

Emotions tracker

ABOUT EMOTIONS

Emotions give us important information about the world around us. Some people experience the world through just a few emotions, and some have many more. Typically, the more information we can access about our situation, the better equipped we are to deal with it.

Emotions that feel good (called positive emotions) usually tell us that things are going well. Emotions that are unpleasant (called negative emotions) usually give us information about what is going wrong in our life or the environment we are in.

POSITIVE EMOTIONS (the ones that feel good)	NEGATIVE EMOTIONS (the ones that don't always feel good)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markers of thriving wellbeing • Indicate that things are going well • Suggest no immediate threat • Open our mind to new ideas and options <p>Increase dopamine, associated with interest and learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More readily triggered • Focus our attention / narrow our thinking • Help to keep us safe by directing our attention to threat (both real or perceived) • Cause reactionary behaviour (fight or flight response) • Reduce performance and linked with poorer wellbeing when experienced over extended periods

Here are some examples to get you thinking:

EMOTION	PUPOSE OR MESSAGE
Fear / worry	Helps us to be aware of what might be dangerous or challenging. Gives us time to plan how to respond. Helps us anticipate real or <i>potential</i> threats/danger.
Anger	Tells us about what is important to us. Gives us energy and motivation to act.
Joy	Tells us that things are going well. Encourages us to keep doing the same thing.
Disgust	Helps us to avoid things that can make us sick.
Sadness	Allows us to take time out and rest. Shows others we need support.



SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

It was the philosopher *Aristotle* who first said “knowing oneself is the beginning of all wisdom”. This activity is designed to encourage exactly that – knowing yourself. Reflecting on emotions encourages emotional self-awareness which is an important first step in being able to navigate a range of everyday occurrences. For example, knowing how you feel is important first step in being able to communicate with others, manage stress, or foster wellbeing. Think about it, it’s very difficult to show others or manage your emotions if you aren’t clear on what they are in the first place!

There are three key goals when completing this activity:

1. To extend emotional vocabulary by thinking about a wide range of emotions;
2. To reflect on which emotions are being experienced often;
3. To make plans to try to experience positive emotions more often and avoid experiencing negative or unhelpful emotions too often.

Step 1: Invite your child to complete the “emotions tracker”. This can be completed as a once off, every day for a week, or once a week as an ongoing check-in with emotions. Aim to complete this at least twice if you can.

Step 2: Next, invite your child to complete the “reflection” portion of the activity. As with the emotions tracker, this can be done multiple times depending on how often you plan to use the emotions tracker.

If your child doesn’t enjoy worksheets, just ask them to write their answers down however they prefer. As with many of the Aristotle EI activities, this is suitable for adolescents as well as adults. Feel free to try the activity yourself! You might even like to discuss what you learnt with your son/daughter and encourage them to share with you too.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS LOTS OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS THEY AREN'T SURE HOW TO DEAL WITH?

- Reassure them that it’s natural to respond this way given the current challenges we all face.
- Encourage them to keep talking with you about how they’re feeling. Sometimes, strong emotions can be alleviated just by letting them out and talking.
- Don’t feel like you need to solve anything right away. Just listen at first.
- If your child would like assistance, help them find solutions to the cause of their feelings (e.g. If it’s loneliness, help them make connections with friends or family. If it’s sadness, find time for activities that bring joy. If it’s anxiety, help them to see the issue from a different perspective).
- Seek additional help if you think you need it.

If you feel your son needs further help and wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son’s homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim

amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz. The school counsellor, Jenelle Hooson, is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).



Here are some support options specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25:

- [Need to Talk?](#) Free call or text 1737 any time to speak to a trained counsellor, for any reason.
- [Youthline](#): 0800 376 633 (24/7), or free text 234 (8am-12am), or email talk@youthline.co.nz
- [What's Up](#): online chat (7pm-10pm) or 0800 WHATSUP / 0800 9428 787 children's helpline (12pm-11pm weekdays, 3pm-11pm weekends)
- [Kidsline](#) (ages 5-18): 0800 543 754 (24/7 but between 4pm and 9pm calls are answered by a Kidsline Buddy, specially-trained year 12 and 13 students)

Further resources to help parents support their children during this time:

<https://www.allright.org.nz/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>

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