

## Section 4:

### Managing feelings

This section of the toolkit and [guidance document](#) is designed to help you support your class to name any difficult feelings they may be experiencing. It will also help class discussion around the development of practical strategies to manage them.

The activities and resources will help promote and support mental health and wellbeing in the classroom. You can use the activities and resources in Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Jamboard and interactive Whiteboard apps.

#### Identifying and naming feelings

##### Activity: Mood boards

Arrange five large sheets of paper around the room titled: angry, sad, worried, happy, content. Ask the group to add to each sheet of paper different words that could also be used to describe that feeling. Use these prompt questions to encourage a class discussion: Why is it good to be able to name as many feelings as possible? How can this help to support our mental health? \*Research tells us that the greater our emotional vocabulary, the easier it is for us to connect with and understand our feelings and this is the first step to managing difficult feelings.

##### Resource: Body mapping

This exercise and diagram helps young people to think about the physical sensations that go with certain feelings. Helping young people to identify and

name how they feel gives them an insight to their response to certain feelings. This is an important step in managing difficult feelings. Get the class to list a range of feelings and give them time to label on the body map where they experience this feeling in the body. Ask what colours they associate with this feeling. Use a range of different feelings, pleasant and unpleasant. Ask the class to consider what the body map has taught them about the nature of feelings.

#### Understanding and validating feelings

##### Activity: Debate

This exercise seeks to open the conversation about the nature of feelings. While we recognise all feelings have a role to play in our lives, it's important we feel able to cope when what we feel is difficult. Normalising feelings and opening conversations about the range we all experience can help to make them seem more manageable.

Read the statements below aloud. For each one, ask the class to move in relation to how much they agree or disagree with the statement. Ask for reasons for decisions and facilitate a discussion around this. Encourage a balanced discussion.

##### Statements:

- (1) You should always try to feel happy.
- (2) There is no such thing as a bad feeling.
- (3) Feelings are temporary.

For information, support, or just to find out more about what we do, visit [jigsaw.ie](http://jigsaw.ie)



(4) Trying to avoid your feelings is always bad.

**Resource: The anatomy of a feeling**

This exercise aims to support young people to think about why we have feelings. It helps them to break their feelings down into thoughts and physical sensations. Ask students to label the worksheet as they relate to different feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant. For example: anger, happiness, worry, calm. Discuss the results. How has this exercise helped you to understand the nature of feelings a little more?

**Strategies to manage feelings**

**Animation: ACE technique**

Play [this animation](#) for your class, which will guide them through the ACE technique, which is a tool for grounding when caught up with difficult thoughts or feelings.

‘A’ refers to accept how you are feeling

‘C’ refers to come back into your body

‘E’ refers to engage fully with what you are doing.

**Resource: Tips for managing feelings**

Use the tips for managing feelings document to support the group to think about ways to manage feelings.

Ask them to rate from ‘least helpful’ to ‘most helpful’ and start a discussion on this.

**Animation: 4x4 breathing**

[4x4 breathing](#) is a technique that supports us to slow our breathing. This encourages our heart rate to drop telling our body and brain it’s OK to relax. We then start to feel more calm. Ask the class to follow the animation, encouraging them to breathe deeply from the belly.

**Resource : Coping Card**

This activity supports the class to think about things that they could try when they start to experience feelings that are difficult. Ask the class to complete the printed card and personalise it for themselves. You could suggest that they keep it and use it when they are feeling worried or overwhelmed.

**Video: Samantha’s story**

[Samantha](#), 24, a Jigsaw volunteer from Cork reflects on how she incorporates relaxation into her everyday routine.

**Animation: 5 a day for mental health**

The ‘[Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)’ report 2008 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) outlines five things you can do [daily for your mental health](#).

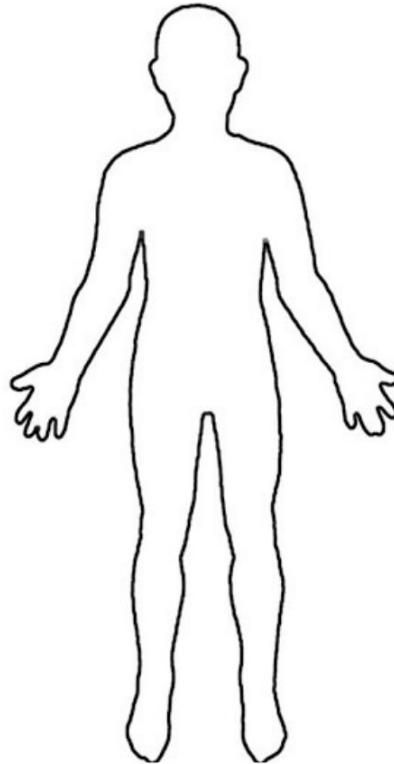
1. Connect with others
2. Be active
3. Take notice
4. Keep learning
5. Give

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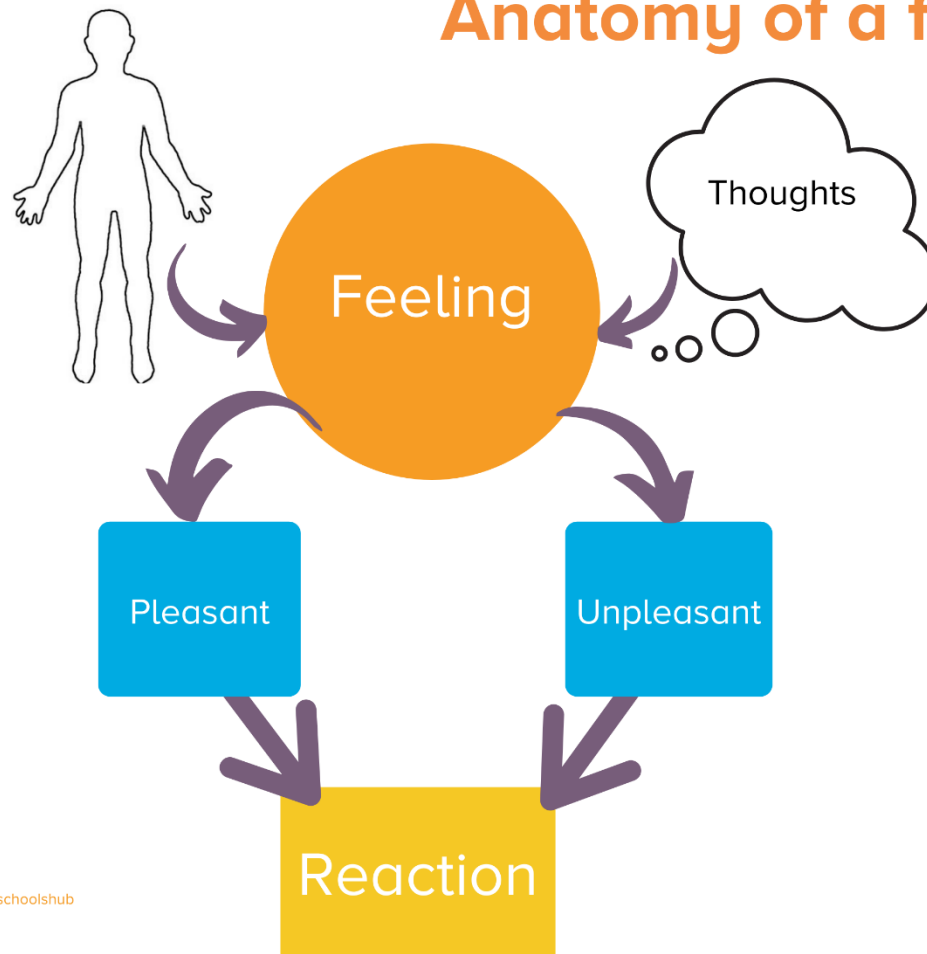
## Body mapping

Label where you feel these emotions



[jigsaw.ie/schoolshub](http://jigsaw.ie/schoolshub)

## Anatomy of a feeling



[jigsaw.ie/schoolshub](http://jigsaw.ie/schoolshub)

Why do we feel?

Should we try to avoid uncomfortable feelings?

What are some of the ways that we can manage unpleasant feelings?

## Tips for managing feelings

### 01 Be a feeling detective

Be curious about what you are feeling and why you might be feeling this way. Once you understand your feelings, they can be easier to manage.



### 02 Talk it out

Saying out loud how you are feeling to someone else can make a huge difference. This could be a friend, teacher, parent or counsellor. They don't have to have all the answers (in fact they probably won't) but talking about what is stressing you out can help you find your own solutions.

### 03 Write it down

This might seem daunting, but your problems will seem a lot less overwhelming when they are written down on a page. You can keep a journal or throw the pages away afterwards if that helps.

### 04 Watch your inner voice

The way that you talk to yourself matters! If you have a very critical inner voice, this may make unpleasant feelings seem overwhelming. Try to talk to yourself with kindness

### 05 Find ways to relax

There are countless ways to unwind your body and mind. Find out what works for you and schedule it into your week. No matter how busy we are, we all need downtime.

### 06 This too will pass

Feelings are temporary and most difficult situations will change. Try to remind yourself of this when you start to feel overwhelmed.

### 07 Avoid comparisons

There is no right or wrong way to feel. Feelings just are and everyone will respond to stresses and worries differently. Try to accept your response with kindness.

### 08 Find meanings in difficult feelings

It can be hard to understand difficult feelings and situations. Try to ask yourself what this difficulty is trying to tell you about yourself and the world around you. Is it helping you to become stronger or to get to know yourself a little better?



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**JIGSAW** Young people's  
health in mind

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Jigsaw, registered charity in Ireland.  
Registered charity number 20064846. Charity revenue number 17439.



## Coping card

x 3 things I will do

x 2 things I will say to myself

x 1 person that can help me

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