

EMOTIONS MATTER: LESSONS ON BUILDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Instructions for Group Activity (teachers, support people, etc.)

The *Learning Feelings* (Part 1) activity can be a stand-alone lesson. You should not move on to *Assigning Feelings to Situations* (Part 2) or *Identifying Solutions* (Part 3) without first going through the previous activities.

If you will focus on a specific feeling for the *Assigning Feelings to Situations* activity (Part 2), we suggest starting with the feeling of being content. Feeling content, satisfied, or safe means that our needs are met, as compared to happy – which is how we feel when an extraordinary event that brings joy happens. Once children recognize feeling content, they can identify negative feelings and how to get back to feeling content.

Materials:

Scissors, tape or glue sticks, crayons/colored pencils/markers, printed copies of *I Feel When...* worksheet and *Feelings List, PATH to Calm* poster

Part 1: Learning Feelings

It is really hard to identify our true feelings. Generally, when you ask someone how they feel, they will use vague terms like, “sad,” “mad,” or “happy.” But underneath these feelings – there are many other feelings words that might better describe how you feel. The goal of this activity is to build an emotional vocabulary.

1. Start the discussion by explaining that everyone has feelings. Ask the children to define what feelings/emotions are.
2. Distribute the *Feelings List*. Have the children cut out the words from the list.
3. Pick 5-10 feelings from the list (or use the large words at the top of the *Feelings List*) and have the children define each feeling or describe what each feeling is like.
4. If you have time, an alternate activity is to put the children into small groups and have them categorize each feeling from the list into buckets/categories of feelings that might go together. For instance, you may ask them to sort words from the list into “good” and “bad” feelings. There are no right or wrong answers.

Part 2: Assigning Feelings to Situations

The goal of this activity is to teach children to slow down and assess their situation and feelings instead of having an automatic reaction. By being more in tune to their feelings, children are able to come up with solutions and reduce their distress levels.

1. Choose a major feeling and its associated worksheet (Content, Sad, Angry, Scared/Worried). NOTE: You may use the sheet with the blank space if you would like to discuss a different emotion.
2. Open the discussion of this feeling by reviewing what this word means (Content, Sad, Angry, Scared/Worried, or your chosen emotion).
3. Talk about how there are more feelings than just happy, sad, angry, or scared/worried. Underneath the big feeling – there are many other feelings that come from different places, like past experiences or our thoughts. Learning to identify different feelings helps us to understand where feelings come from and helps us to find solutions that will make us feel better.
4. Next, share a scenario with the class that relates to the major feeling you have chosen to focus upon. DO NOT use a scenario that identifies or singles out any specific child or children. If it is an emotionally secure environment among the children, open up the discussion to talk about different scenarios the group might share – like having nightmares, fighting with friends or siblings, seeing others get into fights, etc.

5. Distribute the relevant the *I Feel (Content, Sad, Angry, Scared/Worried, _____) When...* worksheet. Prompt the children to draw a picture of the scenario that makes them feel content, sad, angry, scared/worried, or your chosen emotion.*

6. Have children assign feelings that they cut out from the *Feelings List* (Part 1) to the picture they drew by either cutting and pasting/taping, or writing them into the spaces in the "My Feelings" column. 7. If you have chosen content as your feeling of focus, you are now done with the lesson.

Modification for One-on-One Activity: If you have the opportunity to do this activity with one child and you know that child is going through a particularly tough situation, a modification is to have the child draw out a picture of that particularly tough situation rather than a generic situation. The intimacy of a one-on-one situation allows for more privacy and individualized support.

*In the event that a child draws a picture that indicates they are being abused or living in an unsafe environment, please take appropriate action with school administrators and public service agencies as indicated in your school's policies and procedures.

Part 3: Identifying Solutions

Sometimes when we have overwhelming feelings, we forget that we can gain power over them by doing something to feel better. The goal of this activity is to increase student insight into their ability to help themselves. Identifying and following up with solutions takes practice.

1. Ask children to reflect on their picture (Part 2) and the feelings they assigned to it.

2. Introduce the concept of being able to take action to manage feelings. Talk about how solutions can come from other people – like maybe a friend or parent who steps in to help. Other solutions come from changing our thoughts or actions. Use the *PATH to Calm* poster to review the steps children can take when their feelings are "taking over."

3. Ask students to think about what would have made them feel better in the scenario that they drew in Part 2. Get them to brainstorm specific things they can do to help themselves, like ask for a hug, go to a safe quiet space, read a book, or walk away. Write these ideas for the entire class to see. If they are having trouble coming up with ideas, use the list provided on the *Helpful vs Harmful: Ways to Manage Emotions* handout included in the Back to School toolkit to give them suggestions.

4. Have students write down a list of those things they could have done to feel better in the "Things I Can Do to Feel Better" column of the worksheet that they drew on.

5. Ask students if they would like to share what they came up with (if the time and place make sense).

Part 4: Practice!

The more children practice the above activities the better they are able to become emotionally intelligent and resilient adults. Happy practicing.

1. Repeat the above activity with other feelings (Content, Sad, Angry, Scared/Worried, or an emotion of your choice) to build practice.

2. When situations that come up during school that are upsetting, ask children to pause and think about the things they're feeling. Then practice identifying solutions. This may be particularly helpful after tragic or traumatic events that dominate the media.

I FEEL SAD WHEN...

My feelings:

Things I can do to feel better:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

I FEEL ANGRY WHEN...

My feelings:

Things I can do to feel better:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

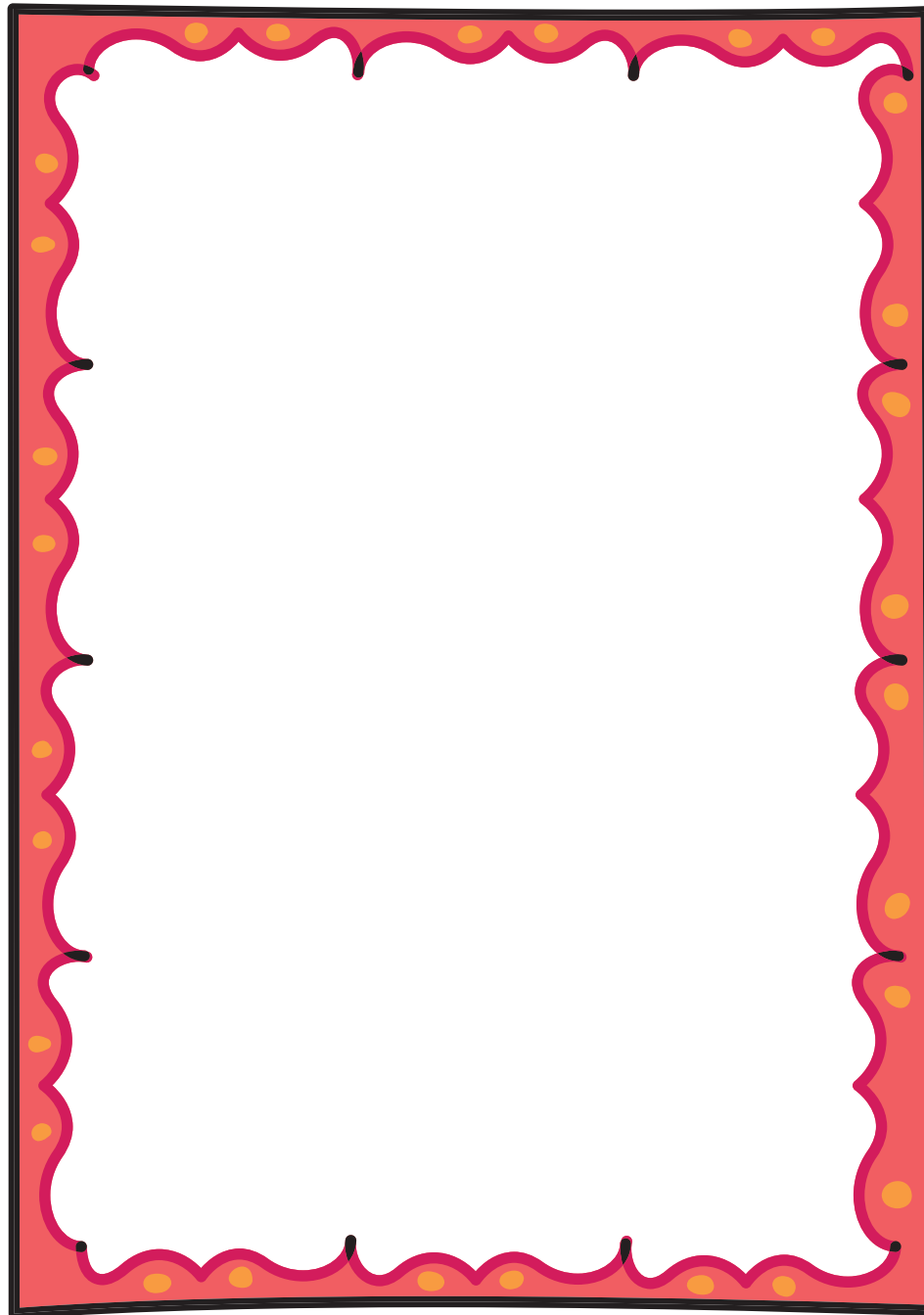
6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



My feelings:

I FEEL SCARED OR
WORRIED WHEN...



Things I can do to
feel better:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

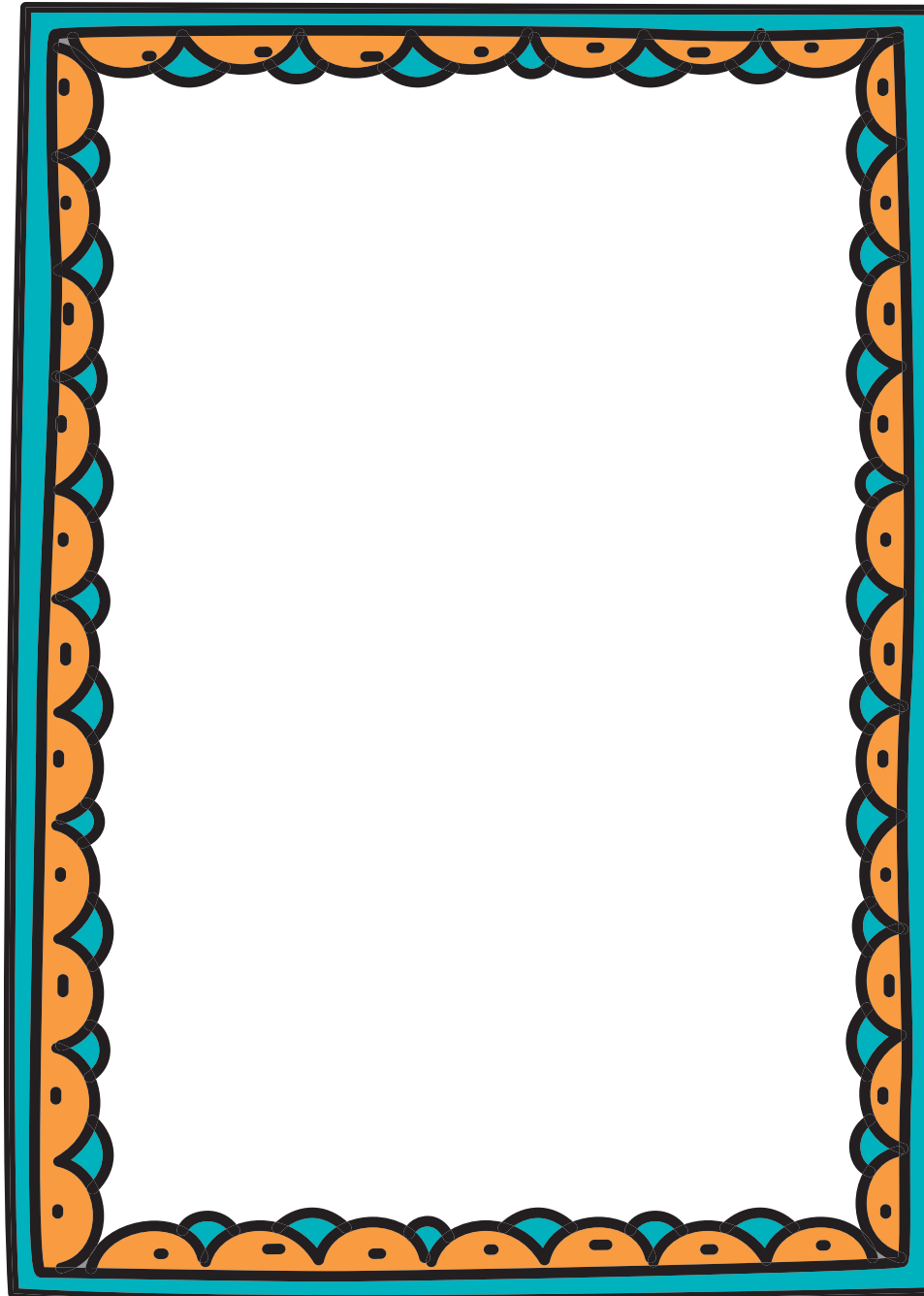
8.

9.

10.

My feelings:

I FEEL CONTENT WHEN...



Things I can do to feel better:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

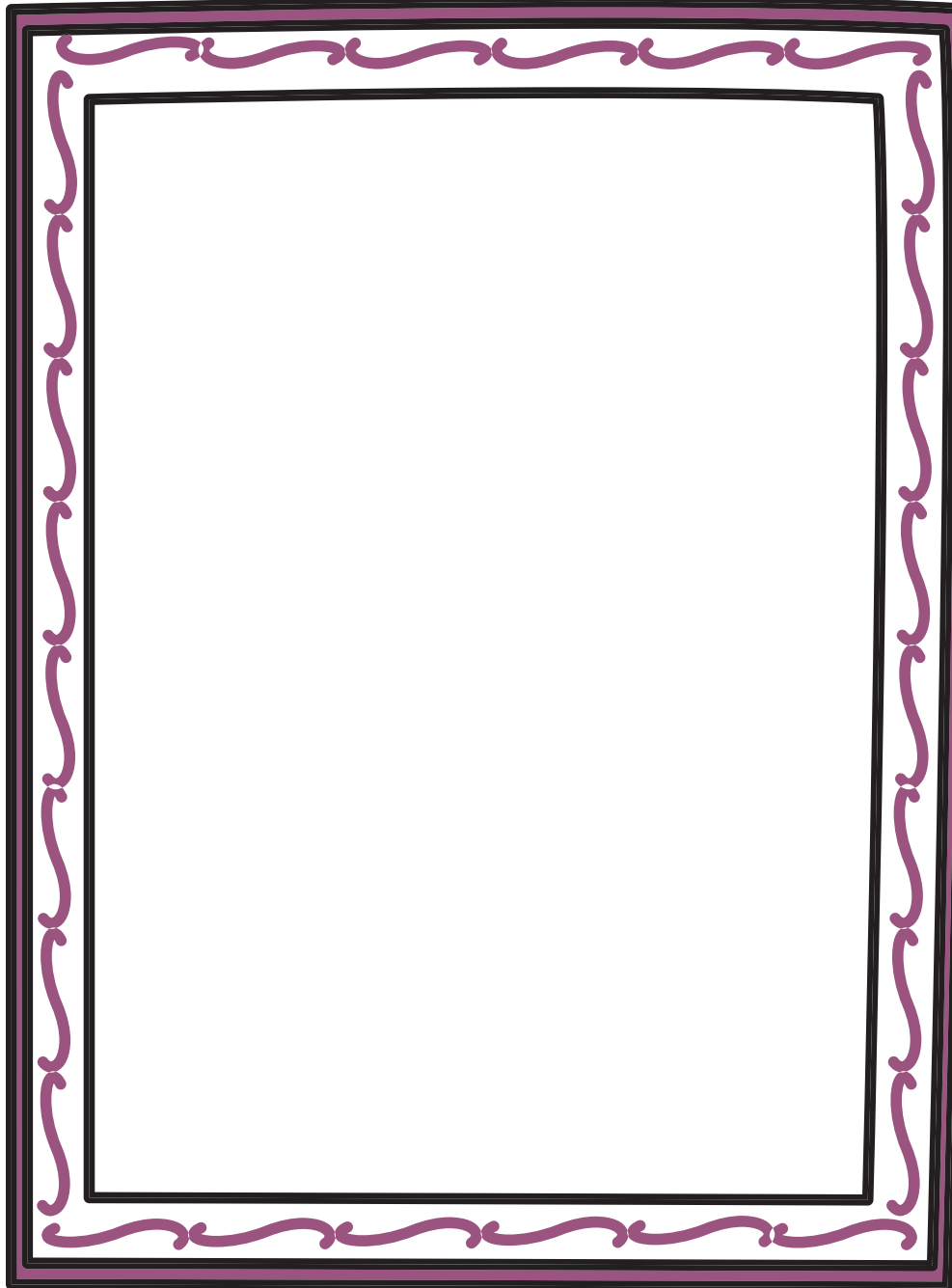
7.

8.

9.

10.

My feelings: I FEEL _____ WHEN... Things I can do to feel better:



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

FEELINGS LIST

	SAD	WORRIED	ANGRY	HAPPY	CONTENT
	Gloomy	Afraid	Dislike	Joyful	Safe
	Empty	Uncomfortable	Crabby	Excited	Calm
	Hurt	Concerned	Bothered	Surprised	Hopeful
	Sorry	Nervous	Jealous	Loved	Thankful
	Lonely	Scared	Embarrassed	Amazed	Strong
	Disappointed	Threatened	Furious	Playful	Relaxed
	Insecure	Dreading	Worked-Up	Silly	Confident
	Let Down	Self-Conscious	Shocked	Terrific	Included
	Unloved	Edgy	Pain	Glad	Trusting
	Helpless	Stressed	Like I Could Explode	Pleased	Comfortable
CONFUSED	Out-Of-Place				
Misunderstood					
Lost					
Stuck					
Excluded					
Awkward					
Hungry					
Frustrated					
Irritated					
Exhausted					
OTHER					
Indecisive					
Proud					
Sassy					
Shy					
Weird					
Bored					
Curious					
Thrilled					
Sleepy					
Alert					