

Chatter Pack

Developing an awareness of
emotions and triggers.

Free resource

The following activity is suitable for all ages and is designed to use alongside other emotional regulation strategies and can be carried out either one to one or in a small group.

There are many skills which can be developed through this activity. If carried out in a small group it could help development of social and language skills, however the main aim, is to work towards recognising that not every situation that cause stress is the worst it can be. It can help young people to recognise that others might feel differently and can raise awareness around potential 'triggers'.

Instructions

Create a safe environment by talking to the young person or group about confidentiality. Also reassure them that you are there to help and that they won't get into trouble from anything shared during this activity. Adapt to fit your individual policies.

Make a list of everyday situations which do, don't, might and might not cause stress or an emotional reaction. For example,

Conflict or arguments | Loud noises | When people ask how I feel | Quiet noises
Saying 'Cheer up' or 'Calm down' | Working in groups | Having to talk in class
Being on my own | Friends not talking to me | Thinking about the future
Assembly-sitting still/quiet | Too many people | Changing classrooms/year groups

Writing the list with the young person could help engagement and encourage them to start thinking deeper about everyday situations. Ask for suggestions of situations which are good and bad and include all responses. Some triggers and non-stressful situations might be not as obvious as others.

Separate the list of situations onto individual sticky notes or pieces of paper and ask the young person to place each one onto the thermometer to rate them in terms of how intense or strong the feeling is. If you are doing this activity in a small group,

try using different coloured paper to visually highlight any difference of opinions or reactions.

If possible, avoid using emotion labels unless the young person does, however if it is appropriate to include emotion labels, try to suggest rather than label for them. “That sound scary” rather than “You must have been scared”.

[ChatterPack resource](#) | [permission to print and photocopy \(see last page for full size resource\)](#)



Next steps

When the situations are plotted on the thermometer, point out the difference in intensity of reactions between certain situations. If in a group, point out any differences between reactions of those present.

Encourage discussion around how everyone, including adults, feel and process positive and negative emotions in different ways and to varying degrees. Whilst acknowledging how difficult some of the situations might be for the young person, point out how stress and negative emotions are totally normal. There are some excellent videos online based around human evolution and explain why we have stress or anxiety reactions.

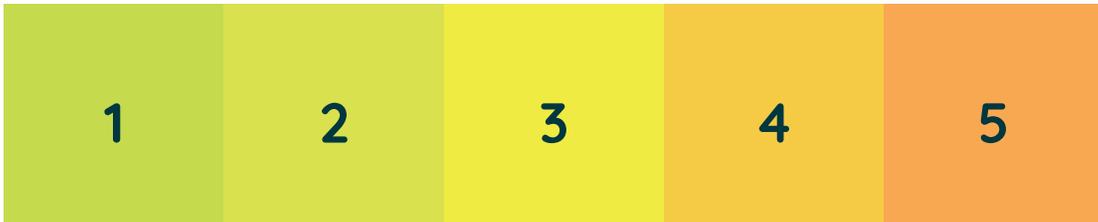
Work together to try to identify a few practical strategies which might help at these times. Ask “what could we do instead to help move [the situation] to a lower number?” Add any practical strategies to a visual which the young person can keep with them and make sure all adults know what the strategies are. Keep a thermometer visual with you and periodically, using both good and bad situations, ask the young person to plot the intensity of how they are feeling.

Adaptions

Here are a few ideas to adapt the activity to suit individual needs.

1. Replace the written situations with images of situations. Perhaps ask the young people to take photos or draw them.
2. Reduce the number of situations or events being discussed
3. Reduce the amount of numbers on the thermometer chart or use visuals such as emoji emotions rather than numbers.

ChatterPack resource | permission to print and photocopy



4. Be aware of any individual needs, particularly around language ability. Adapt any questioning used to fit the needs of the young person or group.
5. If the young person isn't ready for the thermometer chart, go back to basics. Start by simply sorting the events into 'good' or 'bad'. You could add 'not sure/OK' too.

ChatterPack resource | permission to print and photocopy



6. Add motivation as some young people find it very difficult to talk about emotions, some find it difficult to engage for longer periods and some work best when they know what is happening next, try using a working towards board.

ChatterPack resource | permission to print and photocopy

My reward is









I am working towards

**Great
start**

**Keep
going**

**Almost
there**

**Well
Done!**

ChatterPack resource | chatterpack.net

