



ACTIVITY 2: OUR CONNECTED MINDS AND BODIES

AIM: Young people are introduced to the OutRight topic of mental health and wellbeing. They begin to make connections between mental health, emotions, and physical health, and consider how these link to a young person's right to health (Article 24).

Preparation:

- Review the [Fablefy 14 Minute Body Scan video](#) to prepare for the warm-up
- Become familiar with [Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions](#)
- Create a sample wheel of wellbeing, if completing the optional activity

Facilitator materials and resources

- Activity 2 Presentation
- Flip chart paper or white board and markers

Participant materials

- Paper and pen
- Card and coloured pens if completing optional activity
- Clothes peg or paper clip

FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION

We know that all children and young people have a right to good health (Article 24), but what do we think about when we think about being healthy? Most of us think about good health as not being 'sick' or 'ill'. If we have a broken leg, or a bad cold, we know that our health is not 100 per cent. But what about health problems that we cannot see so easily?

Explain to the group that a young person's right to health must include both mental health and physical health, and adults must do what they can to protect this right and do what is in the best interests of children and young people (Article 3). Tell the young people that in this introductory activity we will explore how our brains and bodies are connected and begin a practice of talking openly about mental and physical wellbeing.

ACTIVITY 2: PART 1



© UNICEF/Das

Part 1: Warm-up body scan

1. Begin the body scan mindfulness exercise by asking young people to sit quietly with their eyes closed for one minute. If you like, use the [Fablefy 14 Minute Body Scan video](#) to facilitate the activity. If you choose not to use the video, explain to young people that most of our day we spend time focusing on everything that is going on outside of our bodies. This activity is about focusing on what is going on inside of our bodies.

2. Instruct young people to focus on how their body feels. Explain that we are not trying to change how we feel, we are just going to focus on and notice how we feel.

3. Ask young people to notice how they are sitting or lying. Can they feel where their body connects to the chair or to the floor? Can they feel their breath going in and out?

4. Explain that in this exercise we are going to pretend like we are getting an x-ray of our bodies, one body part at a time. Direct young people to move their attention slowly through their body, checking in with their senses and body parts from head to toe.

For example: Think about your feet. Only your feet. Wiggle your toes. Now keep your feet still. How do your feet feel? Are they hot? Are they cold? Can you feel your socks?

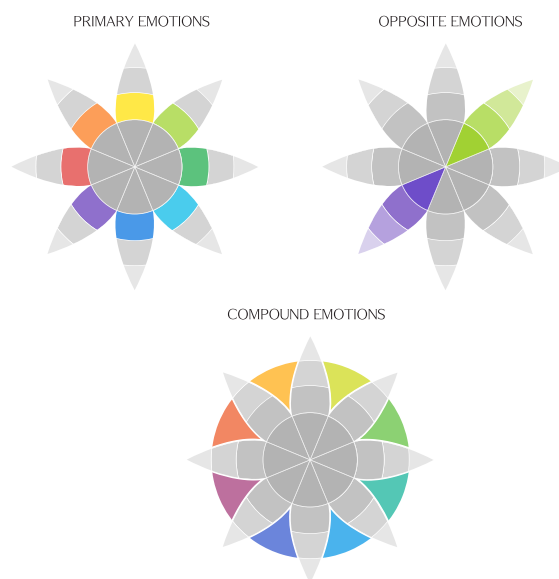
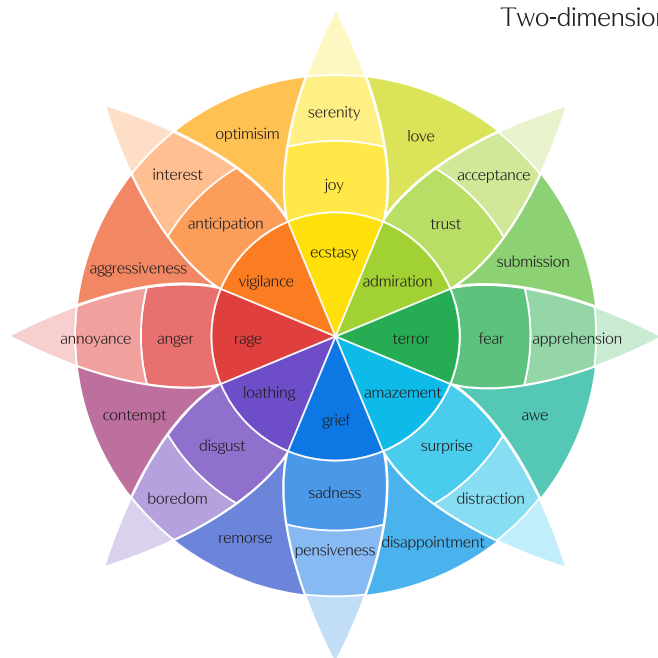
Talk young people through each body part (from the feet to the ankles, legs, knees, hips, belly, arms, shoulders, neck, mouth, nose, ears, eyes, and the top of your head). Prompt young people to notice any physical feelings or sensations, like tiredness, temperature, a breeze on the skin, or how clothes feel against the skin. Remind young people throughout the activity to focus on their breathing as a way to relax.

5. At the end of the exercise, once the young people have opened their eyes, ask them to volunteer to share any feelings or sensations that they noticed, and remind them that any feeling is okay. Explain that our job in this activity is not to fix anything, but only to pay attention and to breathe. Complete the exercise by introducing the idea that we have many body parts, yet our bodies are all one big system.

ACTIVITY 2: PART 2

PLUTCHIK'S WHEEL OF EMOTIONS

Two-dimensional circumplex model



Part 2: Triggers and reactions: mapping exercise

1. Beginning with the feelings identified in the warm-up activity, ask young people to create a list of emotions that they are most likely to feel day-to-day. Be sure to include a range of different emotions. For example: happy, angry, stressed, surprised, calm, scared, nervous. For older adolescents, guide the group to include more complex emotions in their list. For example: rage, anxiety, joy, disgust, grief, acceptance, annoyance, boredom, pride.

2. Using the Activity 2 Presentation, introduce **Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions**. Explain that Robert Plutchik was a psychologist who studied emotions and who created this well-known emotion wheel. Plutchik's wheel is based on the theory that there are eight primary emotions. These are: anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust and joy. Like colors, primary emotions can be expressed at different intensities and can mix with one another to form different emotions. All emotions we experience are a combination of these eight primary emotions. The wheel also shows the relation of emotions to one another, for example which emotions are opposite of each other, like joy is opposite of sadness.

3. After reviewing the wheel, ask young people: "What else do you notice from looking at the emotion wheel?"

4. On a white board or flip chart create a table with three columns and put the list of feelings in the centre column. See the example on the

following page. Ask the young people to identify any additional emotions from the wheel that they would like to add to their own list.

5. At the top of the column to the left, write the word 'trigger', asking young people if they know what this word means. Explain that when we talk about emotions and mental health, a trigger is an action (or lack of action) that causes us to feel a certain way. For example, preparing for exams may trigger the feeling of worry.

6. Ask young people what they think might cause or 'trigger' them to feel each of the specific emotions listed. Write their responses in the column to the left. For example: "I feel annoyed when my mum pays more attention to my brother", or "I feel happy when I think about hanging out with my friends".

7. At the top of the column on the right, write the word 'behaviour', asking young people how they think the word behaviour (or how you act) relates to this exercise about their feelings. Referring back to the example, ask: "When the feeling of worry is triggered by upcoming exams, what kind of behaviour or reaction do you have?" The resulting behaviour in this circumstance may be lack of sleep or feeling irritable or cross.

8. Continuing to build on the same list, asking the young people to identify any physical feelings or behaviours they might link to the emotion and trigger. Write these in the third column. For example: "When I feel cross, my face gets red and I feel a lot of energy in my body", or "When I feel anxious my stomach hurts and I lose my appetite for lunch".

ACTIVITY 2: PART 2 AND OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Tip for virtual facilitation: try using an online presentation tool (for example Google slides) where the group can collaborate together. Alternatively, ask children to fold a piece of A4 paper into thirds and create their own 'chart' by making lists in each column. If they feel comfortable, the young people can, in person or online, share their ideas with a friend or family member and see if they can come up with any more.

Example

TRIGGER	EMOTION	BEHAVIOUR
Preparing for exams	Worry	I can't sleep at night, my mind races, and I can get cross very easily

Optional activity: Make your own wheel of wellbeing

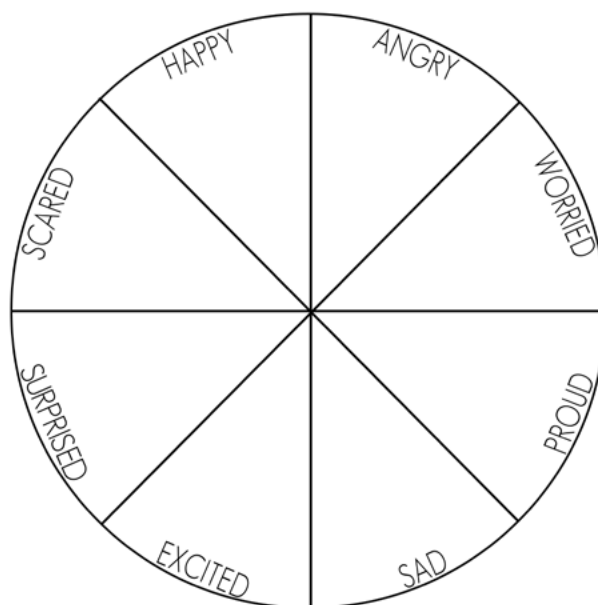
Name _____

1. Using white card, paper and pens, ask young people to create their own wheel of wellbeing that they can use to identify and track their feelings. Draw a large circle on A4 card, then divide the circle into the number of wedges of emotions that they would like to include from their list and decorate each wedge according to one of the feelings. Ask young people to cut out the circle to complete the emotion wheel, then use a clothes peg or paper clip to mark how they might be feeling in the moment.

2. Explain that we can use our wheel to help us identify how we might be feeling at any one time. This is important because when we can identify how we are feeling, it helps us to talk about it and know what actions we might take if we want to understand our feelings or change our reactions to those feelings.

3. Complete the lesson by reminding young people of the connection to Article 13 – that they each have the right to share freely with others what they think and feel.

MY EMOTIONS WHEEL



© childhood101.com