Primary

# Virtual Field Trip
# **Stress Management and Coping**

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School Mental Health Ontario

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# Introduction

**Every day, educators and students are exposed to big and small challenges that can contribute to feelings of stress. This year educators and students have risen to the challenge in innovative and creative ways, connecting and building meaningful relationships with students and families. As the impact of the pandemic continues to evolve, providing opportunities for explicit skill development will continue to be an essential part of bolstering positive student mental health. As an educator, it is equally important to prioritize your own well-being.**

School Mental Health Ontario, in partnership with Ophea, is offering a series of lessons to support the development of stress management and healthy coping skills. The activities in these lessons provide an opportunity for skill development and modelling for both students and educators.

**Each lesson will provide:**

- A **minds on activity** for both educators and students.
- An **action** – through a video, classes will participate in a **'virtual field trip'** that provides opportunities for students and their educator teams to learn, practice and develop skills to cope with and manage stress.
- A **consolidation** activity for follow up after the virtual field trip.

**In this series of six lessons we will:**

- Explore the connection between mental and physical health.
- Discuss the benefits of physical activity for stress management.
- Practice stress management coping skills.

Grades 1 – 3

# Lesson Plan

This is the first lesson in a series of six lessons to support the development of **stress management** and **healthy coping skills**.

By demonstrating a range of stress management strategies, students will have more options and ideas for staying mentally well during difficult times. It is important to note that different strategies work for different individuals. Sharing a range of strategies over time will allow students the opportunity to try them out and determine what works for them.

## OVERALL EXPECTATIONS:

### Strand D, Healthy Living

This chart provides a brief summary of the mental health literacy topic learning, that this lesson will address, for **grades 1 – 3**.

| Mental Health Literacy topic | D1 Understanding Health Concepts | D2 Making Healthy Choices | D3 Making Connections for Healthy Living |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade 1** | D1.5 Mental health and overall health | | D3.3 Thoughts, emotions, actions |
| **Grade 2** | D1.6 Body and brain – responses and feelings | D2.5 Knowing when to seek help | |
| **Grade 3** | D1.6 Brain stress response system | | D3.4 External factors that contribute to stressful feelings |

### Strand A, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills

The chart below provides an “at-a-glance” summary of SEL skills. SEL has been shown to support student emotional wellness, when offered in the context of a caring, inclusive, equity-minded classroom setting. When student identity is affirmed, and skills are introduced in a developmentally-appropriate and sequenced manner, students can select and adopt social-emotional strategies that build on their strengths. The highlighted skills will be the focus of this lesson series. Learning related to SEL skills are woven throughout the health and physical education curriculum for all grades.

| Students will learn skills to: | So they can: |
|---|---|
| • **identify and manage emotions** | • express their feelings and understand the feelings of others |
| • **recognize sources of stress and cope with challenges** | • develop personal resilience |
| • maintain positive motivation and perseverance | • foster a sense of optimism and hope |
| • build relationships and communicate effectively | • support healthy relationships and respect diversity |
| • develop self-awareness and sense of identity | • develop a sense of identity and belonging |
| • think critically and creatively | • make informed decisions and solve problems |

For a more detailed overview please see Appendix A of the 2019 HPE Curriculum

## LEARNING GOALS:

| EDUCATOR | CLASS |
|---|---|
| As educators, we are learning to build the confidence and competence to:<br><br>• explore the connection between our mental and physical health.<br>• discuss the benefits of physical activity for stress management.<br>• practice stress management coping skills. | As students, we are learning:<br><br>• to explore the connection between the health of our minds and our bodies.<br>• practice breathing strategies as a possible tool to help us cope with big feelings. |

## SUCCESS CRITERIA:

Co-develop success criteria with your students using the following questions: “How will we know we are achieving our learning goals? What will it look like/sound like?”

**For example:**

- I can recognize that sometimes I feel stress.
- I can learn ways to respond to stressful challenges.
- I can practice, observe, and apply strategies to help manage my stress.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- Approaches to all instruction, including Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, must be mediated through respectful conversations about students' lived realities, inequity, bias, discrimination and harassment. Starting with self-reflection about yourself, the classroom and the situations individual students in your class may be coping with is key. It is important to remember that our students face a range of challenges that are relative to their personal, social, and cultural lived experience. They also have existing ways of coping. Be sure to consider sources of stress and examine and address structures that reinforce inequitable conditions that add stress to you, your students and entire communities. Through instruction and modelling, we can help students practise new and bolster existing coping strategies.

- This virtual field trip lesson is intended to be embedded as part of your school day. Our collective learning takes place on many different traditional Indigenous territories all across Ontario. We are grateful to be able to work and learn locally on these lands. As a school in Ontario we understand morning routines, including a land acknowledgement specific to your location, will have taken place prior to this field trip.

- The focus on emotions may be difficult for some students. Be prepared to connect students to additional supports if needed. Refer to the ONE-CALL Desk Reference for more information, and take time to consider your school and board circle of support and service pathways. Know what to do, and who to connect with, if a student seems like they might be struggling with their mental health.

## MINDS ON:

The Minds On is to be completed BEFORE the virtual field trip.

| EDUCATOR | CLASS |
|---|---|
| **What is social-emotional learning?**<br><br>Watch this 5 minute video for helpful background information: What is social-emotional learning?<br><br>**Guiding Questions:**<br><br>• What kind of emotions do you experience throughout your day before, during and after school?<br>• Describe some reasons why it would be important to understand and know how to manage your emotions.<br>• How do you think social-emotional learning skills help you as an educator?<br>• How do you think social-emotional learning skills strengthen the relationships with your students and others around you? | **Learning about Stress Management and Coping**<br><br>Choose one of the Minds On activities found in ***Appendix A***. Follow up the activity with a discussion using the guiding questions below.<br><br>**Guiding Questions:**<br><br>• What are some of the feelings you experience during a school day? (whether in person or on-line)<br>• Why is it important to understand our feelings and have different ways to manage our feelings?<br>• What does it mean when we feel stressed?<br>• Have you ever felt stressed? If so, how does your body feel? What do you do to help manage your feelings of stress? |

## ACTION TASK – VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP:

This pre-recorded session is facilitated by an Ophea Educator ambassador and a clinician from School Mental Health Ontario. This session focuses on breathing strategies and how they can help us cope with stress. Guided breathing exercises are an effective and useful tool to help us check-in with ourselves and manage our emotions. These types of interventions can help decrease how our body physically reacts to stress, and helps us calm our mind. In the video, the educator and mental health professional lead a variety of breathing exercises for you and your students to participate in together.

Links to view virtual field trip: Click here to view on **YouTube** Click here to view on **Vimeo**

## CONSOLIDATION:

These activities and resources are designed to provide opportunities for consolidation of learning for both the educator and the students. Also provided is a letter to offer families to share information and share opportunities for follow-up learning.

| EDUCATOR | CLASS | FAMILIES |
|---|---|---|
| Support your own mental health with these self-care tips:<br><br>SMH-ON Personal Resiliency Tips for helpers who Support Students | Choose from the following activities:<br><br>☐ **Discussion**<br>Revisit some of the guiding questions in the minds-on and compare ideas from pre and post field trip.<br><br>☐ Read Aloud - ***Appendix D***<br><br>☐ Offer students further opportunities to practise the strategies introduced, or try new strategies from School Mental Health Ontario and Ophea.<br><br>• School Mental Health Ontario:<br>- Everyday Mental Health Resource (contains some of the activities used in the virtual field trip)<br><br>• Ophea, Brain Blitz:<br>- Breathing with Awareness<br>- Breathing Good Energy In<br>- Happy Place Meditation | Letter to share with caregivers – ***Appendix E*** |

# Appendix A

## Minds On

Choose one (or more) of the following activities as a Minds On activity. These activities are designed to get students talking about different emotions. Once you've completed the activity with your class, ask your students the guiding questions found in the lesson plan.

### Using our Senses to Explore our Feelings

**1. Dance it Out**

a. Select three different pieces of music to play. Choose a variety of tempos and intensities.

b. Play a short segment of each song. Encourage students to stand up and move their bodies in response to the music while they are listening. Play your slower, calmer song selection last to bring student's attention back.

c. After each song ask students to attach a feeling to the music and to the way they moved their bodies. Keep a list of the feelings they shared.

d. Remind students that not everyone will associate the same feeling with each song, just like everyone will move in a different way....and that's ok!

e. Ask your students the guiding questions found in the lesson plan.

**2. Feelings Flashcards**

a. Show students some of the "Feelings Flashcards" – these can be found in ***Appendix B*** or download this slide deck that contains the cards.

b. Ask students what feeling they associate with each of the emojis shown on the flashcards. Keep a list of the feelings they shared.

c. Remind students that not everyone will associate the same feeling with each image, and that's ok! Also, some emotions are expressed in similar ways. For example – joy, excitement, happiness.

d. Ask your students the guiding questions found in the lesson plan.

**3. See and Say how You Feel**

a. Show students the images found in ***Appendix C*** or download this slide deck that contains the images.

b. Ask students what feeling they associate with each of the images. Keep a list of the feelings that they shared. Encourage them to explain why they feel that way. Do they make connections to memories or experiences?

c. Remind students that not everyone will associate the same feeling with each image, and that's ok!

d. Ask your students the guiding questions found in the lesson plan.

**4. What Comforts You?**

a. Set a timer for 45 seconds. Ask students to go for a short walk in their learning space and find an object, that they can carry in one hand, that brings them comfort. Have them bring it back and set it beside them.

b. Each student can share their object and the feeling they associate with it. This discussion may lead to a conversation about the strategies they use to comfort or calm themself.

c. Ask your students the guiding questions found in the lesson.

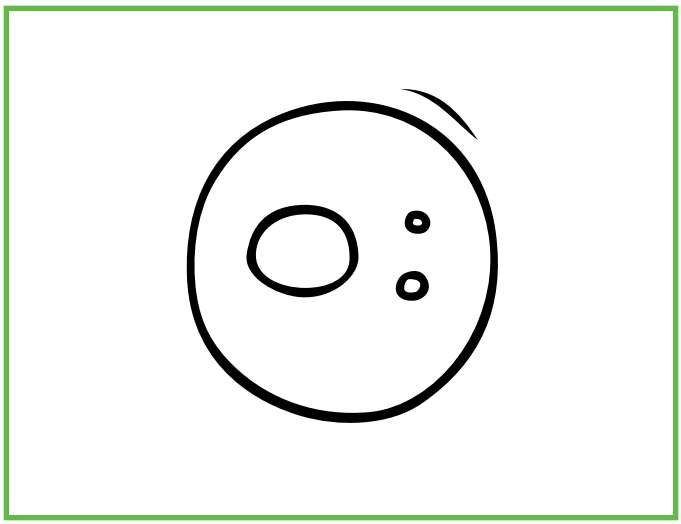
# Appendix B

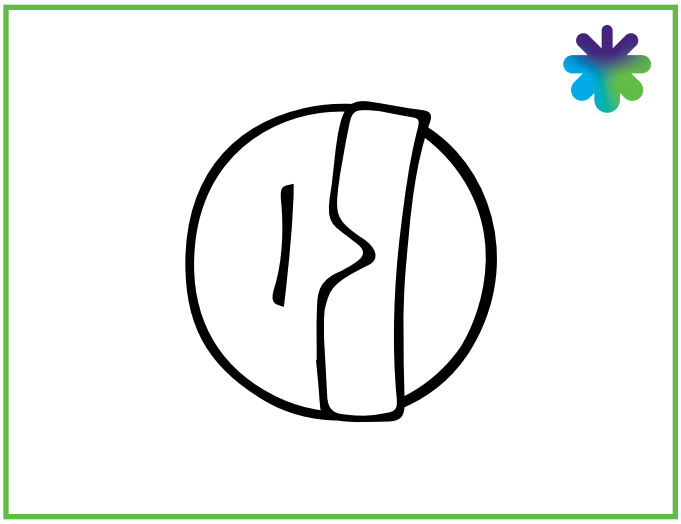
## Feelings Flashcards

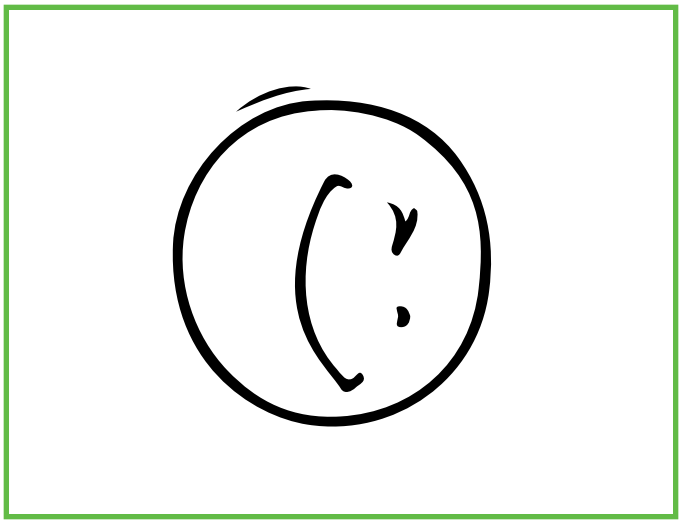
These feelings flashcards can be used in a variety of ways. Here are some additional suggested uses that are suitable for a variety of grades:

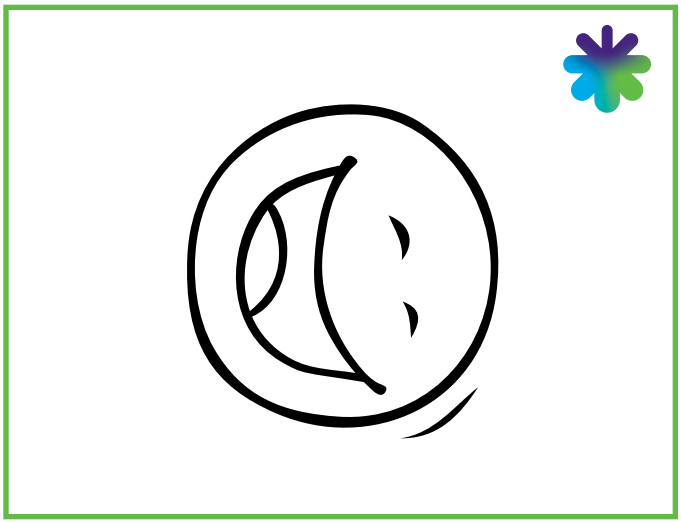
- Create a match game. When students find a match they name the emotion.
- Use for a check-in. Students select the emoji that they resonate with at that moment.
- Co-create labels for each of the flash cards. Decide, (as a class, or in small groups, or as individual students), what feelings each of the emojis represent. Use the blank cards provided to have students create their own emoji.

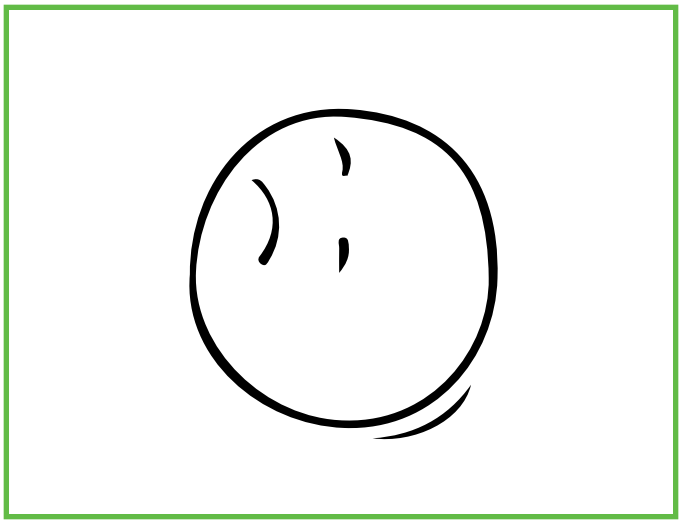
## **Feelings Flashcards** 1 – 6



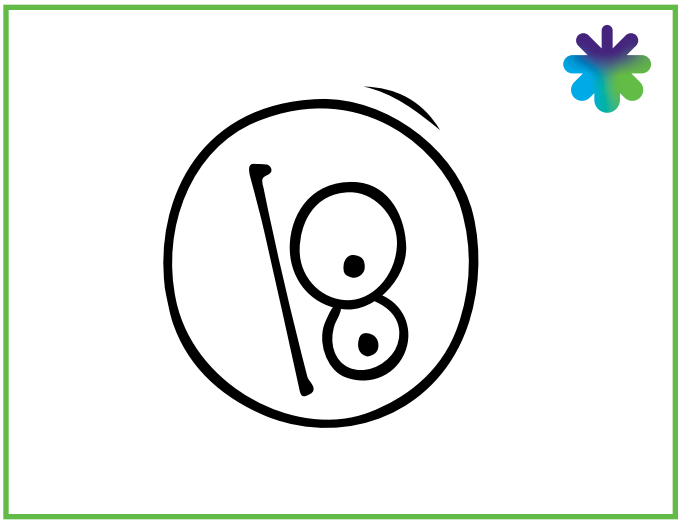


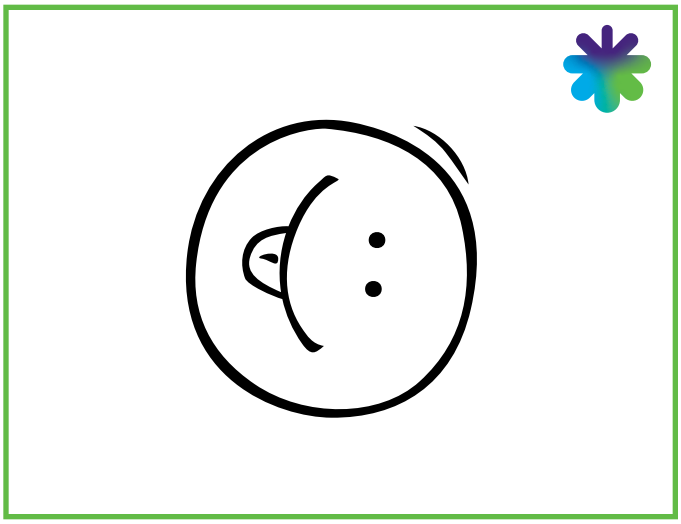


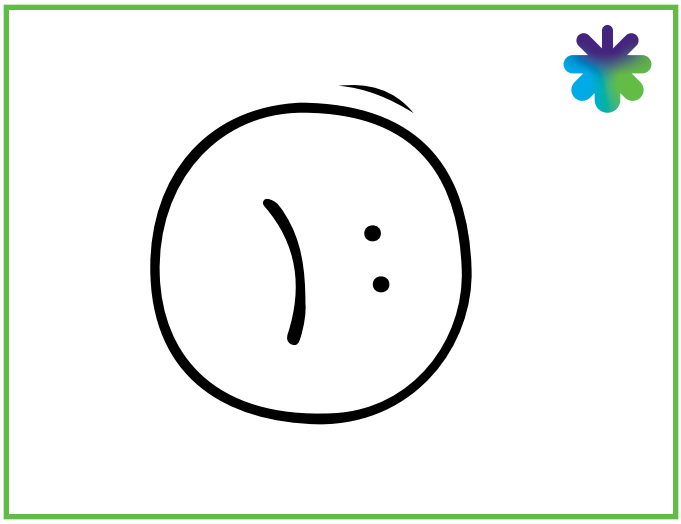




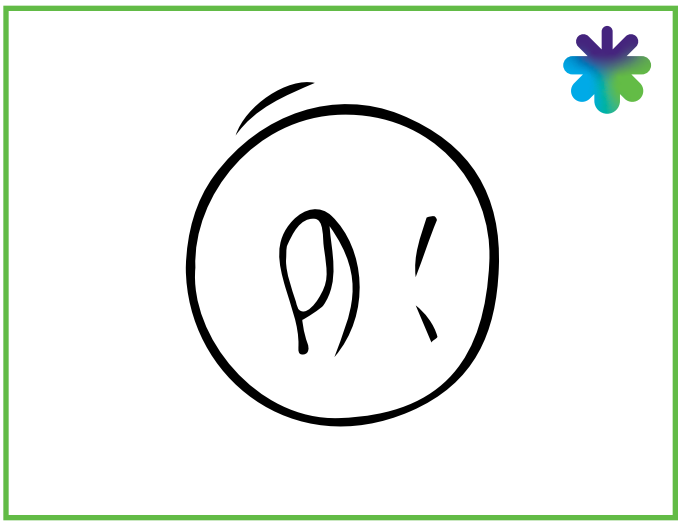
## **Feelings Flashcards** 7 – 12

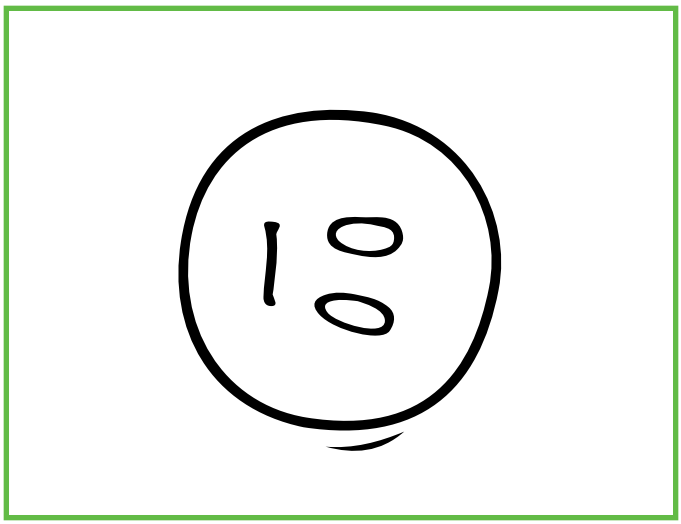


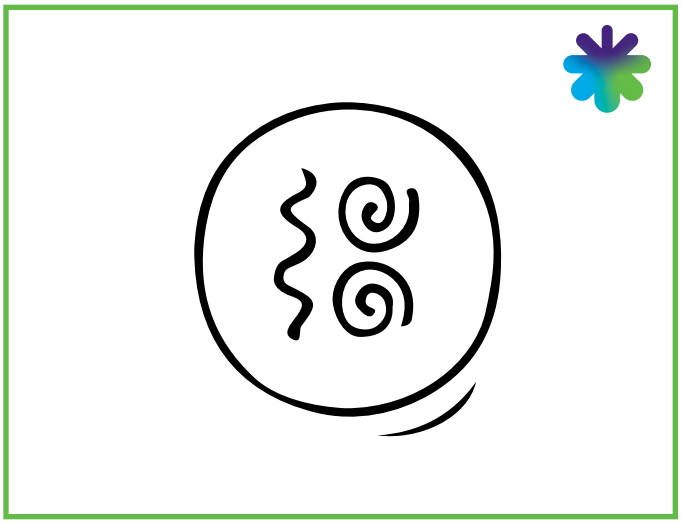


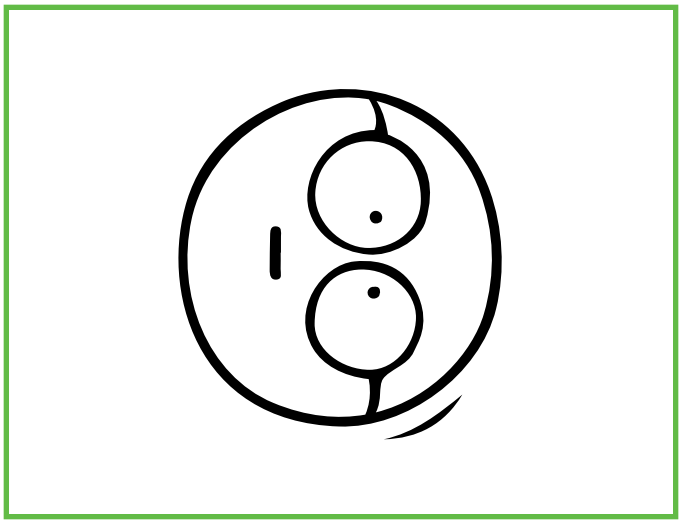


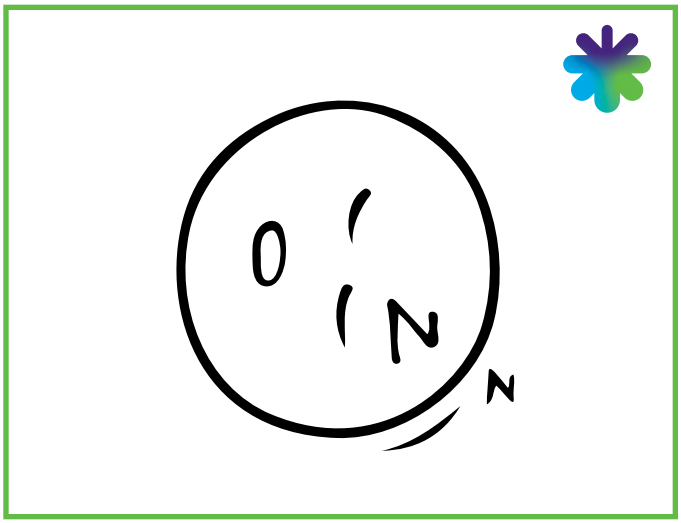
## **Feelings Flashcards** 13 – 18

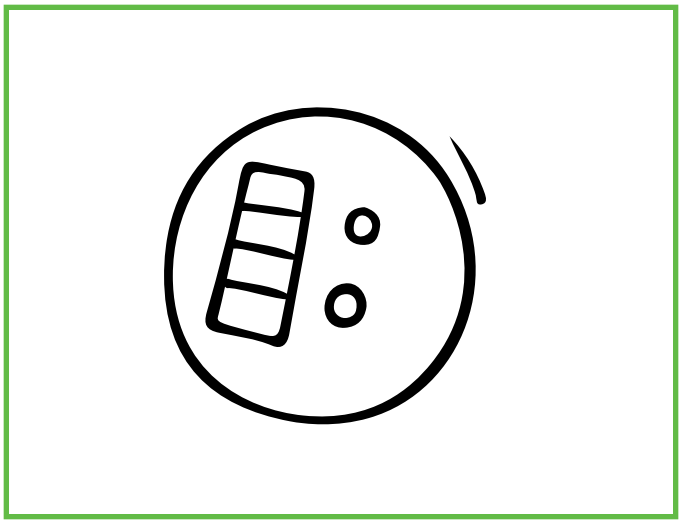












## **Feelings Flashcards** (create your own)

# Appendix C

## Images for See and Say How You Feel

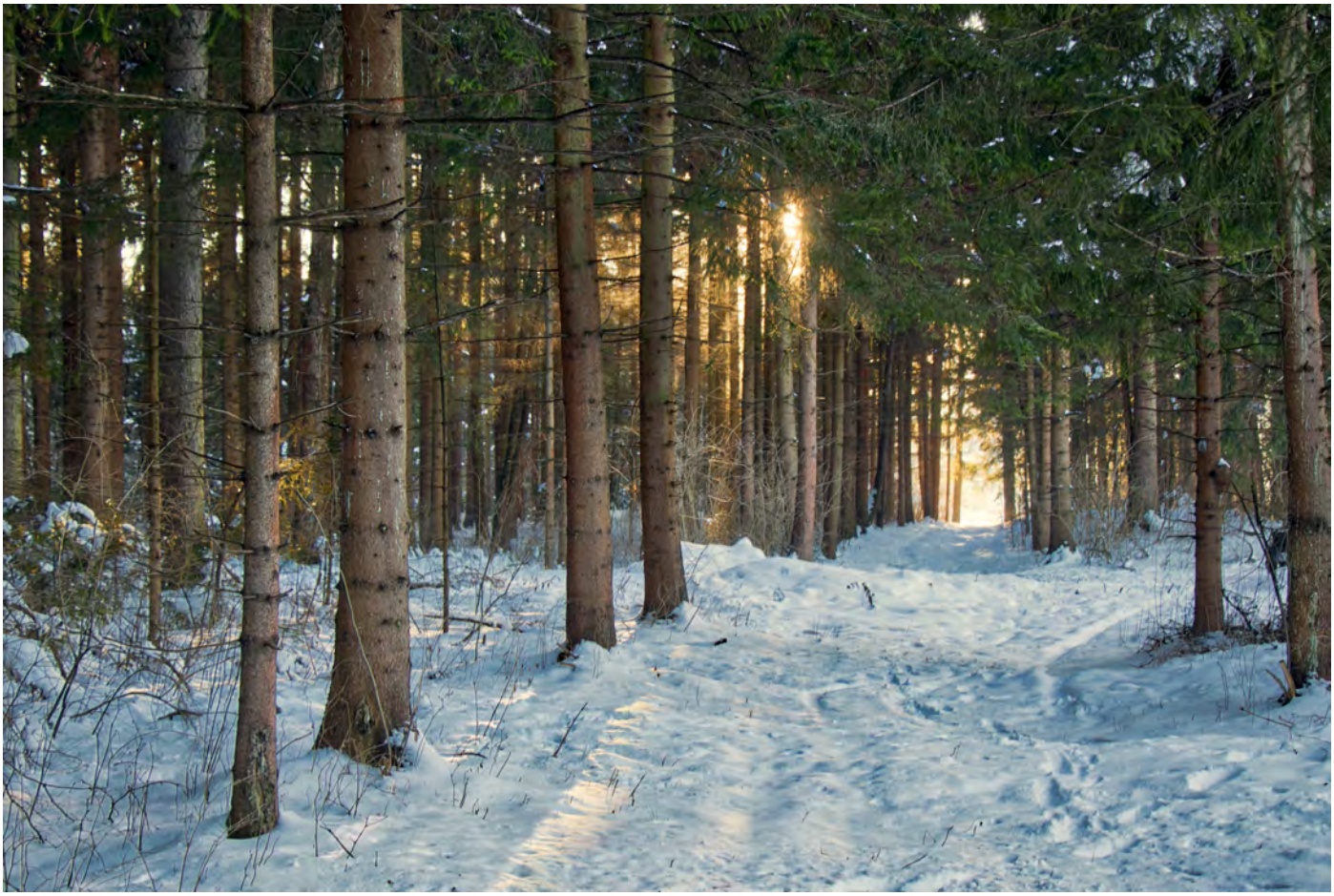


Image by Michael Kopp from Pixabay

Image by lilybsphotoprops from Pixabay

Image by Schwoaze from Pixabay

Image by birgl from Pixabay

Image by Anja #helpinghands #solidarity#stays healthyfrom Pixabay

Image by Gerhard G. from Pixabay

Image by April Lamb-Hunter from Pixabay

Image by Chris Stenger from Pixabay

Image by Petra Roth from Pixabay

# Appendix D

The book **The Thing Lou Couldn't Do**, (also available in French – **Les Hauts et les Bas D'Amanda**?), is a great provocation for a follow-up discussion. Stress is a strong feeling. We are learning how we can cope with stress and other big emotions. In this book we meet a girl named Lou who loves adventures and loves to play with her friends. However, she quickly realizes that when faced with a new challenge it can be difficult or scary.

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

### *Before Reading:*

- What are some things that you are really good at doing? How do you feel when doing them?
- What are some things you are afraid to try?
- How do you feel when you struggle with the task or activity?

While I'm reading, pay attention to her body language and facial expressions and how her feelings change over the course of the text.

### *During Reading:*

Stop at different points across this text. The following are a few examples of powerful times for students to pause and consider.

- Think aloud: "Lou loves adventures, but this adventure is up, she likes her adventures to be down." I'm noticing Lou's face – her furrowed brow, her slouching posture, her hands behind her back, the way she's looking longingly up at the tree. I'm inferring that she feels a bit nervous or worried, maybe even anxious. I also noticed that the author capitalized the words "up" and "down" which makes me think that Lou might be afraid of heights.
- Think aloud: "My tummy hurts. I need to sit down." Why do you think her tummy hurts? Have you felt that way before? Describe the range of emotions that you may go through when you are faced with a challenge. How do you express these emotions?
- Think aloud: "What's so great about climbing trees anyway?" I notice Lou's facial expressions have changed on this page. How do you think she is feeling? What makes you say that? How do you think her friends are feeling? What makes you say that? (Discuss facial expressions, body language, etc.)

### *After Reading:*

How do Lou's feelings change throughout the story? How do you know?
Do you think Lou's friends are good friends? What makes you say that?
What strategies would you recommend to Lou for managing her big feelings?
What do you think the author is trying to tell us in the story? What is her message?
What makes you say that?

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Today our class participated in a virtual field trip to learn more about coping with stress, recognizing that stress is a part of life, and that there are strategies to help us cope.

If you would like to continue the learning from today, here are a few prompts to ask your child.

- Why do you think it is important to understand and know how to manage your emotions?
- Which breathing strategy/strategies from today felt most helpful for you?
- Do you have other strategies of your own that you find helpful? What are they?

For more activities to try at home, check out this set of activity cards from School Mental Health Ontario: https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/EDMH-ParentActivities-FINAL-EN.pdf

You can also access Ophea's H&PE curriculum connected content appropriate for online delivery at home at: ophea.net/hpeathome and visit Ophea Open Class for recorded instructional videos and lessons with guiding reflection questions related to social-emotional learning to support learners at home.



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