favourite things to do with friends?
- Name a time when you felt sad or angry and something improved your mood- what was it?
- Write about a time you couldn't stop laughing.
- Write about a time you did something you were afraid to try.
- What are 3 nice things that happened today?
- Who are you grateful for?

Scissors

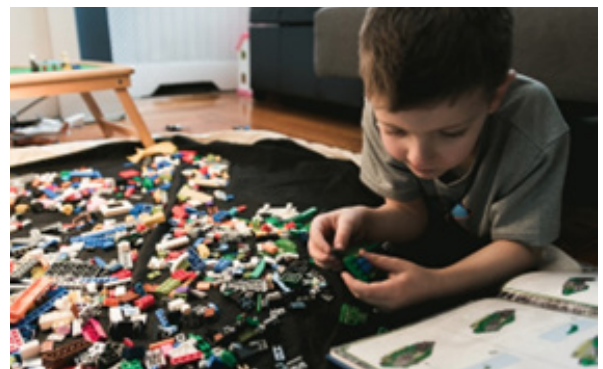
Glue

1x Journal or exercise book per person.











Scared: Fearful or frightened of danger (real or imagined).

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Angry: Strong feelings of annoyance at someone or something (Often related to something that seems unfair).

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Disappointed: Negative emotion when you feel let down or an expectation was not met.

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Nervous: Worried or a little bit frightened.

Nervous: Worried or a little bit frightened.



Frustrated: Strong annoyance. Often related to feeling a lack of control.

Frustrated: Strong annoyance. Often related to feeling a lack of control.

Excited: Feeling happy and with lots of energy.

Excited: Feeling happy and with lots of energy.

Confused: Unable to understand or think clearly about something.

Confused: Unable to understand or think clearly about something.

Sad: Feeling unhappy, low or a sense of loss.

Sad: Feeling unhappy, low or a sense of loss.



Content: Feeling happy, at ease,  
satisfied with what you have.

Content: Feeling happy, at ease,  
satisfied with what you have.

Confident: Trust in yourself and your  
abilities.

Confident: Trust in yourself and your  
abilities.

Excluded: Feeling left out or ignored.

Excluded: Feeling left out or ignored.

Creative: To use ideas and/or items  
to make something.

Creative: To use ideas and/or items  
to make something.

Optimistic: Feeling hopeful or positive.

Optimistic: Feeling hopeful or positive.

Lonely: Feeling apart or not connected to others.

Lonely: Feeling apart or not connected to others.

Overwhelmed: Feeling like there is too much to think about or to do.

Overwhelmed: Feeling like there is too much to think about or to do.

Energetic: Being active, moving or interacting with others.

Energetic: Being active, moving or interacting with others.

# The Feelings Wheel



Developed by Dr. Gloria Wilcox

RewardCharts4Kids.com