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# “Eliminating Social Exclusion” (EliSE) Nr. 2019-1-LV01-KA204-060427

## IO3-Blended Learning Module for Educators

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## **CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIORAL DIFFICULTIES**

### **LEARNING UNIT 4**

#### **COPING WITH STRESS**

##### **Stress**

Stress can be defined as a condition that occurs when the physical and mental boundaries of the organism are forced and threatened, as well as factors that challenge and disrupt individual integrity that is unique to the individual (Baltas & Baltas, 1996).

Stress symptoms can be grouped into four categories: physical, emotional, mental and behavioral. The physical symptoms of stress are headache, heart palpitations, and indigestion; emotional symptoms are irritability and anger easily, depression and general aversion; some of the mental symptoms, on the other hand, the person being affected negatively under stress, impaired decision-making ability, and causing the person to take wrong decisions; behavioral symptoms include disturbances in sleep patterns, and behaviors such as drinking and smoking more than usual (Altuntaş, 2003). The emotions and psychological arousal created by stressful situations are extremely disturbing, and this disturbance motivates the person to do something to reduce this. The process of dealing with stressful situations is called stress coping.

Individuals' interpretation, evaluation and direction of events are the main factors in reducing or increasing stress. For example, some people in the same physical and social environment may be extremely tense and stressful, while others may be more comfortable and happy (Cüceloğlu, 1991). Individuals who participate more actively in their business and social life, who enjoy their work and the social activities they participate in, who have positive expectations for the future, who have tolerance and flexibility in their personalities, and those who have positive emotional relationships with their close surroundings are more resistant to stress and maintain a healthier lifestyle. (Baltas and Baltas, 1996).

Stress is a concept that should be in our lives. However, we need to eliminate the damage caused by stress. Turning stress into a tool we can use in our development will make our lives



more meaningful. How to do this and how to achieve it depends on our knowledge of ways to deal with stress. A stress-free life is not possible. What matters is how we deal with stress. Many individuals and organizations are dealing with this issue today. The prerequisite for a richer and more fulfilling life is to be able to create an alternative. There are alternatives we can create in terms of stress.

### **Positive and Negative Stresses**

It is observed that individuals talk about good and bad stress, and in many cases, the benefits of creating a defense mechanism have been witnessed. Good stress is the body's defense and overcoming difficulties. Traits such as adaptation, learning to cope, and greater resistance to adversity are beneficial aspects of good stress. As a result, we have a better performance and become happy. When various definitions of stress are examined, it is seen that stress is mostly handled in a negative and harmful sense. Whereas, although stress makes the individual difficult, compromises his adaptation, and causes pain and anxiety, it also has a characteristic that leads the person forward, happiness and success when dealing with stress. For example; being pregnant is tiring, anxious, and even painful for many women. However, the happiness of a mother who can take her baby in her arms cannot be discussed. For these reasons, some researchers have stated that stress is not actually a bad thing, it is not possible to avoid it, and that stress is essential for motivation, growth, change and development.

Events related to the goals individuals want to achieve, such as promotion, fame, and marriage are in the positive stress category; obstacles such as death, unemployment, not being promoted in the profession, and events related to losses can be classified under negative stress. While positive stresses play a motivating and encouraging role, others lead to harmful mental and physical consequences. As it can be seen, stress is not a completely negative concept. We need some stress in life. However, when the amount increases, it starts to threaten our lives. That's why we should make use of positive stress as much as possible, and avoid negative stress as much as possible.

<b>Activity: Discovery of Their Own Strengths</b>
<b>Objective: To Make The Individual Aware of Their Own Strengths</b>
The trainer asks the participants to imagine themselves as a building. "7 columns support the building. What are the pillars that keep you alive, make it easier for you to cope with the stresses of life and give you strength? " Participants write on their papers the strenght sources they have identified. For example; These can be a person, a belief, a person's cat, an object,



etc. "When we are under stress, the columns may not be enough. Now I want you to add 3 more columns to the building. What could these be? " For example: a new hobby, playing sports, a new friend, etc.

## **Coping With Stress**

Individuals who participate more actively in social life and business life, who enjoy their work and the social activities they participate in, who have positive expectations about the future, who are more tolerant and flexible as a personality and who have positive emotional relationships with their close environment are more resistant to stress and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

When we consider that change is inevitable today, we can easily conclude that it is not possible to completely get rid of the stress caused by the effort to adapt to change. However, avoiding the negative consequences caused by stress as much as possible, that is, revealing the ways to cope with stress is also necessary to increase the quality of human life. Coping with stress can be expressed as learning how to keep stress at a positive level, not eliminating stress.

## **Physical Ways of Coping with Stress**

The ways of coping with stress physically will help control the negative effects of stress on the body by affecting the central nervous system and the sympathetic nervous system. These ways are physical exercise, breathing exercise, relaxation techniques, biological feedback, eating habits, resting and sleep (Şahin, 2007).

## **Physical Exercises**

Physical exercise techniques are an important element in strengthening their ability to cope with stress. The purpose of exercise is to improve oxygen distribution and metabolic processes, improve strength, endurance, reduce body fat, and improve muscle joint movements. There are three basic steps to exercise; warm-up, exercise and cooling. Warm-up is the preparation of the body for the muscle warming and tension required by the exercises to be done. Exercise is what to do. Cooling down is to continue moving for a few more minutes after the exercise is over. Thus, blood circulation continues.

Baltaş (1996) listed the benefits of physical exercise as follows;

-Muscle relaxation

-Mental relaxation

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- Increased activity in the workplace
- Increased alertness
- Increase in energy
- Emotional discharge and comfort
- Better sleep
- Stronger bones
- Decrease in anxiety
- Reduce heart attack risk
- Protection and relief from waist and back pain
- Increase in self-confidence
- Better health condition

### **Breathing Exercise**

There is a tight connection between controlling the body and healthy breathing. Learning to breathe healthily is essential to coping with stress. During the stress response, respiration accelerates and the number of heart beats increases. Deep breathing decreases the number of heartbeats, and the increase in the blood supply to the hands and feet causes warming and heaviness in this area. This situation allows all the muscles of the body to relax and relieve. Correct breathing is as follows: taking slow and deep breathing through the nose with our eyes closed, holding the breath inside us for a while, and then exhaling through the mouth. The important thing here is to use the diaphragm way and to breathe slowly and deeply (Doğan, 2013).

### **Meditation**

We make it a habit to enter a state of calm awareness that balances our body, mind and spiritual health through regular meditation. In a state of calm awareness, our physiological values return to normal and our body compensates for the stress response. Thanks to this calmness, body and mind are in harmony. Our blood pressure returns to normal, sweating decreases, our breathing returns to normal, DHEA (anti-aging) hormone secretion begins instead of stress hormones, and adhesion of blood cloth decreases to its normal level. This state of



calmness, when applied regularly, becomes a part of our daily life and helps to make constructive responses to the stress.

### **Activity: Meditation**

1. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Close your eyes gently and keep them closed until the meditation is over.
2. Make an intention by imagining a desire you want to come true from within silently, as if it came true before very your eyes.
3. By taking a deep breath, leave it to the universe to realize this intention simultaneously as you exhale. From now on, how and when your intention will come true is a matter of concern for the universe, not yours.
4. Observe your breathing naturally for a few minutes.
5. After observing the breath for a few minutes, while taking a slow and deep breath through your nose, think of the word "SO" in your mind without even moving your lips or tongue.
- 6- Think again of the word "HUM" while slowly exhaling this breath through your nose.
- 7- By allowing your breath to flow freely, quietly repeat the word "SO" from your mind with each breath and "HUM" when you exhale.

### **Feeding Habits**

It has been suggested by experts that certain foods or substances used may increase or decrease the negative effects of perceived stress. According to these views, caffeine, alcohol, salt, sugar and fat in excess make it difficult to cope with stress. Fresh vegetables, fruits, legumes and cereal products have a positive effect on health. Although smoking is a substance used in the face of stress due to its short-term pleasurable effect, its long-term effects on health are negative (Telman, 2004).

Another important issue in nutrition is the relationship between stress and vitamins. During stressful times, certain vitamins are heavily needed to keep the nervous and endocrine systems functioning properly. These are B complex and C vitamins. Deficiency of these vitamins also



lowers the tolerance and ability to cope with stress factors. Deficiencies in these vitamins cause anxiety, restlessness and general irritability (Garipoğlu, 2007).

The basic nutritional principles to be considered in coping with stress are as follow (cited in: Eroğlu, 2006).

- You should not drink more than two or three cups of coffee a day.
- A balance of calories, vitamins and minerals should be ensured in daily nutrition.
- Natural and unprocessed food should be preferred in nutrition, and food containing harmful chemical substances should be minimized.
- Eating should be avoided as a coping mechanism in stressful situations, and especially food with high refined sugar content should be avoided.
- If you smoke or constantly exposed to the cigarette of smoke of others , vitamin C should be taken as a supplement.
- Diet cannot be successful unless exercised, Therefore, regular exercise should be done.
- Temporary dietary efforts should be avoided and diet should be determined.
- Food containing salt, saturated fat and cholesterol should be minimized.

## **MENTAL COPING WAYS**

### **Problem Solving Skills**

We go through five steps in solving any problems. These are identifying the problem, reviewing options, choosing a solution, taking action, and evaluating the results. Some problems can be detected easily. However, it may not be that easy to identify many problems that cause stress. This first step in the problem solving process is often the most difficult. The more uncertain the situation is, the more likely it is to be stressful. Uncertainty reduces our control over the stressful situation, affects us before seeking solutions and puts us in more stress. So understanding exactly what the problem is alleviates most of our stress. Insufficient knowledge of problem solving skills causes some problems. It is particularly associated with negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. Therefore, developing problem solving

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skills will primarily reduce our stress level and help us solve problems effectively (Doğan, 2013).

### **Cognitive Restructuring**

Cognitive restructuring is one of the most effective ways in emotion-focused coping types. The cognitive restructuring technique, in the most general sense, serves to change the evaluations made on the event or stimulus. It is not the event that causes the stress, but the interpretations of the event created by the individual, that is, his thoughts. It is not the event or the stimulus itself that reveals the emotions or the experience of stress, but the way the event is evaluated. As a result, it should not be forgotten that emotions and stress experiences arise as a result of thoughts (Baltaş, 1996).

### **Communication Skills**

Proper and effective interpersonal communication plays a critical role in stress experience. As a result of improper communication, interpersonal relationships will become common sources of stress. The acquisition of effective communication skills will relieve the individual from the stress of interpersonal relationships (Onbaşıoğlu, 2004).

## **BEHAVIORAL COPING METHODS**

### **Social Support**

Although there are differences of opinion on the definition and functioning of social support, it is generally defined as the assistance provided to the individual by the people around him. In situations of crisis and tension, individuals need to rely on family members and friends who are seen as natural helpers. The support network formed by these informal assistants has an important effect on the individual's adaptation process and health (Çakır, 1997).

### **Yoga**

Yoga is a technique of self-regulation that is physically and emotionally beneficial. Yoga, which means union and unity in Sanskrit language, is a technique of self-care and spiritual development. If done in accordance with the rules, it has positive effects on the health of the practitioner.

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## Video Activities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Nf2Pzcketg>

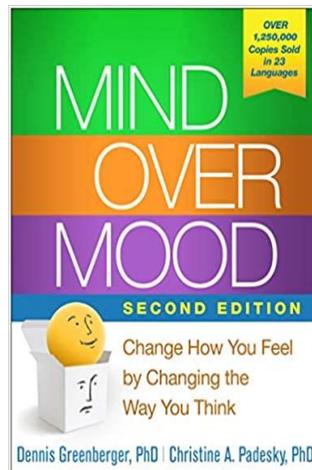
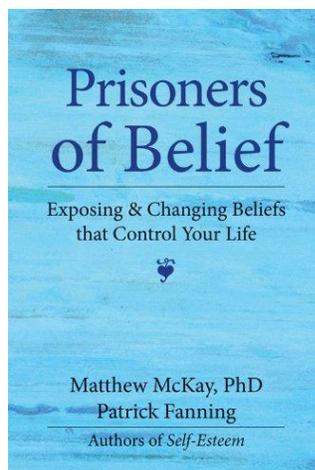
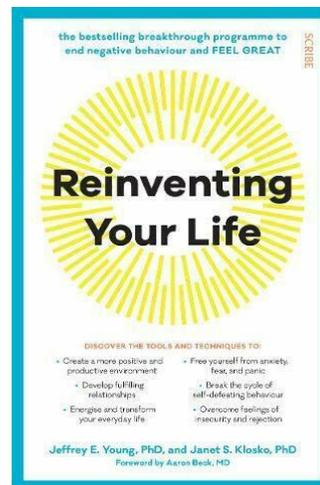
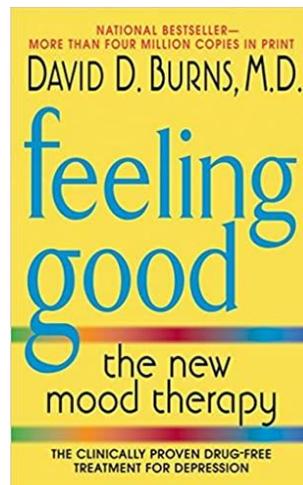
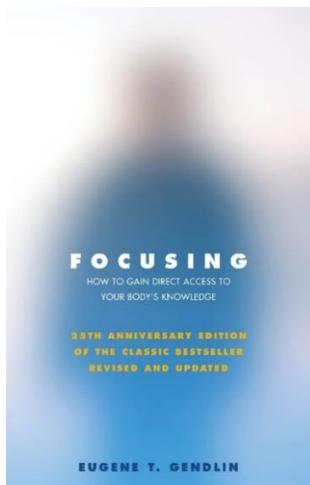
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QXmmP4psbA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLY\\_XXBQWE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLY_XXBQWE)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzKryaN44ss>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-kMJBWk9E0>

## Book Suggestions





### **Activity: The Light Stream**

Close your eyes, your feet are on the ground. Now focus your attention slowly on your body. Identify the points on your body that disturb you from head to toe. And rate the ailment on average between 0 and 10. Now imagine that you have such a stream of light, a ball of light, on the ceiling above your head.

This ball of light is all about health. As you allow, the stream of light approaches you slowly. It touches your hair; If there is anything in your hair and scalp that disturbs you, it melts away and the light moves on. Whatever disturbs you in your head, face, eyes, tongue, palate, brain melts in the light and disappears. Your head is relieved.

The light moves towards your neck, nape, shoulders. Any discomfort that gives you tension in your neck, shoulders and nape melts away. The light travels down your spine, and if there is something disturbing in your spine and in nerves attached to it, it melts away. Your back relaxes.

Every time you breathe in and out, the light is in you, your lungs, your heart, your stomach, and all your internal organs. If there is anything disturbing you in the gut, liver, kidney and all your organs that you can not think of now, it will melt away in the light. You breathe a little easier each time you breathe. And some light goes into the air to deliver healing to someone else.

The light moves , everything that causes discomfort in your back, abdomen, muscles and bones melts away. Your back, arms, stomach are now much more comfortable.

The light moves and anything that causes discomfort in your legs, bones, and muscles melts away. The light moves from your feet to your whole body.

You sit in this ball of light comfortably, healthily, deeply, taking good breaths. Your body is loose. Take a breath. Light fills the entire room or even the entire floor. Take a breath. And when you are ready, feel your feet slowly and slowly open your eyes. **HOW ARE YOU FEELING?**

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### **Activity: The Container Exercise**

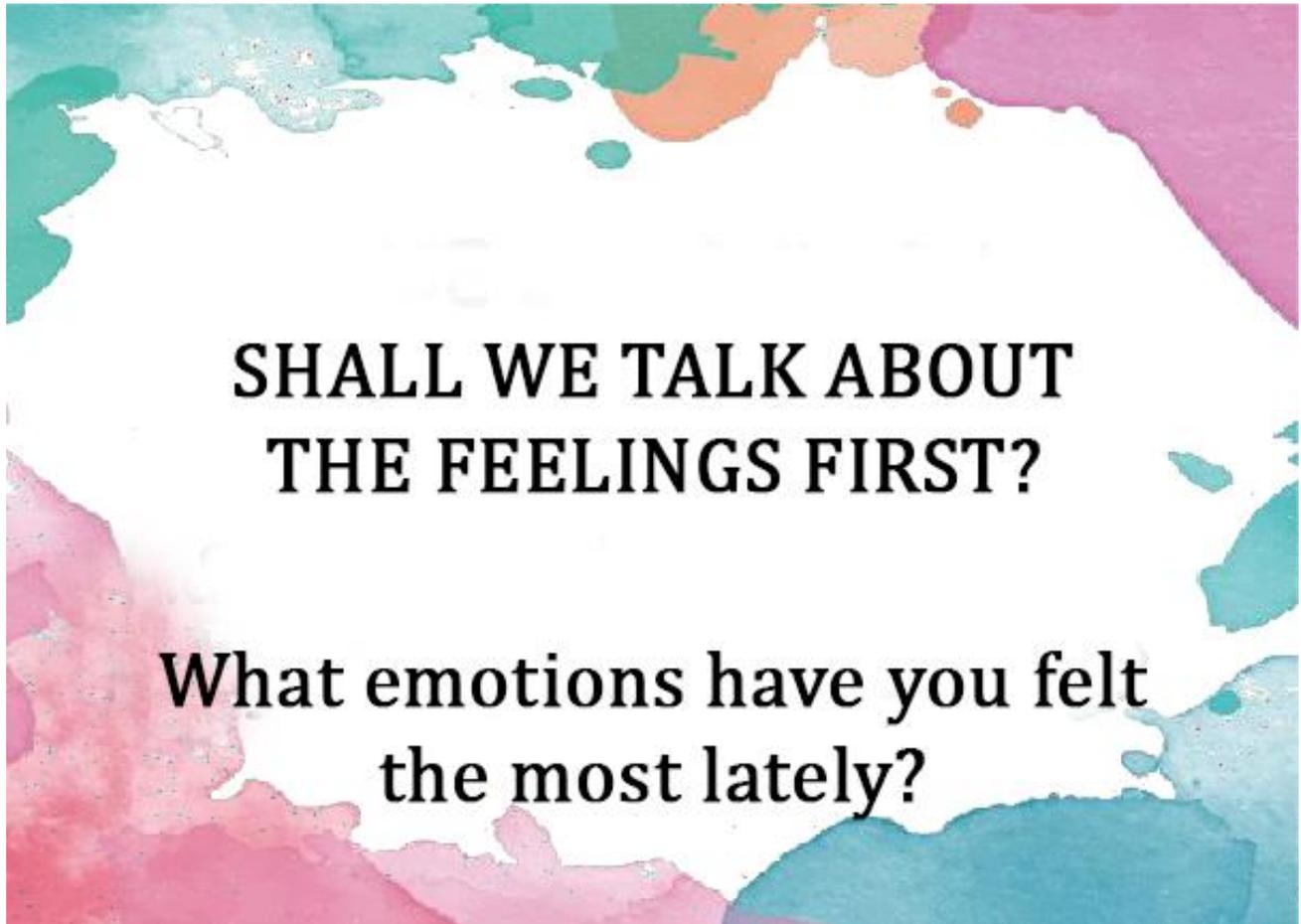
Close your eyes and imagine a container of any shape, size, and quality. This should not be a container at home because we're going to put disturbing memories in it. We don't want it to remind you of disturbing memories every time you see it.

Now imagine sending your feelings, the images, and thoughts to your container. You can do this by imagining them (one at a time or as a single combined unit) flowing from your body into the container. Or you can imagine walking up to your container and placing these items in, followed by placing the lid on it, and then walking away. You can make small beats in the form of wing beats, imagining your hands like a butterfly, while sending them into the container. If you think you've sent them all, close the lid of the container tightly. You can lock it if you want. Your container is here. If there is anything that bothers you after the session, send it into the container. We talk about it when you come again. We will not leave it there, we will not suppress it.

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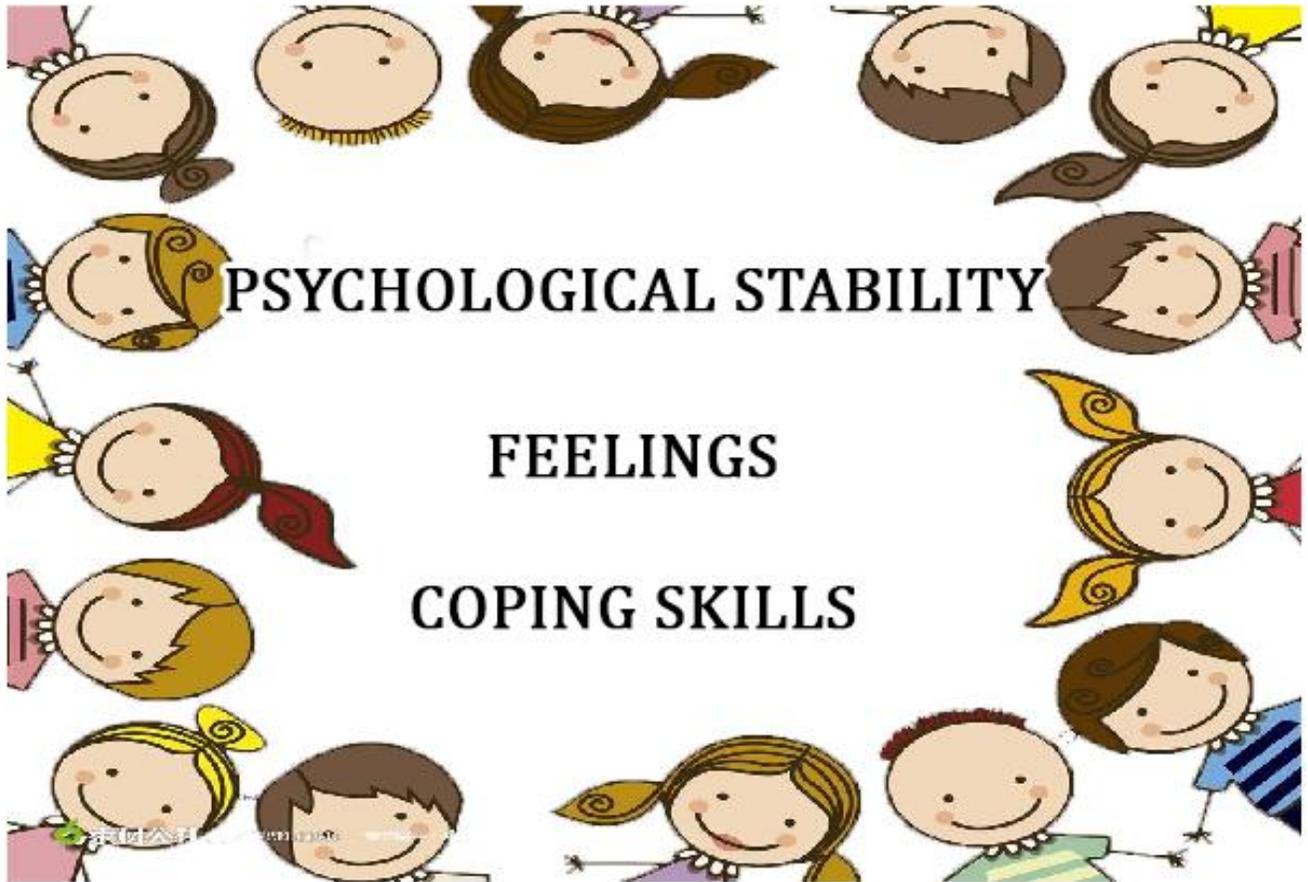
## Activity

A watercolor-style map of the world, with continents in various colors like green, orange, pink, and blue, set against a white background.

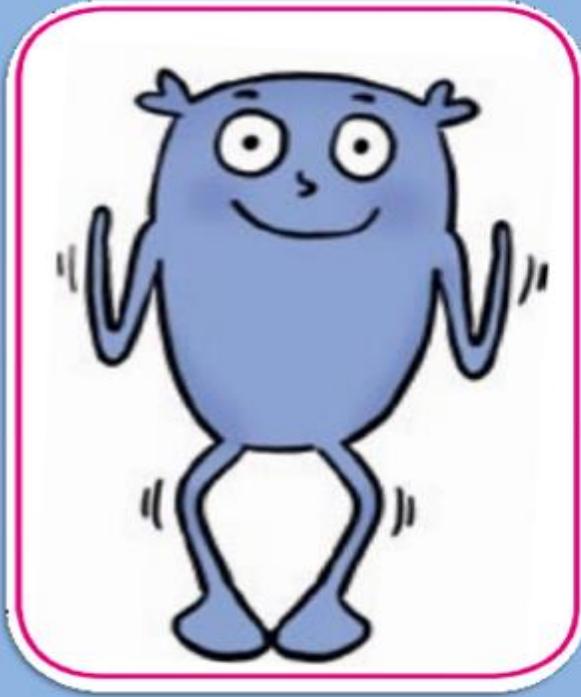
**SHALL WE TALK ABOUT  
THE FEELINGS FIRST?**

**What emotions have you felt  
the most lately?**

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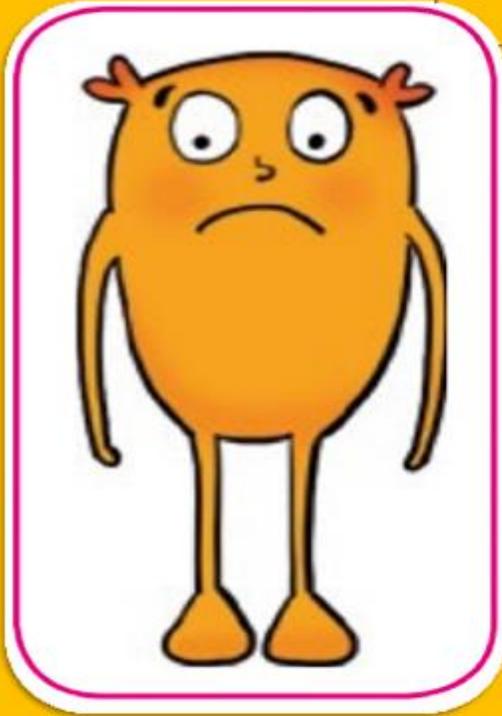
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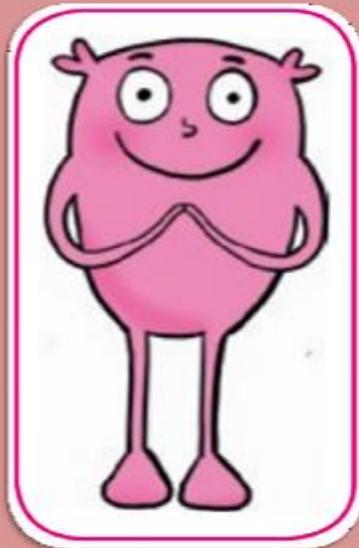
**SOMETIMES  
WE FEEL  
EXCITED...**



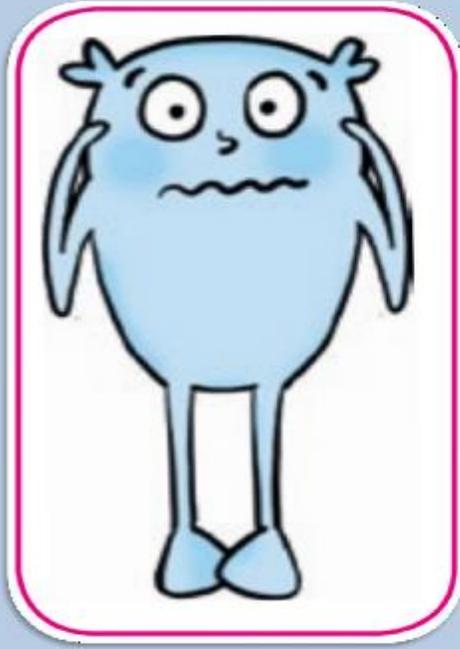
**SOMETIMES  
WE FEEL  
SURPRISED...**



**SOMETIMES  
WE FEEL  
SAD...**



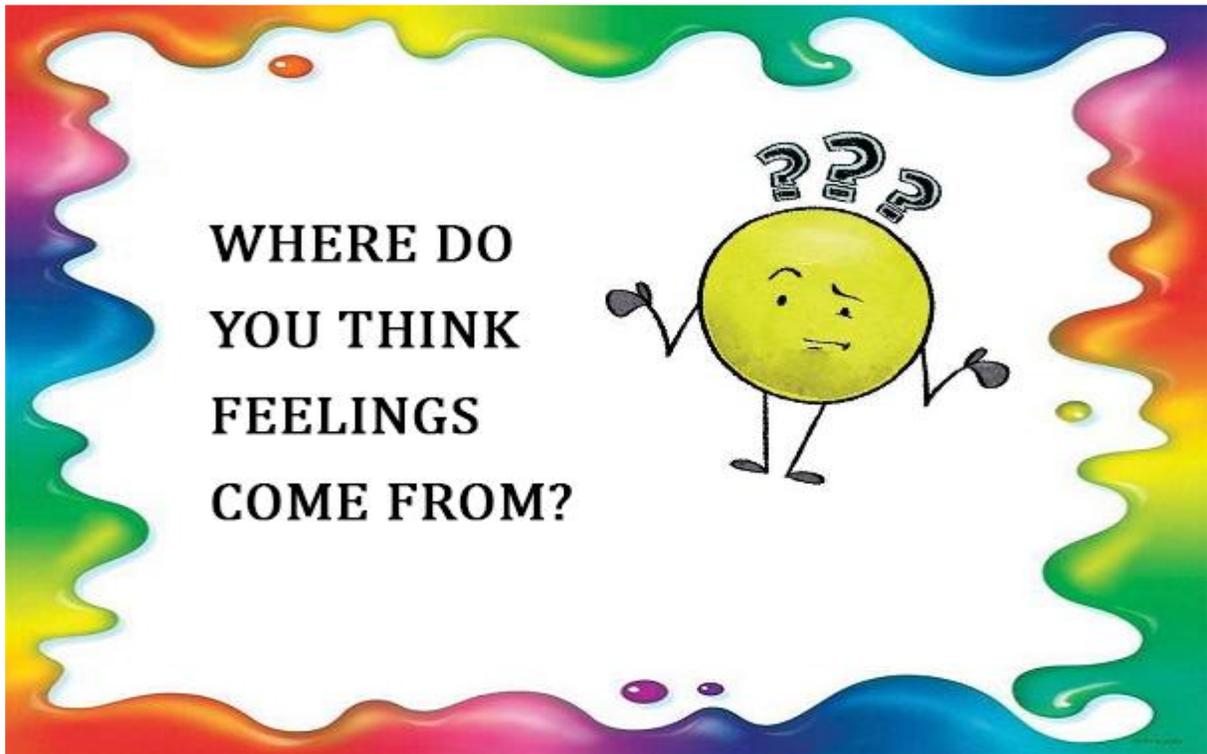
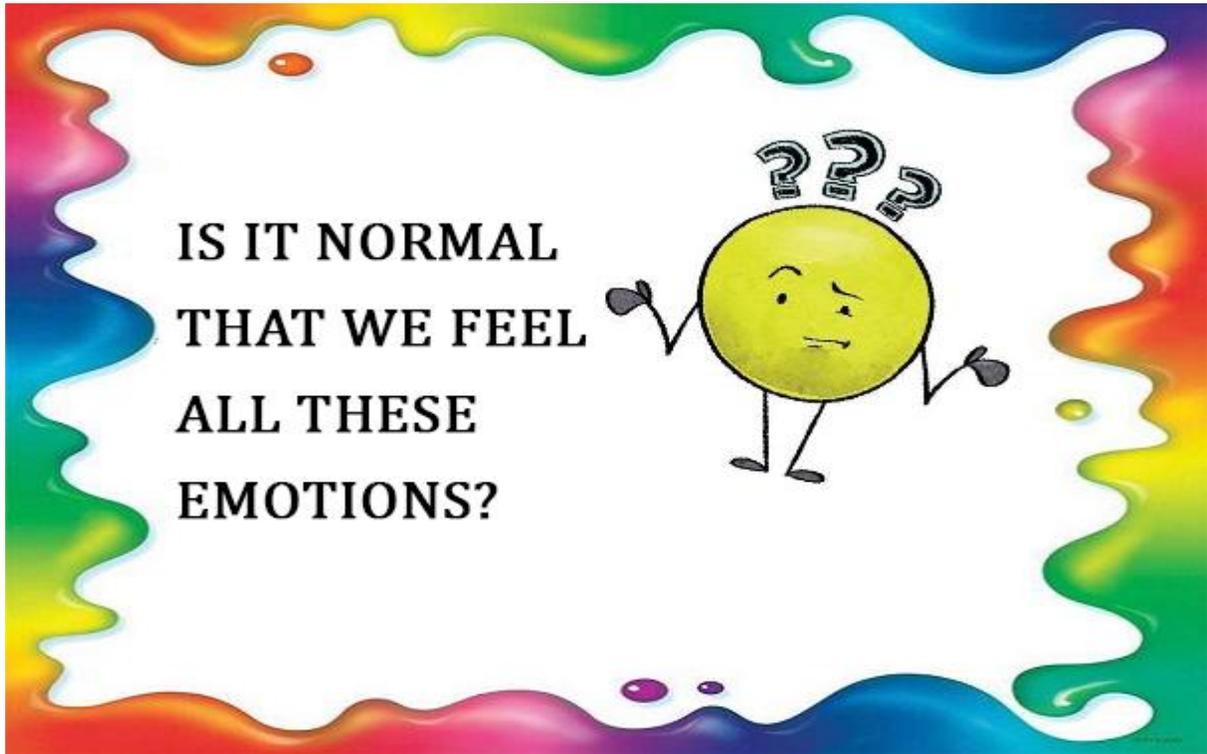
**SOMETIMES  
WE FEEL  
HAPPY...**



**SOMETIMES  
WE FEEL  
VERY ANXIOUS...**



**SOMETIMES  
WE FEEL  
ANGRY...**





## Where do you think feelings come from?

Feelings are our reactions to what is happening around us. We feel an emotion as a result of everything we think and do.



We experience many different feelings throughout the day. As our thoughts, things around us and what we do constantly change, so do our feelings.

Some feelings may be uncomfortable, others comforting.





**Feelings arise, stay for a while and then disappear. Maybe even knowing this can help you overcome feelings you dislike.**



**For example, do you feel angry?  
If you know that your anger will  
pass if you wait a little bit, you  
can stay calm while angry.**



**Some emotions we feel during the  
day are not very strong. Sometimes  
we feel such a strong emotion that it  
takes over us. We can not think of  
anything else.**

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## MY FEELINGS

From the feelings below, circle the emotions you felt the most over the past two weeks.

The central oval contains the following emotions:

Sadness	Excitement		
Serenity	Happiness	Loneliness	
Anger	Despair		
Disappointment	Calm	Despair	
Hope	Anxiety	Love	Ashamed
Confused	Longing	Fear	

Surrounding the oval are ten cartoon faces with various expressions: a smiling face (top left), a sad face (top right), a crying face (middle right), a neutral face (middle left), a sad face (bottom right), a smiling face (bottom right), a neutral face (bottom center), a sad face (bottom left), a neutral face (middle left), and a sad face (middle left).

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## MY FEELINGS THERMOMETER

The thermometer below is designed to measure the emotional state during this process. 0 - I feel very comfortable right now; 10 - I feel very uncomfortable right now.

Now measure your current discomfort.

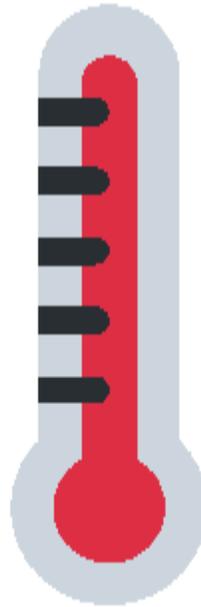
If your discomfort is close to 10, do a relaxation exercise and relax!



10



0

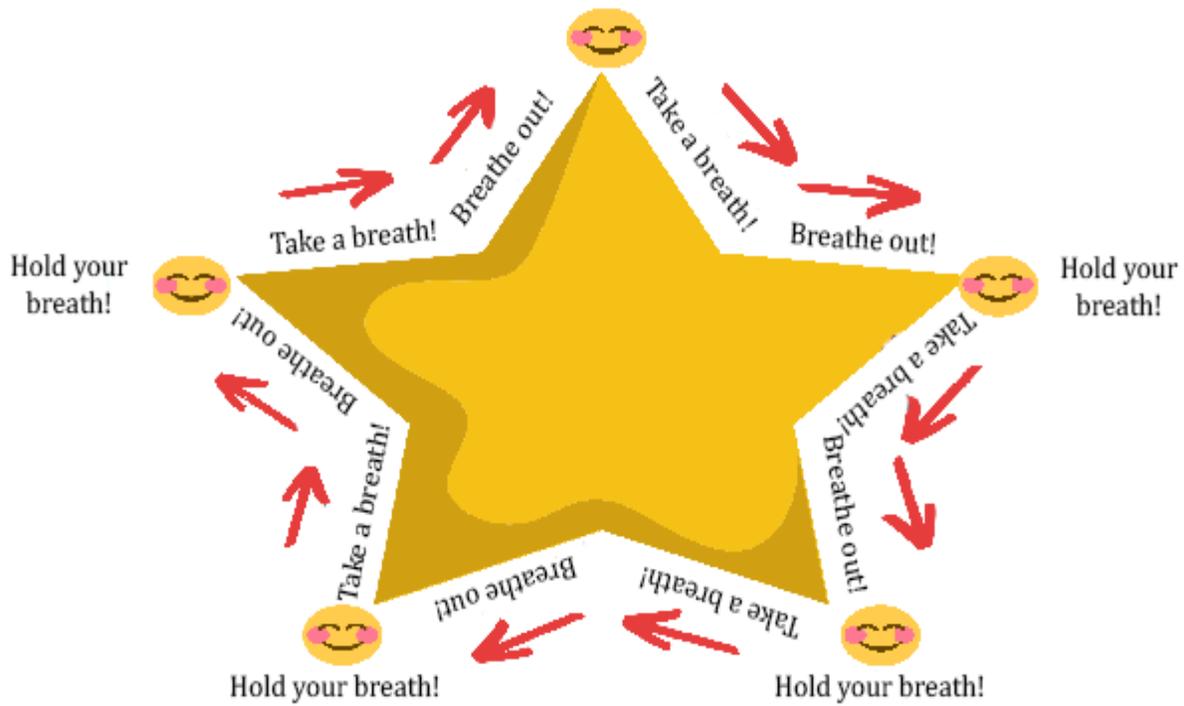




## Activity

### STAR BREATHING

Move around the entire star, starting with any smile and following with your finger. Inhale and exhale as you follow the arrows. Realize your comfort every time you breathe. Hold your breath!





## Activity

### MY UMBRELLA OF POWER

Write down your concerns about the Coronavirus on the clouds. Your umbrella will protect you from these worries. Draw yourself under the umbrella and write down the strengths you have on each part of the umbrella.

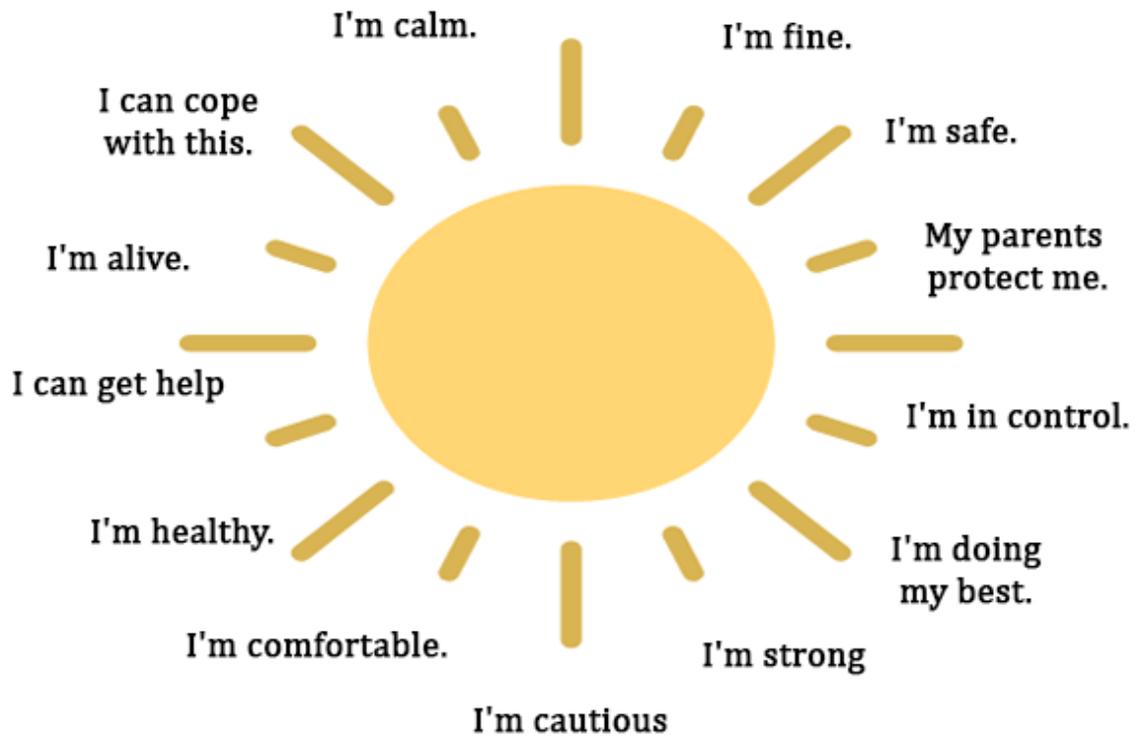
These powerful features will allow you to deal with your worries.  
You can use the list on the next page to find your powerful features.





## Activity

### MY LIST OF POSITIVE THOUGHTS





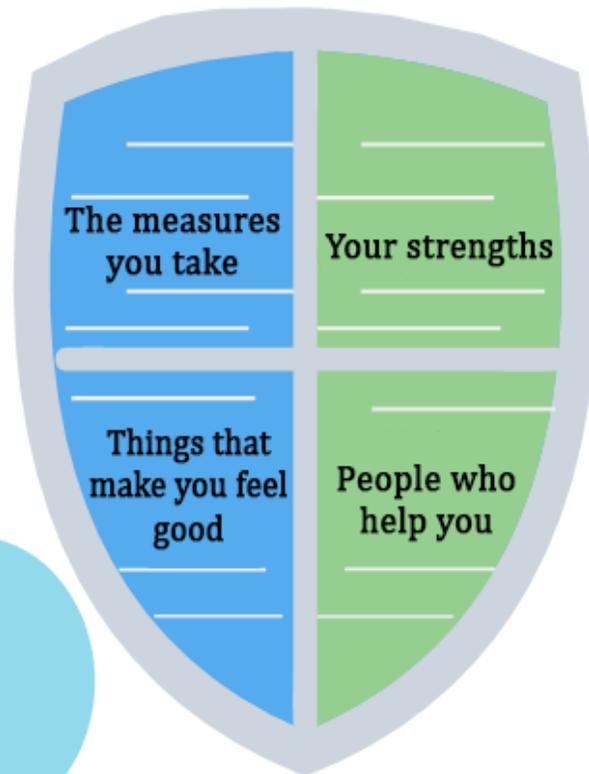
## Activity

# MY PROTECTIVE SHIELD

When you feel sad and anxious, your shield will help you deal with your feelings.

We gave you examples in the bubble.

Fill the sections on your shield by taking help of these examples.



I'm wearing my mask.

I draw.

I eat vegetables and fruits.

I have courage.

I dance.

My parents are with me.



## Activity

# MY BOND OF LOVE

Of the hearts below, the heart in the middle is yours. Paint this heart in any color you want. Write the names of your loved ones on the hearts around you and color those hearts in the colors you want. Draw connections between your own heart and theirs, as in the example. No matter how far you are from your loved ones, these bonds are with you. Feel the power that bonds of love give you.

The activity area contains 13 red-outlined hearts arranged in three rows. The top row has four hearts, the middle row has four hearts, and the bottom row has five hearts. The central heart in the middle row is connected to the heart directly above it by a curved black line. Each heart is accompanied by the text '.....'s heart' below it.

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## Activity

### MY SAFE PLACE

Think of a place where you feel safe and calm. This can be a place you've been to or dreamed of before. For example, your room, the seaside, the park, or above clouds ... While you draw a picture below, enjoy all the things you see, the odours you smell, the sounds you hear, the flavors you feel. As you dream of this place, notice the positive feelings in your body.





## Activity

**EXAMPLES THAT CAN HELP YOU FEEL SAFE**

-  Talking to our loved ones about our feelings
-  Spending time with our family
-  Spending time in nature
-  Painting, drawing something
-  Listening to calm and relaxing music or singing
-  Writing diaries, reading books, studying
-  Playing games (play dough, etc.)
-  Making our favorite recipe (under adult supervision)
-  Drinking warm milk
-  Playing sports
-  Thinking about a funny memory or a joke we laughed about
-  Taking five deep breaths
-  Practicing relaxation exercises



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