

# Emotional Literacy

A resource for tutors/teachers to support the Home or School based Summer Programme Overview.



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

This document provides general suggestions for tutors and teachers to support students’ understanding and use of emotional vocabulary. It includes 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 student(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 students 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 student to recognise how other people might be feeling through the use of open ended questions e.g. in a story, stop and ask the student ‘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.

- **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 students 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 students 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 student’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 students if they struggle to control their emotions** – if a student 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:*

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Lets-Get-Regulated-Information-for-Parents.pdf>

<b>ANGER</b>	<b>LONELINESS</b>	<b>SUPRISE/ SHOCKED</b>	<b>JOY</b>	<b>BRAVE</b>	<b>ANXIOUS</b>
<b>RAGE</b>	<b>HOPELESS</b>	<b>PRIDE</b>	<b>EXCITED</b>	<b>DISGUST</b>	<b>SAD</b>
<b>FRUSTRATION</b>	<b>HATE</b>	<b>CALM</b>	<b>LOVE</b>	<b>BORED</b>	<b>PANIC</b>
<b>EMBARRASSED</b>	<b>SUSPICIOUS</b>	<b>CURIOUS</b>	<b>CONFIDENT</b>	<b>FEAR</b>	<b>DISAPPOINTED</b>
<b>IRRITABLE/ ANNOYED</b>	<b>SYMPATHY</b>	<b>SHYNESS</b>	<b>HAPPY</b>	<b>GUILT</b>	<b>DEPRESSED</b>
<b>ENVY/JEALOUS</b>	<b>HURT</b>	<b>INTERESTED</b>	<b>OPTIMISTIC</b>	<b>CONFUSED</b>	<b>WORRY</b>