# My Emotions – Year 4

Understanding emotions, our own and those of other people, is central to emotional wellbeing and mental health. Emotions affect the way we feel, think and behave. We need to recognise emotions in ourselves and others and manage them, particularly when they are strong, if we are to build satisfying relationships. Emotional wellbeing contributes to the development of a positive self-image and good self-esteem, both of which have an impact on how confidently we approach things and how prepared we are to cope with varied situations and undertake challenges. There is a growing body of research into emotional literacy and resilience and their links to learning and development, and their important contribution to mental health.

This film focuses on developing pupils’ understanding and recognition of their own emotions and those of others, including how we might express those feelings. It pays particular attention to identifying uncomfortable emotions such as worry and sadness including developing a language to describe them, and considering what prompts these feelings in themselves and others. The pupils explore how these emotions affect how we think, feel and behave, including how their bodies might respond to strong emotions, and the impact their resulting behaviour may have on those around them. They explore ways to deal with sadness and how they might manage very strong emotions and cope with feeling overwhelmed including strategies to calm and relax themselves or help themselves feel better. This film demonstrates PSHE teaching and learning methodologies including Circle Time, Draw and Write and the use of fiction and puppets.

## Sensitive issues

When teaching about emotions it is important to be aware of and sensitive to what is happening in pupils’ lives. Some pupils find it very difficult to talk about their feelings and will need careful encouragement to do so.

Creating a safe trusting environment is a key factor in this support and it is, therefore, important that there are Ground Rules in place so that children feel ‘safe’ in these activities.

Time to think about what they could say, and opportunities to practise in small groups, may be a necessary start for some children. For children to practise what they are learning in ‘real life’ situations, they will need to ‘meet’ the strategies they are taught in many situations and be given support to use them over time. They will benefit from many opportunities in wide-ranging situations to practise, apply and reinforce their learning.

It is important to be sensitive to pupils’ and families’ different approaches to discussing their emotions. Cultural differences may also have an impact, for example, in some cultures it is not appropriate to discuss being proud or to look people directly in the eye. It is also important to be aware of those pupils with low self-esteem who will find it difficult to identify their strengths and skills or talk about themselves. Some pupils may display angry or aggressive behaviour and may find it difficult to deal with work which focuses directly on this. However, it is important that they do explore anger and assertiveness, but small group, or even individual, work may need to be their starting point.

Please note that if concerns or disclosures are raised, it is important to follow your school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures.

## Wider Context

Teaching about emotions should form part of a whole school approach to promoting emotional wellbeing and mental health. It should be supported by the school’s pastoral support systems and policies such as Relationships and Behaviour Management, Anti-bullying, Inclusion and PSHE. Emotional literacy will be most successfully taught within the context of a comprehensive PSHE programme of work including complementary learning around ‘Healthy Relationships’, ‘Anti Bullying’ and ‘Personal Safety’.

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| Activity | Content | Methodologies |
| **Introduction** | Welcome  Aims of session  Ground Rules. | Circle Time. |
| **Activity 1** | Exploring how we show emotions through our facial and body language. | Circle Time round – pass the emotion e.g. smile, frown.  Musical feelings. |
| **Activity 2** | Identifying emotions and exploring what they might feel like e.g. sad. | Circle of feelings. |
| **Activity 3** | Exploring reasons for sadness and what might cause someone to appear unhappy. | Circle Time through fiction – ‘The Cloud’ by Hannah Cumming.\*  Paired work. |
| **Activity 4** | Identifying ideas and helpful behaviours to support someone who is feeling sad. | Circle Time through fiction – ‘The Cloud’ by Hannah Cumming.\*  Circle discussion. |
| **Activity 5** | Exploring how we feel when we have felt sad for a long time including how it can feel ‘stuck’.  Exploring things they could do to help themselves when they are feeling sad. | Circle Time through fiction – ‘The Cloud’ by Hannah Cumming.\*  Draw and Write. |
| **Activity 6** | Exploring ways of supporting and helping another person when they feel sad or ‘stuck’. | Puppets. |

\* ‘The Cloud’ © 2010 Hannah Cumming

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