

Teacher's slide

Key lesson information



Location	Classroom with no student access to internet
Recommended time	60 minutes
Objectives	By the end of the session, students should be able to: • Identify a range of emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary • Explain how different emotions make us think and feel • Recognise the link between language and mental health stigma
Main student tasks	1. Read four examples of mental health stigma and write one reason for each on why they are unhelpful 2. Match a range of positive and negative emotions to photos 3. Write how each emotion can affect our mind and body 4. Identify what emotion is taking place in a range of scenarios and decide how the person could communicate their feelings 5. Compare different sources of support for mental health issues
Keywords	Emotions, mental health, mental illness, mental wellbeing, health.

Teacher preparation



Provide	Lined paper, exercise books or laptops to work on.
Familiarise yourself	Unifrog's Know-how library tool (Student side>Know-how library). Unifrog's Read, Watch, Listen tool (Student side>Read, Watch, Listen). Students can use these for independent research after the lesson.

Know-how library



Know-how library	Open the 'student side' of your Unifrog account and click this link: 'Breaking the stigma around men and mental health' Students can also search for these guides using the Know-how library tool.
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Tracking progress on Unifrog



Add as an Interaction	Click Advanced view>Sort by school leaving year>[filter for specific students]>+interaction.
Track on Charts	Click Usage charts>Customise and filter> 'Know-how library: Favouriting over time' OR 'Read, Watch, Listen tool: Favouriting over time'.
Tracking individual students	Advanced view>Sort by>Library profiles in Favourites

Benchmarks and standards



PSHE Association	Mental health and emotional wellbeing
CASEL 5	Self-awareness
ISCA	SE:A1:2, SE:A1:3, SE:A1:4, SE:A1:5, SE:A1:6, SE:A2:1, SE:A1:3
Skills	Balance, Caring, Communication, Resilience.

Teacher's slide – teaching mental health and wellbeing

This lesson covers issues which may be difficult for some students. This slide gives a brief guide for teachers for handling these topics sensitively.

According to NHS data, 12.8% of children aged five to nineteen had a child mental health disorder in 2017. **Always work on the assumption that at least one student in the class has been affected by the issues discussed (either personally or through experience with a family member or friend).**

Talk to your school or college's mental health, wellbeing, pastoral, or safeguarding lead before delivering the lesson. This will flag to them that there may be students in your class seeking further help on this issue after your lesson. They should also provide you with support and guidance for covering sensitive issues.

In the class, put the emphasis always on seeking help and support. The information and activities in this lesson are intended to be practical; they are aimed at giving students the language, information, and confidence to seek support, as needed, for themselves or others.

Distinguish between 'mental illness' and 'mental health.' There is a tendency to use these two terms interchangeably. It's important not to mix them up, however, as it contributes to the false idea that mental health is a negative thing that we only need to think about if there is a problem. This lesson focuses more on putting in place healthy behaviours and strategies to maintain mental health rather than explicitly mentioning specific mental illnesses (although, of course, mention of these may naturally occur in class discussions).

Be aware of mental health stigma and challenge stigmatising language if it comes up in class. Words like 'nutter', 'mental' or 'crazy' can be used in a derogatory way against people with mental illnesses. Or certain commonly used phrases like 'That's so OCD!' or 'He looks so anorexic!' can trivialise serious illnesses. All of this contributes to people feeling like they can't come forward to get help and support. If language like this comes up in your lessons, ask students to consider the impact of their words. Try to do so in a non-judgmental way (we all have internalised mental health stigma that we need to combat) and focus on explaining how these words could be harmful.

Use ground rules for classroom discussions. This will help keep the discussion respectful and prevent it from contributing to further stigmatisation of mental health issues. An example of a ground rule might be to remain honest and open but not directly discuss your own personal experiences or the private lives of others (i.e. leave out names and identifying descriptions from examples).

Encourage students to contribute but allow them the right to pass on a question or activity. Students might feel uncomfortable discussing certain issues so never force anyone to share or contribute.

Teacher's slide – teaching mental health and wellbeing

Students may have additional questions after completing this lesson. This page is intended to give you answers to questions that aren't covered in the main lesson.

What causes mental illness? There isn't one cause of mental illness – more likely it's a combination of factors which can be biological, psychological, or environmental. See the notes on this slide for more on this.

Can you prevent mental health problems? We may all suffer from mental health challenges to some extent in our lives. This is never something we can fully guarantee against, but developing our wellbeing, and resilience, and seeking help early can help prevent challenges from becoming serious.

How do I know if I have a mental illness? Generally, if your thoughts, feelings or behaviours impact your ability to function in day-to-day life, you should seek help from a school counsellor/nurse, GP, or other medical professional. But equally, some people suffer from mental illness and remain high functioning – so this is not the only sign to look for. If you have any concerns about your mental wellbeing, it's always best to seek help.

Are there cures for mental health problems? It is possible to improve your mental health with small actions like exercising more, getting regular sleep, taking breaks from work etc. If you have a mental illness, treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy or certain medications prescribed by a medical professional can help you to get better. **It's crucial to emphasise that mental illness is something that people can recover from.** At the same time, we should avoid thinking of mental health as something that can be permanently 'sorted' or 'fixed.' Everyone's mental health exists on a spectrum – some periods of our life it will be good, others it may become worse. It's something that we all have to look after consistently throughout our lives.

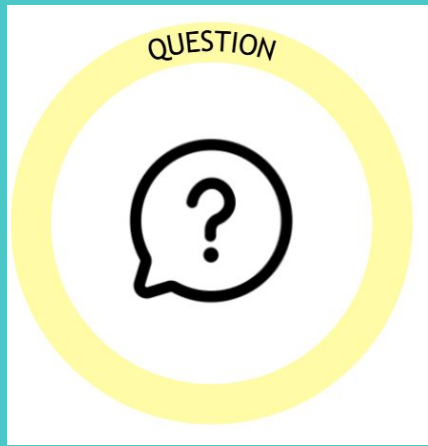
Does mental illness run in families? Some research suggests that the genes which make us susceptible to certain mental illnesses can run in families. However, the way these genes interact with our environment is unique for every person. So being related to someone who is mentally ill does not mean that you will also definitely develop a mental illness. More simply, the reasons people may become mentally ill are very complicated. It is almost never down to a single cause such as biology or environment, but a combination of factors.

What do I do if the support doesn't help? Different treatments work for different people so it can sometimes take trying a range of approaches to find the support that works for you. For example, some people find exercise highly beneficial to their mental health whilst others can actually find it triggering. At the end of this lesson there is a list of resources, so students have access to a wide range of mental health support.

What should I do if I'm worried about a friend or relative? If you're worried about the mental health of a friend or relative, you could gently direct them to professional support (such as the resources at the end of this lesson). You can also talk to a teacher, school counsellor/nurse, GP or support organisation for advice that's specific to your situation.

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Mental health: talking
about our emotions



What do we mean by the
word 'stigma'?

'Stigma' = negative or
unfair social attitudes
towards something

Mental health stigma (10 mins)

Read the four statements below. For each statement, write down one reason why each one might contribute to **mental health stigma**.

a) 'Why are you so sad? Some people have much harder problems!'

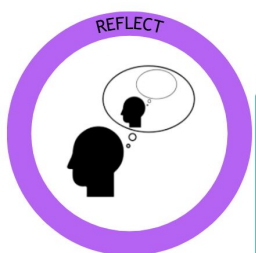
b) 'You'll feel better if you pull yourself together. Man up!'

c) 'I like keeping my room tidy. I'm just so OCD like that.'

d) 'You don't *look* depressed for someone who has depression.'



Mental health stigma - negative or unfair social attitudes attached to a person or group experiencing a mental health issue.



Mental health stigma

Mental health stigma is a negative or unfair social attitude attached to a person or group of people experiencing a type of mental health issue.

'Why are you so sad? Some people have much harder problems!'

'I like keeping my room tidy. I'm just so OCD like that.'

'You'll feel better if you pull yourself together. Man up!'

'You don't look depressed for someone who has depression.'



Reminding someone that other people 'have it worse' does not help solve their problems – it does the opposite by making them feel guilty!

Encourage students to share how they think this statement contributes to a negative attitude or stigma surrounding mental health issues before revealing the rest of the text.

What would be a more positive thing to say instead?

- , E.g. 'It's okay to feel sad. It doesn't mean you're unaware of other people's problems.' or 'You can tell me when you're feeling down. I won't judge you or make you feel guilty.'
- A significant barrier to people seeking help for mental health difficulties is the idea that they will be wasting a professional's time because their problems 'aren't that bad.'
- Emphasise to students that there is no 'minimum requirement' for seeking help – you won't be asked by a counsellor to prove that you are ill or in crisis.
- In fact, the **earlier** a student seeks help, the better. It means they will have a greater chance of stopping the issue from developing into something more serious.
- **They will never be told off for seeking help from a counsellor, medical professional, or support organisation. They are never wasting a counsellor's or teacher's time. They are not 'making a fuss over nothing'. They always deserve to be listened to – no matter how big or small the issue.**

Mental health stigma

Mental health stigma is a negative or unfair social attitude attached to a person or group of people experiencing a type of mental health issue.

'Why are you so sad? Some people have much harder problems!'

'I like keeping my room tidy. I'm just so OCD like that.'

'You'll feel better if you pull yourself together. Man up!'

'You don't look depressed for someone who has depression.'



OCD is a mental health condition where someone has repetitive thoughts and behaviours that they cannot control. **It is not just having a tidy room.** This kind of language **trivialises** a real and serious illness.

Encourage students to share how they think this statement contributes to a negative attitude or stigma surrounding mental health issues before revealing the rest of the text.

What would be a more positive thing to say instead?

- E.g. 'I like keeping my room tidy. I'm just so particular/fussy/organised like that!'

Key word: Take a moment to define the term 'trivialise.' To **trivialise** something is to make light of it or to treat it as unimportant.

- In this case, if we use OCD to describe ordinary, organised behaviour, we make it seem like it is just a fun quirk or personality trait – rather than a serious illness.
- This contributes to a wider belief in society that mental illnesses aren't real or as important as physical illnesses (the kind of belief which leads to mental health support services receiving less funding and some people feeling unable to seek help).
- But mental illnesses aren't things we can choose to turn off and on (like we can choose to have a tidy room). They require medical treatment – just like any other illness.

Mental health stigma

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'I like keeping my room tidy. I'm just so OCD like that.'

'You'll feel better if you pull yourself together. Man up!'

'You don't look depressed for someone who has depression.'



Phrases like 'man up' contribute to the **gender stereotype** that men should be tough and never show emotions. This is a **dangerous** stereotype. It stops men and boys from coming forward to get mental health support.

Encourage students to share how they think this statement contributes to a negative attitude or stigma surrounding mental health issues before revealing the rest of the text.

What would be a more positive thing to say instead?

- E.g. 'I'm really sorry you feel that way. How can I help?' or 'Thank you for being open about how you feel – I think that's a really brave thing to do.'
- A **gender stereotype** is the belief that someone will display specific characteristics based purely on gender.
- Gender stereotypes can be very damaging as they make people believe they must behave in a certain way. Otherwise, they will not be considered 'masculine' or 'feminine' enough.
- An example of a gender stereotype is the idea that men should act tough and never show emotion or vulnerability.
- This is damaging for many reasons. First, it stops men from feeling like they should come forward for vital mental health support, which can, in some cases, be life-saving. Secondly, it implies that speaking about our emotions is somehow 'weak' when it takes much bravery to be open and honest!
- Phrases like 'man up' are part of our everyday vocabulary. Whilst they seem pretty harmless, if something is said repeatedly, it eventually becomes our subconscious, and we start to believe that manliness is about 'toughening up.'

Mental health stigma

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'Why are you so sad? Some people have much harder problems!'

'I like keeping my room tidy. I'm just so OCD like that.'

'You'll feel better if you pull yourself together. Man up!'

'You don't look depressed for someone who has depression.'



It contributes to the **false** idea that there is a specific *type* of person who is mentally ill – and that we can spot those people by looking at them. There is no *one way* to look or behave if you have depression.

Encourage students to share how they think this statement contributes to a negative attitude or stigma surrounding mental health issues before revealing the rest of the text.

What would be a more positive thing to say instead?

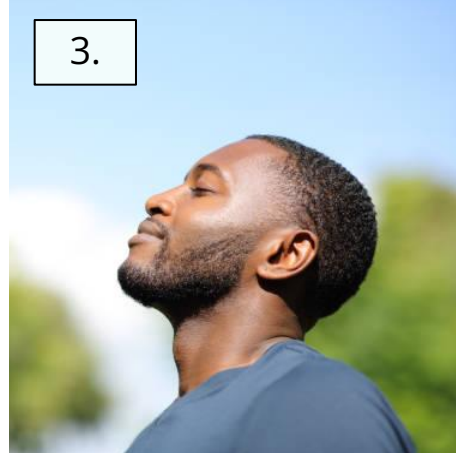
- E.g. 'I'm really sorry you feel that way. How can I help?' or 'It must have been tough to keep things going when you've been dealing with so much.'

This kind of reaction contributes to the **false** idea that there is a specific *type* of person who is mentally ill – and that we can spot those people by looking at them.

In reality, **mental illness can affect anyone** regardless of age, race, class, gender, or sexuality. There is no *one way* to look or behave when you are mentally ill.

Identify the emotion (20 mins)

Write what emotion is happening in each image.

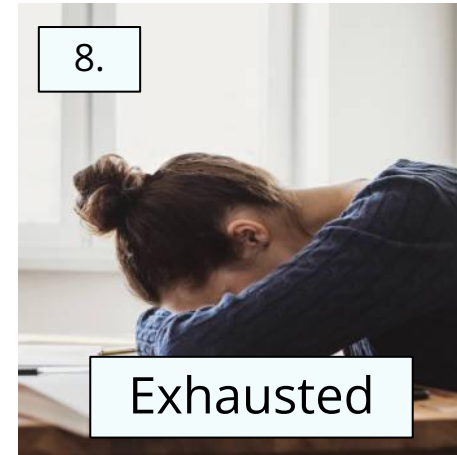
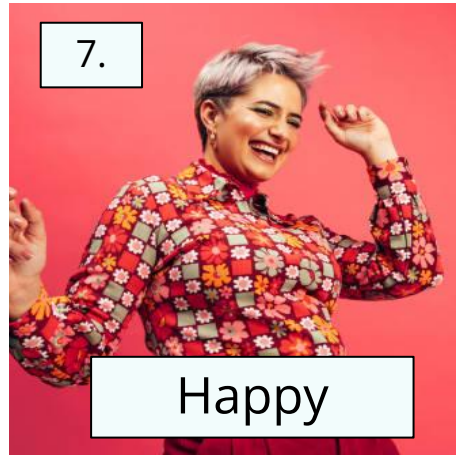
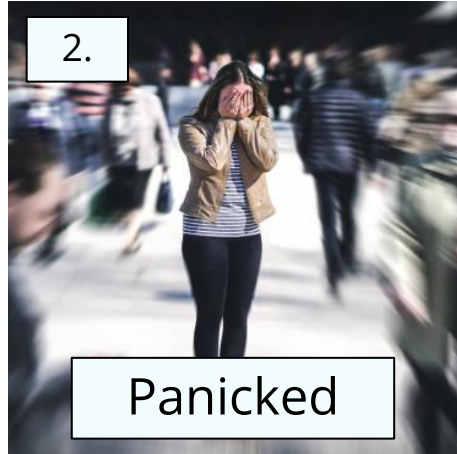


Take a moment here to reassure students that, although this is a lesson on talking about emotions, they will not be asked to share their personal experiences or feelings with the rest of the class. It is more about learning the *tools* for discussing emotions so that students can employ them later when they feel comfortable rather than discussing them in the lesson itself.

Emphasise to students the importance of knowing and then articulating how we feel. There can be situations where just recognising why we feel a certain way can help us feel better.

Identify the emotion

Write what emotion is happening in each image.



Which emotions are **easiest** and **hardest** to talk about?

Supporting exercise: what is stopping us from talking about emotions?

There are lots of reasons why someone could find it difficult to discuss their emotions:

- Coming from a culture or religion in which mental health is not talked about
- Not wanting to 'cause a fuss' or draw attention to the problem
- Not wanting to look 'weak' or 'unable to cope'
- Feeling pressure from gender stereotypes (the idea that men have to be strong and unemotional all the time)
- Not having the vocabulary to describe the emotions
- Not having someone trustworthy to speak to

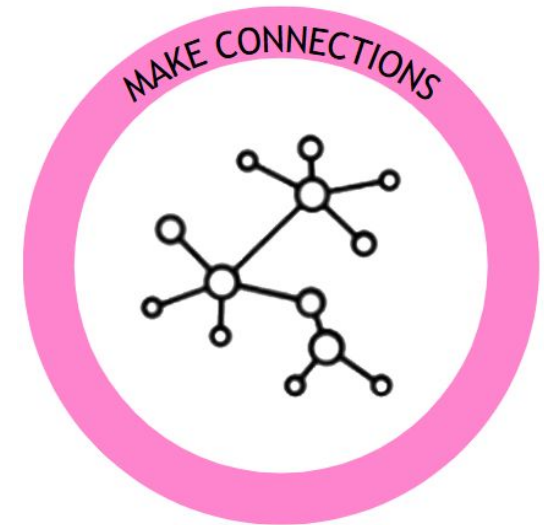
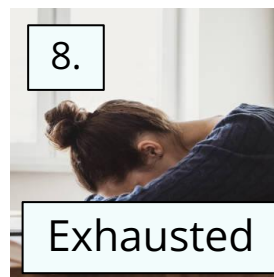
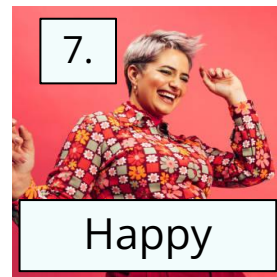
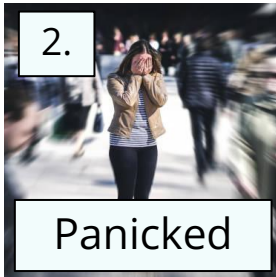
Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

1. **mind** when they experience this emotion



2. **body** when they experience this emotion



The purpose of this task is to help students practise describing how emotions feel in the mind and body.

It's important to explain to them that emotions are not just thoughts but are also felt in the body. This might be a new concept for some students.

Show them the example of anger (on the next slide) if they need extra support with the task.

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If you're short on time, split the class into eight groups or pairs, and assign them an emotion each.

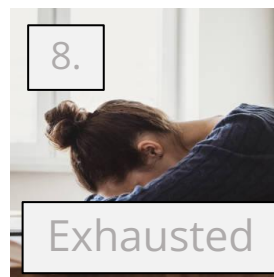
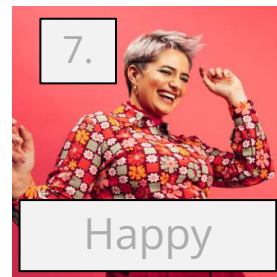
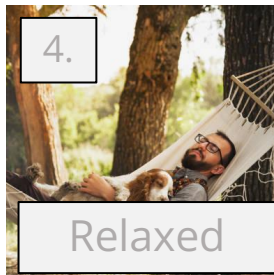
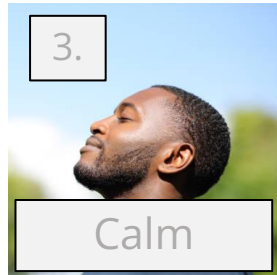
Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

1. **mind** when they experience this emotion



2. **body** when they experience this emotion



Here is an example for anger:



Racing thoughts, confusion, frustration, feeling "out of control" or powerless, shame.



Heart beats faster, face feels flushed, feeling shaky, sweaty or tense, teeth, fists or jaw clench.

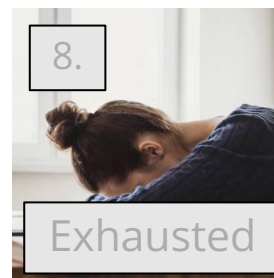
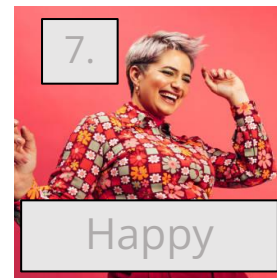
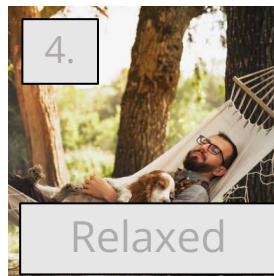
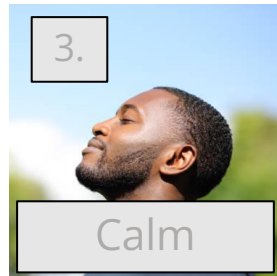
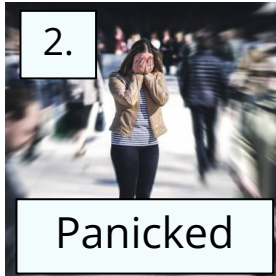
Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

1. **mind** when they experience this emotion



2. **body** when they experience this emotion



Panicked



Thinking of the worst-case scenarios, intense fear, racing thoughts.



Fast heartbeat, shallow breathing, nausea, tunnel vision, dizziness, shaking, sweating.

Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

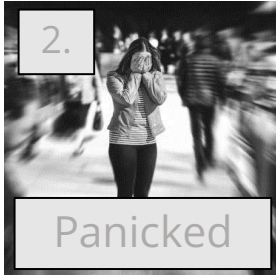
1. **mind** when they experience this emotion



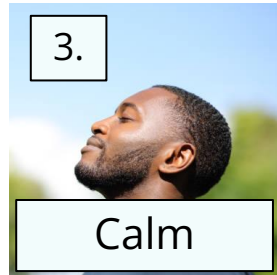
2. **body** when they experience this emotion



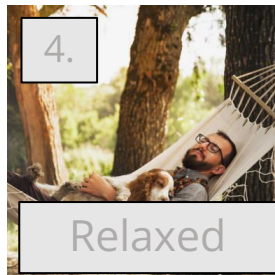
Anger



Panicked



Calm



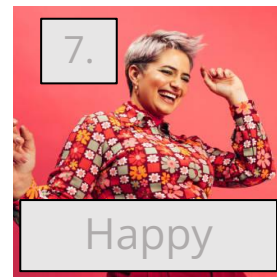
Relaxed



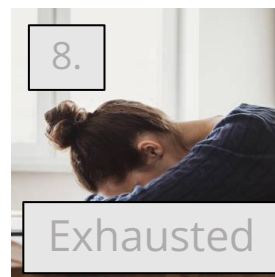
Worried



Confident



Happy



Exhausted



Calm



Focused and slow thoughts, focusing on one thing at a time, peaceful and at ease.



Steady breathing, normal heart rate, body relaxed, jaws and shoulders unclenched.

Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

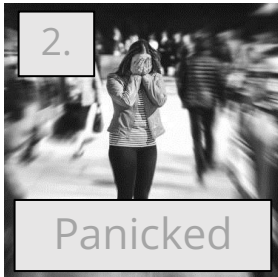
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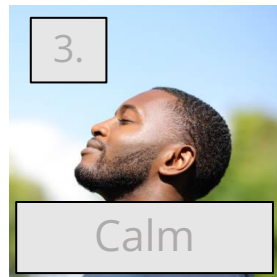
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Anger



Panicked



Calm



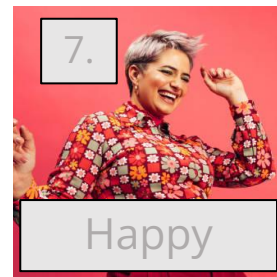
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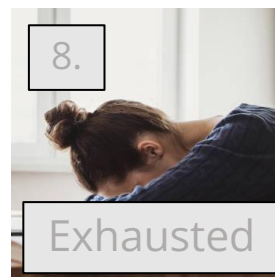
Worried



Confident



Happy



Exhausted



Relaxed



Clear mind, day dreaming, thinking about nice things or not thinking about anything at all.



Loose body and limbs, breathing and heart rate slow and steady, tiredness or sleepiness.

Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

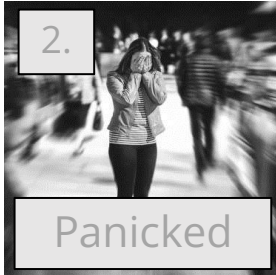
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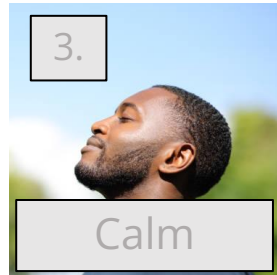
2. **body** when they experience this emotion



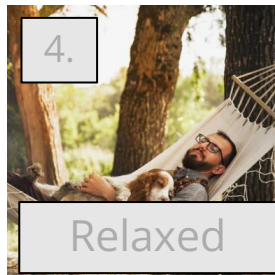
Anger



Panicked



Calm



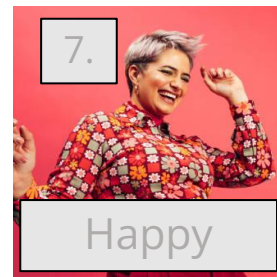
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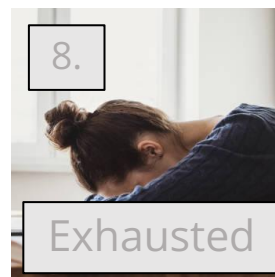
Worried



Confident



Happy



Exhausted



Worried



Repeatedly thinking about the same thing, unable to think clearly.



Trembling or shaking, nail or lip biting, nausea, fidgeting and unable to sit still.

Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

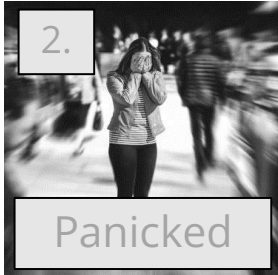
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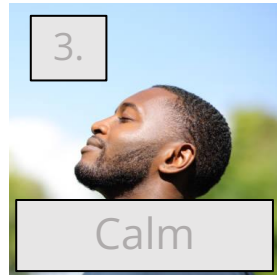
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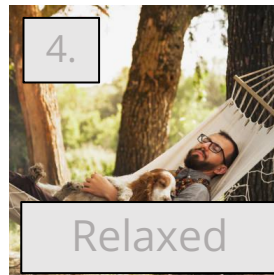
Anger



Panicked



Calm



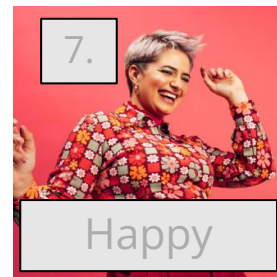
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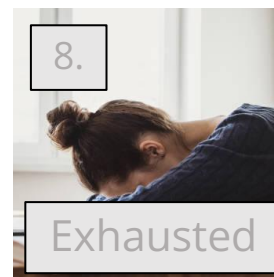
Worried



Confident



Happy



Exhausted



Confident



Clear, strong and positive thoughts, motivation and imagining things going well.



Strong, proud and powerful stance with your head held high and standing or sitting tall.

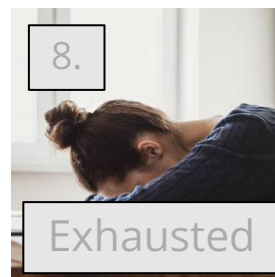
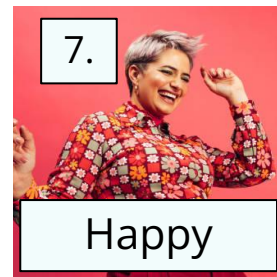
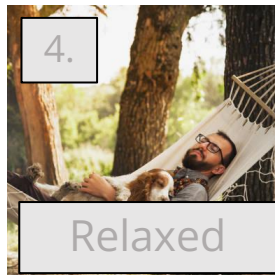
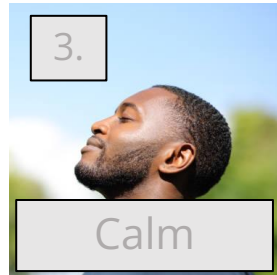
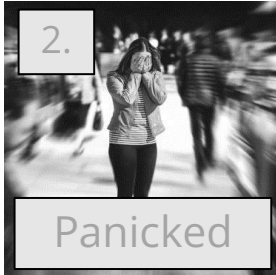
Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

1. **mind** when they experience this emotion



2. **body** when they experience this emotion



Happy



Energising and positive thoughts, and feelings of excitement about the present and future.



Energised body with a slight increase in heart rate or 'butterflies' in your tummy.

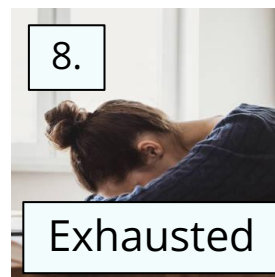
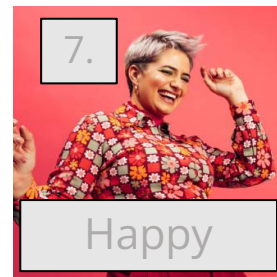
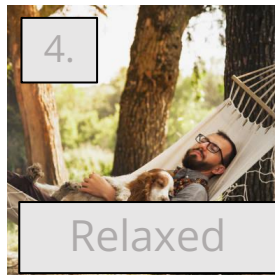
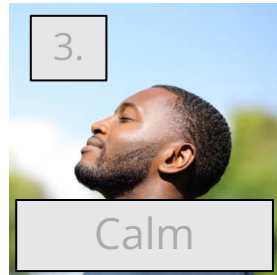
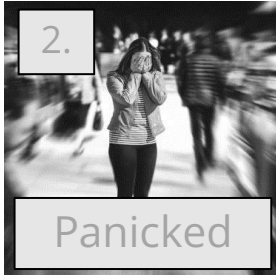
Identify the emotion

Pick one positive and one negative emotion. Then, **write** what happens in a person's:

1. **mind** when they experience this emotion



2. **body** when they experience this emotion



Exhausted



Racing thoughts but unable to focus, feeling stuck, trapped, unable to move forward.



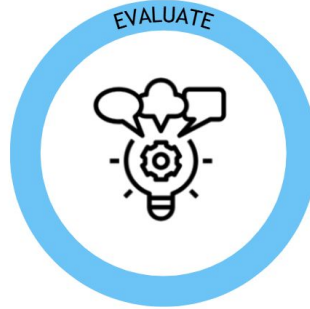
Low on energy, tired but unable to sleep, irritability and restlessness, internal buzzing.

Emotions and the Brain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNY0AAUtH3g>

The benefits of talking about our emotions (5 mins)

It's helpful to let others know how we're feeling, if we do it in the right way.

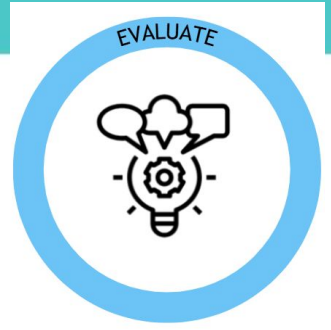


Read the scenario. List **two** reasons why response 2 is better than response 1.

Jamie's mum is always late to collect him from school. She forgot to sign his permission form for the school trip and now he can't go. When Jamie gets in the car his mum says, 'sorry I'm late! Traffic was awful again.'

1 Jamie ignores her. Jamie's mum asks, 'What's wrong with you?' and he shouts, 'Just shut up! You don't care about me.'

2 Jamie says, 'I'm angry, mum. And upset. When you're late to pick me up, or you don't fill in the school trip forms, I feel forgotten. Right now my heart is racing, and my whole body feels tense. I'm worried I might end up saying something I don't mean because I'm angry. Can we not talk while I try to calm down?'



The benefits of talking about our emotions

Response 2 is better than response 1 because:

1. Jamie ignoring his mum won't help her to **understand** his feelings.
2. Jamie's mum is likely to become **defensive** when she hears, "*You don't care about me!*" She will defend herself against the statement instead of understanding the situation.
3. The sentence, "*When you do X, it makes me feel Y*" is useful in resolving conflicts. Jamie isn't attacking his mum, he's just explaining the **effect** her actions have on him.
4. Jamie recognises it's best to discuss sensitive issues when you feel **calm**.

Scenarios: what would you do? (20 mins)



1. Abel has after-school activities most nights. He's captain of the football team, he's on the swim team and he's in the school play. It's 6:30 by the time he gets home. His parents ask, 'Have you done your homework?' He says no and heads up to his room. His mind is buzzing, thinking about everything he needs to do, but his body feels heavy; he can barely keep his eyes open.

Read the scenario and answer the questions:

1. What **emotions** is Abel experiencing?

Exhaustion

Worry

2. What could Abel **say** to his parents?

“ Hey mum and dad. I'm feeling exhausted from all my commitments and need a break. My body feels so heavy, but my mind is buzzing. I need to rest. ”

QUESTION



Scenarios: what would you do?



2. Hannah is moving house and moving to the other side of town. All her friends live in the same neighbourhood, and she worries she won't see them as often. Her throat and chest feel tight. She can feel her eyes welling up. She curls up in a ball on her bed. Her phone pings, and it's her friend, Jade, asking her what she's up to.

Read the scenario and answer the questions:

1. What **emotions** is Hannah experiencing?

Worry

Loneliness

Sadness

2. What could Hannah **say** to Jade?

“ Hey Jade. Thanks for messaging me. I'm feeling really sad about moving. I'm worried that I'll feel really lonely and you'll all forget about me once I've moved. ”

QUESTION



Scenarios: what would you do?



3. Marcus is at the shopping centre with his friends. The last time he was here, he wasn't very well and had to go home. He starts thinking about how unwell he felt the last time he was here and worried it might happen again. Suddenly, his heart starts racing, and his hands get clammy. His mouth gets dry, and he thinks he needs some water. His friends ask if he's ok.

Read the scenario and answer the questions:

1. What **emotions** is Marcus experiencing?

Panic

Fear

2. What could Marcus **say** to his friends?

“I'm suddenly feeling really panicked about being in the shopping centre after what happened last time. I think I need some water and fresh air. Can we go outside?”

QUESTION



Independent learning

It can be difficult to know which information you can trust online!

The **Know-how library** and the **Read, Watch, Listen tool** is a reliable source of information about this topic and lots of others.

Search by the keyword 'mental health' in the Know-how library or Read, Watch, Listen tool. Remember to favourite things you'd like to come back to later!

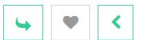


Breaking the stigma around men and mental health

Why it's a concern and what's being done about it

[Read the guide >](#)

Forest Bathing: How Microdosing on Nature can Help With Stress



What

📄 Article, 2017, USA, Non-fiction

👤 Rahawa Haile

This article explores the Japanese practice of 'forest bathing', which essentially involves prescribed time outdoors to help individuals relax and recoup. The activity might appeal to those who feel a particularly strong draw to the outdoors, or who seek the peace many associate with spending time in the wilderness.

[Read now](#) 



Looking for support (5 mins)

Below are examples of people or places you can go if you struggle with your emotions and feel you need support.



Family



Staff Member
eg FT, HoY,
Wellbeing



Charity or
phonline



Friends



Doctor

1. Choose one from the list above, and **explain** why that source of support is **helpful**.

2. Why is it important to **talk** about our emotions and **connect** with other people?

Organisations that help with mental health

Managing your mental health is something we all need to do. However, you should always reach out for help if you are not able to cope or manage yourself.

Mind (Charity dedicated to supporting people with their mental health) mind.org.uk

YoungMinds (Mental health charity for children, young people and their parents) youngminds.org.uk

NHS (Practical support with mental health) nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

Childline.org.uk (Helpline for children) childline.org.uk 0800 1111

KOOTH www.kooth.com

Calm (App for sleep and mediation) calm.com/breathe

Rethink (Charity dedicated to supporting people with mental illnesses) Rethink.org

Headspace (Exercises for breathing to reduce stress) headspace.com/meditation/breathing-exercises

We'd love your feedback!

What did you think of this lesson? We'd love to hear from you!

[Click here](#)

to rate this lesson out of 5. You can also add a comment if you have time!

PSHE lesson feedback

We'd love to hear your thoughts!

Rating *

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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