Emotional Literacy

Overview

This tool was developed by the National Council for Special Education, Speech and Language Therapists. It has been adapted for use by teachers working with pupils with additional needs as part of Summer Provision. This resource supports the key principles of ‘promoting connectedness’ and ‘promoting self-efficacy’.

This document provides general advice for teachers to support pupils’ understanding and use of emotional vocabulary. Included are tips and visuals which can be used when interacting with a child or young person to support their emotional literacy. The emotions you choose to work on will depend on the developmental stage and language skills of the pupil(s) you are working with.

Some children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, or other complex needs, can find it difficult to notice, understand and put words on how they are feeling. Some pupils may automatically be able to recognise their emotions and adapt to new or different situations more easily. Others may need a bit more help.

Tips for Supporting Emotional Literacy

- **Label how other people might be feeling** - support a pupil to recognise how other people might be feeling through the use of open ended questions e.g. in a story, stop and ask the pupil ‘how do you think that made him feel?’ If they are not sure, label the emotion for them and support them to understand why someone might be feeling that way.

Adapted from: www.parentkind.org.uk
• **Label their own emotions with them** – this supports children to feel that they are being understood e.g. ‘you look scared’. This also demonstrate an openness and acceptance of discussing feelings as part of your learning environment.

• **Link emotional labels to pictures** – Use a variety of imagery where possible (emoji’s, cartoon characters, real photos, a mirror) to support a pupils full understanding of how an emotion might present. E.g. Anger is associated with the colour red, frowning, clenched teeth and fists, loud voice etc.

• **Link emotions to situations** – This can be helpful to support pupils to understand emotional responses. Use play, reading or discussions as opportunities to link emotions to situations. For example, if you are talking about time where your favourite sweets were sold out you might say you were sad versus a time when your sister broke your favourite toy which made you very upset.

• **Model emotional vocabulary**– expand a pupil’s emotional vocabulary by using different words to describe emotions e.g. instead of always saying ‘I feel happy’, say ‘I feel glad/cheerful/joyful’ etc. *Included in this handout are various different pictures that can support this.*

• **Support pupils if they struggle to control their emotions** – if a pupil becomes distressed, have an area in your setting where they can go to calm down or use an activity that you know they find calming to support them. You can label and model the language around this feeling:

> “I can see you are getting cross/frustrated/upset, let’s do our heavy marching to help us to calm down”.

*For more information on some helpful regulation strategies for children, please refer to the Occupational Therapy ‘Let’s Get Regulated’ on the NCSE website. It can be accessed here:*  

Adapted from: www.parentkind.org.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANGER</th>
<th>LONELINESS</th>
<th>SUPRISE/SHOCKED</th>
<th>JOY</th>
<th>BRAVE</th>
<th>ANXIOUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAGE</td>
<td>HOPELESS</td>
<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>EXCITED</td>
<td>DISGUST</td>
<td>SAD</td>
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<tr>
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<td>HATE</td>
<td>CALM</td>
<td>LOVE</td>
<td>BORED</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CURIOUS</td>
<td>CONFIDENT</td>
<td>FEAR</td>
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<td>SYMPATHY</td>
<td>SHYNESS</td>
<td>HAPPY</td>
<td>GUILT</td>
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