

## Stress bucket / feelings bucket

**Approximate time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** A bowl / bucket / box. Something to fill the box e.g. beads, blocks, pens – anything that will fill it up. You could do this in an outside space with a bucket and give each pupils a cup of water!

**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:**

- Set out your bowl / bucket on a table in the room and have the pupils gather around.
- Ask the pupils to take a moment to think about all the different things in their life which make them feel an emotion. Things that make them feel worried, angry, sad, excited, nervous etc.”
- Ask the pupils to come forward and put something in to the box to represent their emotion. Tell the pupils that they are free to share what they are thinking about with the group, but only if they want to.
- Keep going around until the bucket fills up and things begin to fall off the top / spill out. Continue on and encourage a few more pupils to continue to put their ‘emotion’ in and make it spill over even more.
- Explain that just like the bucket, our minds sometimes get so full of the different emotions we are feeling they we struggle to keep control of them. We might cry or shout or scream or we might actually go a bit quiet when our emotions get too much.
- Ask the group to think of times when they have felt their emotions were overflowing. Would anyone like to share what they are thinking of?
- As the pupils share their examples, you can get them thinking about the connection between body and mind. Ask the group: How did the emotions make you feel physically? Were you feeling tired as well? Did that make things worse?
- Ask the pupils to think about something they can do to manage their emotions and make their minds and bodies feel better. Give them a short time to think an action that would help them.
- Ask for volunteers to say what their actions are and as they say they must come and pick an object out of the box (or use a cup to take some water out of the bucket). Some examples of things they could say might be: tell a parent, go for a walk, play a computer game or talk to friends.

It is good for us to be able to identify the things that makes us feel better when we are struggling with our emotions – it is also good to learn from others as they might have ways of coping that we haven’t thought of.