

# Lesson 3: Big Feelings

# Key stage 1: Year 1/2

This is the third in a series of three lessons written for Year 1 or 2 (KS1) about mental health and wellbeing focussing on feeling and emotions. In this lesson, pupils explore the impact of 'big' feelings on their behaviour and how to manage this. They also practise how to ask for help with feelings. Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.



## Learning objective

Pupils will learn:

- about 'big' feelings and how to manage them



## Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- recognise that feelings can intensify (get stronger)
- describe how big feelings can affect their behaviour
- identify what can help them feel better when they have a big feeling (including talking to trusted adults)
- use words or phrases to ask for help with feelings



## Climate for learning

Before teaching these lessons, ensure that you read the accompanying PSHE Association document [Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, handling questions, and additional advice relating to teaching about mental health effectively and safely.



## Resources required

Box or envelope for anonymous questions



Flipchart paper and pens



Resource 1: Say and do sheet



Resource 2: Sorting feelings (Photocopy 1 sheet per group and cut out individual word cards)



## Key words

Big feelings, little feelings, good feelings, not so good feelings, unsure, worried, anger, angry, sadness, excited, intensity, happy, heartbroken, scared, thrilled, distressed, glad, furious, overjoyed, terrified, sleepy, exhausted

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Baseline assessment	Pupils show their current understanding of 'big feelings' and how to manage them.	5min
2. Big and little feelings	A simple card sort activity to classify feelings.	10min
3. Discussion of big feelings & behaviour	Pupils discuss big feelings and strategies for feeling better	15min
4. Role play Asking for help	Pupils practise asking for help.	20min
5. Plenary: reflecting on learning and signposting support	Pupils reflect on the main points from today's lesson. Support and where to go for help is given.	5min
6. Endpoint assessment	Pupils annotate the draw and write sheet with new learning from today's lesson.	5min

# Baseline assessment



## Say and do



Explain that Maz the alien is having a 'big' feeling. He knows it's a big feeling because his body is tense and shaking, and his fists are tight. What might his big feeling be?

Tell pupils that Maz is feeling really angry. Can they give him some advice on what he could do to help with his big feeling?

**Using Resource 1: Say and do** sheet, pupils write in the speech bubble what Maz might **say** to someone to tell them how he is feeling. In the box, write or draw two things that he can **do** that might help him with his big feeling.

The purpose of this activity is to enable the class teacher to find out the pupils' existing knowledge, skills and attitudes towards big feelings and how to manage them. Pupils should work individually, however an adult should scribe for those who need support. Whilst they are working, do not prompt them in any way. When complete, ensure pupils write their name at the top of their paper. Collect in and note any responses and any misconceptions that need addressing through the lesson. Keep the sheets – pupils will return to this activity at the end of the lesson to assess their learning.

# Core activities



## Big and little feelings



Remind pupils that in the previous lessons they have been exploring different types of feelings, and that today's lesson will look at 'big' feelings.

Display the **Everyday Feelings list from lesson 1**. Pupils decide which feelings on the list are 'big' feelings. Can they think of any other big feelings to tell Maz about? Provide examples from the key words section if necessary.

Explain that sometimes these big feelings don't start off as big feelings, they can start as little feelings but if they don't go away they can grow and grow until they become big feelings. Sometimes we can do things to help us calm down (recap suggestions from lesson 2), but sometimes these feelings can get bigger and bigger until they can change how we behave or how we get on with other people or how we see the world, a bit like blowing up a balloon until it gets bigger and bigger and finally pops.

Provide **Resource 2: Sorting feelings**. Pupils work in groups to sort their word cards into 'big' or 'little' feelings. Compare how groups have sorted their cards. Were there any that they were unsure of?

### Support:



Pupils match feelings pictures to a simple scale of 'little' and 'big' feelings. Provide pictures from magazines or newspapers which show feelings.

### Challenge



Provide Resource 2a: Sorting feelings as above. Pupils should sort cards into 3 piles: 'little feelings' 'big feelings' and 'unsure'. Some cards have been left blank - challenge pupils to add their own suggestions. Compare how pupils have sorted their cards. Were there any that they were unsure of? Were they able to add their own suggestions? What can they tell Maz about how feelings can get bigger?



## Big feelings and behaviour



Read aloud the following scenario. Pupils suggest how the big feeling has affected Maz's behaviour.

*Maz finds out that his best friend from his home planet is coming to earth to visit him. Maz starts talking really loud and fast and shouts and whoops; he is jumping up and down and spinning round and round. He starts to jump and bounce on the sofa, even though the grown-ups tell him not too. Oops – he makes a tear in the cushion. Maz realises that he is having a big feeling that is affecting his behaviour.*

Ask pupils:

1. Can you identify the big feeling that Maz is having? (He is excited)
2. How is the big feeling changing Maz's behaviour? (He is talking fast and loud/jumping around/shouting out, jumping on the sofa)
3. Which parts of Maz's behaviour are not so good? (Jumping on the sofa, tearing the cushion and ignoring the grown-ups)
4. Can you suggest ways that he could make the situation better? (Talking to an adult about feelings should be included - provide this if pupils do not volunteer as a response)
5. What could you do to help Maz or what advice would you give him? (Stress that feeling excited is a good feeling but that any big feeling can affect our behaviour in not so good ways and it's this that Maz needs help to manage)

As a whole class discuss how some of the big feelings on **Resource 2** can affect and change people's behaviour. Ask pupils to suggest ways that someone could help themselves feel better. Ask pupils if they think that Maz's big feelings might change? Explain that like all feelings, our big feelings can change and can get smaller, just like a balloon that goes down.



## Asking for help



Explain that you've received some text messages from some children who want to ask the class their advice. Read the questions and ask the pupils what advice they would give, drawing out that it's often a good idea to ask an adult or someone they trust, for help.

**Text messages:**

- 'I'm feeling so angry today, I wonder what can help me feel better. Any ideas?' – Grace, age 7
- 'What do you do when you feel excited?' – Ali, aged 6
- 'I need some quiet time because I feel exhausted, who should I tell?' – Milo, age 8
- 'I'm really scared – I feel sick in my body, what will help?' – Tali, age 5

Next, pupils role-play asking for help. They should begin by freeze framing a big feeling (use feelings from Resource 2), which they should show on their face and bodies. Choose a few children to demonstrate asking for help.

After the role plays, tell pupils that talking to an adult won't always solve a problem – but it might start to help them feel better. This is because adults have experience and can come up with ideas that might help them to feel better.

# Assessing learning & signposting support



## Reflecting on today's learning & signposting support



Pupils identify some of the things that someone can do to help them when they have a big feeling, and some of the things that they shouldn't do:

For example:

- Do talk about it
- Do something to help you calm down
- Do remember that feelings can change
- Don't hurt yourself
- Don't hurt others
- Don't hurt things or property

It is important to reassure pupils that everyone experiences big feelings, even adults, it's how we deal with them that is important and that it's never right to hurt someone because of how we are feeling. It's always best to speak to a parent or a trusted adult in school if they are having trouble with any feelings, big or small, or if they are feeling particularly sad, scared or worried about something.



## Endpoint assessment



Return **Resource 1: Say and do sheet** to pupils, on which they write on any new learning from today's lesson in a different colour pencil. They should include anything from the three lessons that they think will be useful for them.

## Extension activity →

### Story time!



Use class story time to read books about feelings, such as: *Angry Arthur* by Hiawyn Oran, *The Great Big Book of Feelings* by Mary Hoffman or *The Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside