Activity Ideas

Learn Well

Bag of Buddies

T3382 and T3399

Let's make friends with our feelings

If we accept that all emotions are valid, they all matter and as humans we will, chances are, experience all of them in our lives; then it is important to get to know them, to recognise them and to understand what they are telling us about ourselves and others.

For example, we feel angry if we think we are on the receiving end of injustice, or if our boundaries have been violated. We feel sad if we are bereaved of someone we love or have another kind of loss. Envy tells us what we want in life. Fear alerts us to danger and so on.

The Bag of Buddies are charming little characters, who children can connect with. Small enough to sit in the palm of their hands, and soft to touch, they really are great listeners.

I feel happy when my granny comes to visit

Get to know the Buddies

Take sometime to get to know the Buddies, pulling each one from the bag and talking about their expressions. Ask the children what the Buddy might be feeling? Can you see the tear on Sad Buddies face? Look at Angry Buddies scowling eyebrows. I wonder what Anxious Buddy is worried about? Can you guess? And here is Happy Buddy full of joy. You might like to choose names for the Buddies like Happy Henry, or Sad Sara. Or just keep it simple and talk about Happy Buddy, or Sad Buddy, etc.

I wonder why?

Ask the children why Angry Buddy might be feeling angry. Let the children come up with as many ideas as possible. Remember there are no right or wrong answers.

If you can, read one of the Pip books with the children, either "Pip and the Bag of Buddies" which explores each emotion in turn. Or maybe the "Pip feels Angry" book, when you are talking about anger and getting to know Angry Buddy. This will give you lots of prompts. You can ask the children to talk about their angry feelings.

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Welcome to the Happy Gang

In a small group, pull one of the Buddies from the bag and throw it to one of the children to catch. This child then has pull the same face as the Buddy and name the emotion. If you can, pass a little mirror around so that children can see their own faces too.

Alternatively, when you pull the Buddy out of the bag, ask all the children to stand up together and make a whole-body statue of that feeling. Ask the children to name the emotion.

My Sad Body

Sadness, like all emotions involves changes in the whole body. Tears well up in our eyes, our faces contort and crunch up, we cry and our bodies shudder with sobs. Our hearts hurt, our heads might throb, our posture sags and crumples. We droop and turn inwards. We might hold our head in our hands or hug our knees. Sadness lowers our energy.

The following activity demonstrates that we feel sadness in our whole bodies (not just our faces) and helps children understand their experience. Using a wide roll of paper, lie one child down and draw an outline around their body. Together talk about where we feel sadness and colour in the parts of the body where they feel their sadness. Talk together about their

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choice of colours, and the marks they have chosen to make. There are no right or wrong answers here. Every child's experience and contribution matters.

You can repeat this activity with each of the emotions at different times during the year, so that children are able, together, to build up an understanding and vocabulary around each emotion.

Tell me a story

Together with the children, make up stories about each of the Buddies. Why is Excited Buddy so excited? What has happened? Who might they tell? What will happen next?

Why is Anxious Buddy feeling a little worried today?

Give me the words so that I might speak

We all know the benefits of talking about feelings. It is, of course, to be encouraged. But in order to do this, children (and adults) need two things: someone with good ears and a kind heart to be listening, and the vocabulary to enable them to talk about their feelings. So help children build their emotional vocabulary and understanding.

For each emotion use, and so build, a wide range of other words. So for sadness you may talk about feeling blue, down-hearted, glum, heavy-hearted, etc.

Talk about their size and scale. Which is bigger cross or furious? Fretting or 'worried sick'? Joyous or ecstatic?

Look at photographs and talk about the language of association and place. For example, I felt so angry I thought I might explode like a volcano. Or I felt a wave of sadness.

Let's talk about my angry feelings

happy	**cross**	**terrified**
joyful	**excited**	**calm**
sad	**thrilled**	**relaxed**
glum	**jealous**	**emotions**
anxious	**bitter**	**emotional**
worried	**spiteful**	**feelings**
angry	**scared**	**understanding**

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