

Sample Chapter:
EMPATHY

From the soon to be released book

How to Stop
Bullying & Social Aggression
Activities and Lesson Plans
to Teach
Respect, Empathy and Friendship

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Publisher: Corwin Press

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Increasing Empathy



An increase in empathy will develop over time through role-modeling from many adults and consistent reminders.

Empathy is viewed as a cornerstone of emotional intelligence (Dr. Daniel Goleman). If our children are to communicate effectively and develop satisfying interpersonal relationships, it is essential that we help them develop empathy.

Empathy is the ability to feel what others are feeling. Empathy is the identification with, and the understanding of, another's situation, emotions and motives. In other words, it is the ability to see the world through that person's eyes. Empathy influences us to treat others with respect and kindness; in turn it reduces violence and cruelty to others.

Most people are born with the ability to be empathetic. However, certain life experience can diminish that ability. Children who have experienced domestic violence or some other form of abuse are especially at-risk for diminished empathy.

Research supports the provision of empathy training to increase empathetic feelings and increase prosocial behavior. In addition, **research shows an impressive correlation between students' training and skills in empathetic understanding and their academic performance.**

Program evaluation results have shown that schools where students are involved in programs designed to increase empathy and create "caring communities" have higher scores than comparison schools on measures of higher-order reading comprehension (Kohn 1991).

What makes you feel... ?

Emotions tend to arise spontaneously, rather than through conscious thought or effort and are often accompanied by physiological changes. Emotions are neither good nor bad; they are just a natural part of life. **How one expresses emotions, however, will be judged by society as good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable.**

The purpose of this lesson is for students to recognize and verbalize their emotions. To increase empathy for others we first focus on having the students gain greater self awareness and learn to value their own emotions.



Materials:

Paper

Pen(cil)

Black/White board



Time: 20-30 minutes

Goal:

Students will recognize and accept their emotions.

Activity

1

Begin this activity by handing out paper. Let the students know that you will not be collecting their papers, and their answers will remain private. Ask them to write their answers to the following questions on their paper.

On the board write, “What makes you feel ...” (see Figure 1)

1. **happy?** (An example of an answer would be, "When I go out to eat.")

After the students have written their answers, **then write**:

2. **mad?**

Again, after the students have written their answers, **write**:

3. **sad?**

Repeat this process for the next three:

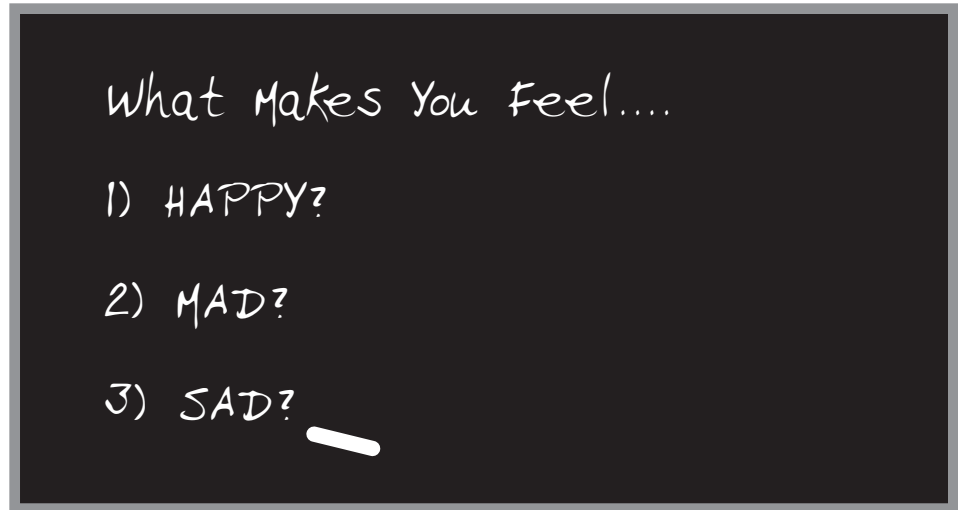
4. **nervous?**

5. **excited?**

6. **frustrated?**



Figure 1



These words are examples of emotion words. You don't have to start out with this amount or these specific emotions. Consider how many emotion questions are appropriate for the time you have allotted and the developmental age of your students.



If the students are too young to write, or writing will take too long, this activity can be done sitting in a circle with the students answering the questions, one by one. Always tell the students they can say, "Pass," if they choose not to answer the question. This shows respect for their feelings of shyness and/or privacy.



After the students have finished writing, ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class. As the students answer, delve deeper into their responses. For example, if a student says, "I get happy when I see my dog," or, "I feel mad when I am not allowed to go to my friend's house," follow up by asking the student to verbalize why they feel this way. This is an opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of their own feelings and the feelings of others while improving their verbal and listening skills.



Asking "why" is key to this activity. We are asking the students to have a deeper awareness of their own emotions.



Final Thoughts

The purpose of this lesson has been to increase the students' recognition and appropriate verbal expression of their emotions.

You can support this lesson with ongoing conversations about their emotions by using emotion words to fulfill spelling and vocabulary requirements. In addition to asking students how to spell or define a particular emotion word, take a few moments to ask them what makes them experience that emotion. This strategy reinforces the value placed on emotional awareness.

Lesson Extension

Some emotion words might include the following:

Use emotion words as vocabulary and/or spelling words for the week. This strategy reinforces the value placed on emotional awareness.

1. acquiescent
2. adequate
3. affectionate
4. afraid
5. aggressive
6. alarmed
7. alone
8. amazed
9. ambitious
10. amused
11. angry
12. anguish
13. animosity
14. annoyed
15. anxious
16. apathetic
17. appreciated
18. apprehensive
19. ardent
20. ashamed
21. assured
22. awestruck
23. awkward
24. bad
25. belonging
26. benevolent
27. bewildered
28. bitter
29. blissful
30. bored
31. brave
33. caring
34. cautious
35. cheerful
36. close
37. competent
38. competitive
39. concerned
40. confident
41. confused
42. contemptuous
43. contented
44. controlling
45. cool
46. cordial
47. cowardly
48. cranky
49. cross
50. curious
51. defeated
52. defensive
53. dejected
54. delighted
55. delirious
56. dependence
57. depressed
58. desired
59. devoted

60. disappointed
61. discontented
62. discouraged
63. disgusted
64. disheartened
65. dismayed
66. dispassionate
67. disrespectful
68. distant
69. distress
70. distrustful
71. docile
72. down
73. eager
74. earnest
75. ecstasy
76. edgy
77. elated
78. embarrassed
79. empty
80. enjoyment
81. enthusiastic
82. envious
83. excited
84. exhausted
85. expectant
86. fair
87. faithful
88. fascinated
89. fear
90. fearful
91. flowing
92. forceful
93. forgiving
94. fractious
95. frantic
96. free
97. friendly
98. frivolous
99. frustrated
100. furious
101. gentle
102. good
103. grateful
104. gratitude
105. greedy
106. grief
107. guilty
108. happy
109. hassled
110. hate
111. hatred
112. helpless
113. hope
114. hopeful
115. hopeless
116. hostile
117. humble
118. humiliation
119. humorous
120. hurt
121. hysterical
122. icky
123. impassive
124. impatient
125. impulsive
126. inadequate
127. independent
128. indifferent
129. inferior
130. insecure
131. inspired
132. interested
133. intolerant
134. involved
135. irritated
136. jealous
137. joy
138. joyful
139. kind
140. lazy
141. left out
142. lighthearted
143. lonely
144. lost
145. loved
146. loving
147. mad
148. masterful
149. meek
150. melancholic
151. miserable
152. mistrusting
153. needed
154. neglected
155. nervous
156. neutral
157. non-involved
158. nostalgic
159. obedient
160. optimistic
161. passionate
162. passive
163. pathetic
164. patient

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 164. patient | 193. respectful | 222. stressed |
| 165. peaceful | 194. responsible | 223. stubborn |
| 166. pessimistic | 195. responsive | 224. sulky |
| 167. philosophical | 196. restful | 225. superior |
| 168. pitiful | 197. restrained | 226. surprised |
| 169. pleasant | 198. revolted | 227. suspicious |
| 170. pleased | 199. ridiculous | 228. sympathetic |
| 171. poetical | 200. righteous | 229. temper |
| 172. pompous | 201. romantic | 230. tense |
| 173. possessive | 202. sad | 231. terrified |
| 174. powerful | 203. satisfied | 232. threatened |
| 175. protective | 204. secure | 233. thrilled |
| 176. proud | 205. self-blaming | 234. tired |
| 177. provocative | 206. self-conscious | 235. tolerant |
| 178. put down | 207. sensitive | 236. tranquil |
| 179. rage | 208. serene | 237. triumphant |
| 180. rapturous | 209. shame | 238. troubled |
| 181. rebellious | 210. shamed | 239. trusting |
| 182. reckless | 211. shocked | 240. uncaring |
| 183. regretful | 212. shy | 241. uncertain |
| 184. rejected | 213. silly | 242. uneasy |
| 185. relaxed | 214. sincere | 243. unfair |
| 186. relieved | 215. small | 244. unkind |
| 187. reluctant | 216. smug | 245. unneeded |
| 188. remorse | 217. sorry for self | 246. unpleasant |
| 189. remorseful | 218. spiteful | 247. unsettled |
| 190. repulsed | 219. startled | |
| 191. resentful | 220. stimulated | |
| 192. resilient | 221. stoical | |

Find the Emotion Words

N X M X D N J J M D C Q D D T
 O G L I U E A O I E A A E O E
 I S K V S N L S Y I M T S I R
 T U K V G E T T O W A V U X R
 A R T E D R R K R R Z D F D O
 I P R E E A T A T A S F N K R
 L R E S I S N S B D T O O G N
 I I S J U T U G X L U S C Z S
 M S N G R R I S U T E O C W D
 U E S A F D E V E I L E R L E
 H I E R A G E M A H S T X P V
 D F K J R I R D B C T H E I O
 J B D B P H R V J W M N J N L
 R L M O N Z E X C I T E D A B
 E N J O Y M E N T E Z G W I S

ANGER

DISGUST

EXCITED

HUMILIATION

MISERABLE

RELIEVED

SURPRISE

ANGUISH

DISTRESS

FEAR

JOY

PROUD

SHAME

TERROR

CONFUSED

ENJOYMENT

FRUSTRATED

LOVED

RAGE

STARTLED

Create Your Own Find-A-Word and Other Puzzles

Use the internet to create your own word search, cryptograms or crossword puzzles. Go to: www.puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com

Lesson Extension

It is a sign of **respect** to raise your hand and wait to be called upon before answering a question.

Word Scramble

On the board, write the scrambled letters of one emotion word; for instance, dsa (sad), or hyapp (happy), or sdacre (scared). On a piece of paper, have the students (or a group of 2 or 3 students) unscramble the words. Tell the students that you will only be using emotion words previously discussed. Ask the students to wait to be called upon before stating the answer.

Variation

Write each letter of an emotion word on a separate index card, as in Figure 1 below. This will make one "set" of cards. Do this for several words so that each set of index cards contains the letters of only one word. Hand each set to a student or a group of two or three students. Have them spread out the letters of each set and determine what the word is supposed to be.

Figure 1 shows an example of a word scramble:



Take time to discuss the definitions of the words and what can happen to make a person feel that emotion.

This is a fun game and the students will enjoy unscrambling the words. You might find they are better at this game than expected, especially with longer words (frustrated, confident, etc).

Emotional Statues

The Emotional Statues activity helps students recognize how their emotional states affect their bodies. It also helps them to recognize the physical clues their bodies are giving them to indicate their overall emotional state or how they are feeling about a specific issue. For example, when "Jamal" gets nervous he scrunches his face and his stomach gets queasy. At that point he begins to bite his nails until they bleed. By learning the clues that precede his nail biting, he can avoid nail biting. This will be discussed further in the lessons entitled Feeling Clouds and Charades.

Emotional Statues also increases empathy by teaching students to recognize others' body language and what emotions another person might be experiencing. By recognizing physical clues that another might be upset, nervous, angry, etc., a student will be better able to determine how to treat that person respectfully. For example, if "Juan" recognizes the clues that "Patrice" may be getting angry when he is teasing her, Juan will know that he should stop teasing and perhaps even apologize.

Goal:

The students will recognize the physical signs of their own emotional states and the emotional states of others.



Materials:

(None)



Time: 15 minutes

Activity

1

Explain to the students that they are going to walk around the room. They are to walk around respectfully, not bumping into people or objects and they always need to be visible to you. Indicate any areas that are off limit.





Ask the students to look around and notice what other people look like when they are expressing emotions.

2

As the students are walking around the room, you are going to call out an emotion word. When they hear the word, they will turn towards the middle of the room and strike a pose that portrays that emotion. Remind the students that statues are still and make no noise (although you should expect some laughter).

Use yourself as an example: say, "For instance, if I were to call out 'happy,' I would freeze like this." Then strike a pose that shows a big, but not overly exaggerated, expression of yourself in a happy pose. In my example, my shoulders are back, chest is out, arms out bent at elbows, with palms open and outstretched. I am smiling, you can see the whites of my eyes, I am showing my teeth, there are lines by my eyes, and my cheeks are pronounced.

As I strike this pose, I name the details of the physical features I just described. Do the same when you strike *your* pose. **Explain that the purpose of looking at others is to note that sometimes different people show their emotions differently.** For example, you don't see the whites of some people's eyes, or their arms are closer to their body.

3

After explaining the activity, **have the students get up and walk around.** To begin, call out the more obvious words such as happy, sad, mad, proud, and nervous. Later, you can use the emotion words on page ____ to add to the list.

As you call out each word, and the students freeze, state that you see various differences in the students. For instance, if the word was "sad," you might say, "I see hands by the eyes because of crying, I see pouting lips, I see shoulders rounded over, and I see frowns."



Before you do this activity, consider common physical traits of various emotions such as nervous, sad, mad, proud, etc. It will then be easier to describe these physical traits during the activity.

4

Next, have the students face the center of the room. Let them know that you will be telling a story using emotion words. After each emotion word is stated, the students will become emotional statues.

1. – You wake up and know it's your birthday. You are **happy**.
2. – You go to school and nobody on the bus says "Happy Birthday." You are **sad**.
3. – Then you go into class and nobody says anything about your birthday. You are **mad**.
4. – You are called to the principal's office. You are **nervous**.
5. – You walk in, see your parents through the window and you wonder if you are in trouble. You are **scared**.
6. – You walk in, see a cake with candles lit up and "Happy Birthday" written on it. You are **surprised**.
7. – And then you are **relieved**.
8. – And **happy**.

5

The next step uses sentences without the emotion words. For instance, "You are called to the principal's office." The purpose is to show, and explain, that **sometimes people react differently to similar situations**. Tell the students that they should freeze at the end of each sentence in a manner that shows *their* feeling about the situation you just described.

One might think that everyone would express some variation of nervousness or fear about being called to the principal's office. However, some people like to visit the principal and might show physical expressions of being happy.

When the students freeze, describe the different emotional states that you see; some people are smiling and looking happy, some people have rounded shoulders and look sad, some people look nervous and are biting their fingernails.

As a lesson extension, have the students make up their own story using different emotion words.

Sample Scenarios:

- You wake up and it is raining.
- Today is the day of the big play and you have the lead role.
- School is cut short because of snow, right before you were going to take a test.
- You hear there is a substitute teacher for art class.
- The principal is taking a year off.
- Your parents are adopting a new baby.
- Your brother or sister is leaving the house to go to college.
- Your mother is offered a job in Hawaii.
- There is a rumor that the President of the United States will visit your school.
- The weather forecast calls for snow.

Final Thoughts

Recognizing physical clues of emotions, in one's self or others, is difficult for some children. While it might be easy for one child to recognize what emotion another is experiencing, it may not be obvious to another child. On-going refreshers of the emotional statues activity are helpful and fun ways to gain this important skill.

After the initial explanation of emotional statues, this activity can be played in short spurts with previously used as well as new emotion words (also used for spelling and vocabulary). Emotional statues can be done during morning meetings, indoor recess and short breaks during long lessons when students need to be physical for a few moments.