



Relationships Education

With Happy Healthy Minds

OVERALL AIMS / CURRICULUM LINKS:

1. Understand the importance of empathy in relationships
2. Foster consideration and respect for others
3. Define the characteristics of friendship
4. Explore the reasons behind bullying behaviour
5. Promote positive behaviour and relationships beyond the classroom



Supporting activities and ideas for Teachers & Students

For use in the classroom or at home.

Suitable for ages 8+



Happy, Healthy Minds: A Children's Guide to Emotional Wellbeing

This is a guide designed to help children become more aware of their emotional needs and examines a range of topics that might give their minds difficulties, for example:

- When parents don't seem to understand us
- When we are finding it hard to make friends
- When we feel angry, anxious or lack confidence
- When school feels boring or difficult

We explore a range of common scenarios encountered by children and talk about some of the very best ideas to help deal with them. By offering a sympathetic and supportive framework, *'Happy, Healthy Minds'* encourages children to open up, explore their feelings and face the dilemmas of growing up armed with emotional intelligence.

Suggested for curious minds aged 8+.

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OBJECTIVES:	
Define what we mean by the word 'friend'; create a list of attributes and behaviours of a healthy friendship.	
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OBJECTIVES:	
Explore how bullies might also suffer themselves; develop empathy skills to tackle bullying behaviour.	
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OBJECTIVES:	
Understand the value of emotional intelligence; identify the markers of emotional intelligence.	

This Mini-Scheme of work can be used with children either at home or in the classroom. It includes material for between 4-6 lessons. The lessons can be completed in sequence or children can dip in and out of activities as they wish.

NOTE:

It is advised that teachers, parents or carers read through this Mini-Scheme and complete any tasks before students, to ensure that everyone is comfortable with its themes and activities.

1. EMPATHY

Pages 147–149

BIG IDEA:

You have a lot of great sides, but some bad ones too. People who love you always know that: they can see the link between your strengths and your weaknesses and they forgive you for the latter.

START:

What is 'empathy'?

1. Encourage children to reflect on a time when they played 'pretend' – thinking about how they used empathy. For example: 'dressing up' or 'playing superheroes'. What did they need to do to step into another person/character's shoes?
2. Reflect on 'empathy' and write a definition: 'I think empathy means...'

em – Ancient Greek,
'in, into'.

pathos – Ancient Greek,
'feeling, emotion'.

3. Can children think of someone they know who was once being 'annoying' to someone else? Describe the scenario in detail.
4. Empathise with *both* people in the scenario and answer the following questions:
 - What is it like to share 'in' their 'feelings'?
 - What were their *strengths and weaknesses* in the scenario? How were their strengths also their weaknesses?

By constantly shifting perspectives, children may gradually begin to understand that empathy creates wisdom.

5. What are your strengths that could also be weaknesses?

TRY WRITING YOUR OWN



DEVELOP:

Observing empathy with the 'Speaker's Stick'.

1. Deliver a statement, for example:
'It is easier to have empathy when you are not personally involved in the situation.'
2. Select two volunteers who *disagree* with each other.
3. Person A is given a stick, known as the 'Speaker's Stick':
 - Whoever has the Speaker's Stick can speak, stating what they think and why.
 - Whoever does not have the stick cannot speak *unless* it is to ask questions and empathise with the other person.
 - When Person A holding the stick *feels* understood, they pass the stick to Person B.
4. The passing of the stick continues until both Person A and Person B *feel understood*.

Genuine dialogue requires fairness. This activity shows children how to conduct a fair dialogue, as the Speaker's Stick prevents the participants from talking over each other. The activity also encourages reflection, as the topic is empathy itself, and the children must use empathy to *discuss* empathy.

CREATE:

Using empathy to create mutual understanding.

Having observed how empathy works in the previous activity, give children a chance to practice themselves.

1. Ask students to find a partner and decide on a philosophical topic they *disagree* about. For example: 'Everyone has free will' or 'The meaning of Right and Wrong depends on the situation – it is all relative.'
2. Person A is given a stick (or a pencil), known as the 'Speaker's Stick':
 - Whoever has the Speaker's Stick can speak, explaining what they think and why.
 - Whoever does not have the stick cannot speak *unless* it is to ask questions and empathise with the other person for understanding.
 - When Person A holding the stick *feels* understood, they pass the stick to Person B.
3. The passing of the stick continues until both Person A and Person B feel *understood*.

Philosophy is an opportunity for empathy because it is full of disagreements. The purpose of this task is less about who is 'right' and 'wrong', and more about creating understanding.

DISCUSS:

Facilitate discussion on empathy and autonomy.

- Is empathy the same as agreement?

REFLECT:

Share ideas on expanding the limits of empathy.

- What might it feel like to empathise with *two, three or four* people?
- Is it possible to empathise with *hundreds, thousands, even millions* of people?

2. FRIENDSHIP

Pages 90–95

BIG IDEA:

Here is a thought that an ancient philosopher called Seneca once said, 'A true friend is as rare as a comet in the sky.'

START:

The aim of this task is to help children organise their ideas on friendship.

1. Ask children to write the word 'friend' in the middle of a blank sheet of paper. They should write continuously and *without self-criticism* everything that comes to mind around the word 'friend'.
2. Then, create an acrostic for the word 'Friend'. For example:

Forgiving

Respectful

Inspiring

Empathetic

Needful

Defender

F _____

R _____

I _____

E _____

N _____

D _____

The acrostic need not be single words but could also be sentences, or even a poem.

3. Encourage children to share their ideas with a partner and discuss what they think Seneca meant by a 'true friend'.

DEVELOP:

This activity introduces children to metaphorical thinking.

1. We can see *examples* of what a good friend does (they may create further examples) below and on page 91. Can children *rank* them in order of importance to them?

Acknowledges
your feelings
(even bad ones)

Listens and is
interested to
know more

Apologises and
will genuinely
be sorry

Shares their
vulnerabilities
with you

Enjoys hearing
about the secret
bits of you

Makes you feel
normal if you've
made a mistake

2. Then, write a '*Friendship Recipe*':

- What are the 'ingredients' of a good friendship and how should the 'dish' be prepared?
- Share Friendship Recipes with a friend or the group.

After listing the attributes and integrating them using the recipe metaphor, children may then evaluate the metaphor by thinking about where it works and where it breaks down. If there is time, they may also try other metaphors.

CREATE:

Thinking about the Golden Rule.

1. Reflect on the following statement:

‘Treat others as you would wish to be treated.’

2. Encourage children to write about a scenario where they experienced a *problem or difficulty*, describing how they felt in detail. For example:
 - I didn’t feel well on my birthday.
 - I was struggling with schoolwork.
3. Create *solutions* to these problems in terms of what a good friend would do. For example:
 - Keep in touch while they are feeling unwell.
 - Help with schoolwork or find a useful source of information to support them.

4. Think of a friend who might be in a *similar situation* and write an ‘*Action Plan*’:

- What is the problem? How might their friend feel?
- What is the solution? How might their friend feel better?
- What should they do as a good friend?

5. Children may benefit from sharing their Action Plans with a friend or the group.

Sometimes we know more than we actually do. This activity begins with an abstract rule and ends with a concrete action plan. In contrast, the previous activity began with concrete examples and ended with abstract metaphors. By thinking in both ‘directions’ children may learn to solve problems flexibly.

DISCUSS:

Facilitate discussion on how concepts like empathy, friendship, and the Golden Rule might help us think about moral dilemmas.

- If a friend does something wrong, what should we do?

REFLECT:

On the idea of being friends with oneself.

- What does it mean, and why might it be important, to be friends with ourselves?

3. BULLIES

Pages 62–66

BIG IDEA:

Around bullying we're meeting a big idea about why people behave badly: people are horrible because they are suffering.

START:

The purpose of this task is to use the concepts of empathy and friendship to think about bullying behaviour.

1. Encourage children to reflect on a time when they found it *difficult* to be a good friend, describing it in detail.
 - What was the right thing to do?
 - What made doing the right thing difficult?
 - How will they make sure they do the right thing next time?

2. Reflect on the following statement:

'People are horrible because they are suffering.'

Do children agree or disagree? Why?

3. Discuss the possible reasons behind bullying behaviour. Some are shown on page 63.

Bullies are sometimes hard to understand, which makes empathising difficult. However, the possibility of living up to an ideal, such as friendship, may help children to address the problem with a positive mindset.



DEVELOP:

This task aims to help children understand emotions behind behaviour.

1. Can children reflect on a time (or a scenario they can imagine) where one person 'bullied' another person?
2. Divide a plain sheet of paper into two *columns*.
3. The left column will be entitled 'Behaviour', the right column 'Emotion':
 - In the *left column*, describe things that the person said or did.
 - In the *right column*, describe thoughts and feelings *behind* what the person said or did.

BEHAVIOUR

Describe only the behaviour
E.g. 'Teasing, laughing, poking fun.'

EMOTIONS

Describe the emotions and thoughts behind the behaviour.
E.g. FEAR: 'I have to be mean so they don't laugh at me.'

Children may begin to see complex relationships: perhaps several behaviours link to a single emotion, or several emotions to a single behaviour.

CREATE:

The Empathy Pyramid.

1. Reflect again on the same scenario, or perhaps another one, where one person 'bullied' another person.
2. Create an *inverted pyramid*, dividing it into *three layers*.
3. The top layer will be entitled 'Behaviour', the middle layer 'Emotion', and the bottom layer 'Deeper Emotion'.
 - Beginning from the top, describe the bullying behaviour in detail.
 - Moving to the *middle*, describe the emotions behind such behaviour.
 - Then, moving to the *bottom*, describe the emotions behind such emotions.
4. Reflect on how these 'Deeper Emotions' might influence all the emotions and behaviour above.

The pyramid need not have only three layers but may have more. Children may begin to understand empathy as layered, just as emotions are layered, and view empathy as a practical skill and source of wisdom; it is easy to assume the problem is a surface behaviour when really it is a deeper one. If we better understand problematic behaviour, we may think up better solutions.



DISCUSS:

Grey areas between friendship and bullying.

- Is it possible for someone to be *both* a friend and a bully?

REFLECT:

Share ideas on stopping and preventing bullying.

- What is the wise thing to do to *stop and prevent* bullying?

4. BEYOND SCHOOL

Pages 82–85

BIG IDEA:

There are people who don't get on very well at school but who have plenty of success after they leave.

START:

The aim of this task is for the children to think about 'success' both inside and outside of school.

1. Encourage children to write the word 'Success' at the top of a piece of paper and divide the paper into *three columns*:
 - The left column is for *clear examples*.
 - The middle column is for *borderline examples*.
 - The right column is for *opposite examples*.

2. Can children fill in the columns with as many characteristics of 'success' as they can think of? For example:
 - *Clear Examples*: studying hard, focused, doing homework, asking questions...
 - *Borderline Examples*: studying just enough to pass, sometimes distracted,...
 - *Opposite Examples*: giving up, not trying, blaming others, not asking for help...
3. Together, write a definition: **'I think success means...'**
4. Reflect on the following statement, and write down whether they agree or disagree:

'There are people who fail at school but succeed after they leave.'

Thinking about borderline cases allows students to clarify the boundaries of their definitions and reflect on why they define 'success' as they do. This activity also opens discussion on what 'success' means outside of school, where 'Emotional Intelligence' may be more important than academic ability.

SUCCESS

CLEAR EXAMPLES Examples of 'success'

E.g. 'studying hard...'

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BORDERLINE EXAMPLES Examples of 'grey areas'

E.g. 'studying just enough to pass...'

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OPPOSITE EXAMPLES Examples of 'failure'

E.g. 'giving up...'

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DEVELOP:

This task aims to introduce children to the concept of 'emotional intelligence'.

1. The children reflect on a time when they solved a *problem* for someone *outside of school*, describing in detail. For example:
 - **Helping mum and dad with the chores.**
 - **Fixing something for a friend or sibling.**
 - **Completing a small job for a neighbour.**
2. Reflect on the following characteristics of emotional intelligence on page 83 and opposite.

Sensitive to
the needs of
other people

Able to admit
when you might
be wrong

Able to calm
down upset or
angry people

Able to stick up
for good ideas
when necessary

Interested in ideas
(even from people
you don't like)

Good at
helping other
people in need

Nice to people
that you don't
like very much

Able to lead
without seeming
really bossy

3. Encourage children to write down which of these characteristics they possess themselves, and to reflect on the following questions:

- Why are these characteristics important for ‘success’ *outside* school?
- How are they *different* from the characteristics required for ‘success’ *inside* school?

The characteristics of ‘emotional intelligence’, which include empathy and friendship, are essential to ‘success’ outside of school. By reflecting on their own experiences outside school, children may begin to distinguish emotional skills from intellectual skills.

CREATE:

Role-playing an ‘emotionally unintelligent’ scenario.

1. Ask children to form groups of six.

- *The Situation:* Customers ordering food at a restaurant.
- *The Roles:* Restaurant Manager, Chef, Waiter(s), Customer(s).
- *Details:* Each person must role-play the opposite of one of the characteristics above. For example:
 - i. Restaurant Manager who is not able to lead without seeming really bossy.
 - ii. Chef who is not sensitive to the needs of other people.
 - iii. Waiter who is not good at helping other people in need.
 - iv. Customers who is not nice to people that they don’t like very much

2. *Discussion:* How did it play out? What can be learned about ‘success’?

Negative examples are just as informative as positive ones. By deliberately playing the negative, children may develop a clearer view of the positive.

DISCUSS:

Facilitate discussion on 'emotional intelligence'.

- What might it mean to be 'emotionally intelligent'?

This discussion may include questions about what emotions are, what 'intelligence' means, what it means to 'control' emotions, and what it might mean to express an emotion 'intelligently'.

REFLECT:

On a positive life.

- What can I do to feel more positive now and in the future?

Suggestions: exercise, journaling, drawing, setting goals, learning, making new friends, helping somebody...