

## Emotion scenarios

**Approximate time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** None needed

**Aim/outcome:** To encourage students to think about coping strategies that help when they feel stressed. To recognise that emotions can build up and become overwhelming. To explore techniques for proactively managing emotions

### **Explanation**

- Ask everyone to get to their feet and spread out so they have some space around them.
  - Explain that the pupils are going to have to do a bit of acting and that you are going to call out situations that could happen in life. When you call out a scenario, the pupils will have to act out how they think they would feel if it happened to them. For example, different things might make them feel sad, happy, worried, frustrated, angry. They will have to show these emotions with their body language and their facial expressions.
  - Call out each scenario in turn, pausing after each one to give the pupils some time to act out the emotions. Point out one or two particularly creative ones and ask the rest of the group to guess what emotions their friends are acting out.
- Adaption:** If any of the pupils are reluctant to get involved, adapt the activity so only some act out the emotion while others identify what they are feeling. You could split the class in half and have half doing each.
- Example scenarios: (please feel free to use your own!)
    - You've fallen over and broken your leg so you can't do your favourite sport anymore.
    - You tried really hard and got 10 out of 10 on your test.
    - You suspect that your brother or sister has sneaked in to your room and stolen some of your things.
    - You have a really important exam coming up and you don't think you know enough
    - You and your best friend are have had a huge argument and they haven't spoken to you for days.
    - You're about to go off on holiday
    - You have to give a group presentation in assembly
  - When you have been through all of the scenarios ask the pupils to sit down. Explain that how we experience things, and how we feel about situations are very different. Everyone acted out one emotion for each of those scenarios but often we can feel lots of different emotions at the same time. For example, when you think your brother / sister has stolen something of yours you might feel angry at them, frustrated that you can't find it, but you will also still love your brother / sister!
  - Explain that feeling all of those different things at once can be overwhelming but we can build our resilience by actively doing something to help ourselves feel better. Go over each scenario that led to negative emotions but this time ask the pupils what they could do to feel better in these situations, e.g. if you've fallen over and broken your leg so you can't do your favourite sport anymore, you could do something else you enjoy like playing video games at home with your family or friends.

The point of this exercise is to help pupils realise that everyone has times when they feel lots of complicated emotions. If they think in advance about the sorts of situations that might make them feel sad, angry or frustrated, when they find themselves in that situation they'll be ready to do something positive about it. That might be about solving the problem, or it might just be about distracting themselves, either way it's all about finding out what works for them.