

Feelings, body signals and positive coping strategies

Curriculum links

Staying safe: Protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies to keep safe.

For example:

- identifying the body's reaction to a range of safe and unsafe situations
- identifying and comparing different emotional responses
- identifying a personal safety network

WA Curriculum

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

- Positive ways to react to their own emotions in different situations such as:
 - walking away
 - seeking help
 - remaining calm

International technical guidance of sexuality education

Key concept

Materials

- Book or YouTube reading of [I have feelings!](#) by Jana Novotny Hunter
- Large sheets of butchers paper to draw body outline - can be life size (for children to draw around their own bodies or scaled down and pre-drawn).
- Markers, crayons, pencils or paints.
- Optional: scrap craft materials.

Learning activities

Book: I have feelings!

10 min

Whole Class

1. Read [I have feelings!](#) book.
2. Read the book a second time stopping at each emotion.
3. Ask students to show the way the possum is feeling with the body language, facial expressions and words.
4. Draw attention to the different body signals the students are demonstrating for each emotion.

E.g. Happy - large open eyes, arms in the air, smile, warm feeling in belly, etc.

Body outlines

30 min

Independent or Small Group

5. Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4 using a [grouping strategy](#).
6. Give each group some large butchers paper to trace around one person's body.
7. Allocate each group with a different emotion - sad, angry, scared, happy, excited, frustrated, loved, calm, silly, etc.
8. Ask students to draw body signals on the body outline to represent their allocated emotion. Optional: use scrap craft materials to represent body signals.

E.g. Scared - squiggly drawing in tummy, clenched teeth, knees shaking, frozen still, eyes wide, mouth open

Teaching tip: It is important to draw attention to the fact that different people can have different body reactions to the same emotion. People can also have different body signals for the same emotion in different scenarios. The flight/fright/fawn/freeze response is an example of this.

9. Display the body outlines and share each groups response.

Positive coping strategies

10 mins

Whole Class

10. Use the body outlines as visual prompts to discuss the following questions:

If we are feeling silly, is it OK to run around the classroom and bump into each other?

(No, it could hurt someone or break something)

What are some positive things we can do to get the sillies out?

(Wiggly our bodies to some music, run around the playground, laugh with our friends)

If we are feeling angry, what things might someone do that are unhelpful or unsafe?

(Hit, scream, break something, etc)

What are some positive things we can do to help if we are angry?

(Hit a pillow, scream into a pillow, run around outside, talk to a friend or trusted adult, do something we enjoy, listen to calming music, eat some food or have a drink, etc)

11. Continue for other emotions that students have created body signals for.

3-2-1 Reflection

10 min

Whole Class

12. Ask:

Which of these body signals might someone notice if they were feeling unsafe?

(sweaty palms, butterflies in tummy, feel unwell, heart racing, frozen, etc)

13. Say:

"These body signals are very important. They are warning us that we might not be safe. If we listen to our body signals carefully, they can help keep us out of danger."

What can we do if we start to feel any of these warning signs?

(talk to a trusted adult, don't ignore the signals, tell a friend, move away, call 000 if it is an emergency, etc)

14. Give a first introduction to the 'helping hand' network by asking students to list their 5 trusted adults (one for each finger) to themselves.