

Emotions and feelings

Teacher's Guide



Secondary School

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INTRODUCTION

During adolescence, the emotional world becomes more complex. At this age, young people are faced with internal changes, social conflicts and decisions that begin to weigh more heavily on their identity and relationships. However, many still lack the resources to understand what they are feeling, to express it clearly or to transform their automatic reactions into conscious responses.

This module seeks to accompany students in a process of emotional self-awareness, recognising that behind every emotion there is an unmet need. Concepts such as the perception of internal signals, emotional interpretation, reaction patterns, personal goals and action plans are addressed.

It also seeks to foster empathy and mutual respect, creating a classroom environment where all students feel seen, understood, and emotionally accepted.

The role of the teacher is key: to facilitate the activities, hold a safe space for expression, and guide conversations through active listening. Teachers will also observe how students manage their emotions, which can provide valuable insights to support the group's socio-emotional development.

Objectives

- Recognize and name one's own emotions and others'.
- Explore how emotions are felt in the body.
- Understand that all emotions are valid and serve a function.
- Express feelings respectfully.
- Develop initial strategies for self-regulation.
- Foster empathy, group cohesion, and well-being in the classroom

Theoretical basis

Gumora, G. y Arsenio, WF (2002). Emotionality, emotional regulation and school performance in secondary school children. *Journal of School Psychology*, 40 (5), 395-413.

- **Perceive signals:** noticing what we feel inside and what is happening around us.
- **Interpret the situation:** understanding what emotions are present and what others' intentions might be.
- **Clarify what we want:** deciding on our personal goal in that situation.
- **Think of responses:** imagining different ways to act.
- **Evaluate options:** considering possible consequences and choosing the best behavior.
- **Act and self-regulate:** carrying out the response and, if necessary, adjusting it.



The ideas we share in this workshop are simply suggestions on how you might use the material. Feel free to adapt it to your needs: you can divide the workshop into two parts, spread it over several days, or complete it all in one session — whatever works best for you. You know your students and what suits them best.

Likewise, the materials can be used either in printed or digital format, depending on what is most convenient for you.

Palabras clave

- Self-awareness
- Emotional expression
- Emotional regulation
- Non-verbal language
- Personal needs
- Empathy and connection with others
- Non-judgmental listening
- Group climate
- Shared reflection
- Emotional safety

Expected outcomes – Module 1

By the end of this module, adolescents are expected to expand their emotional vocabulary, connect with their needs, and develop skills to express themselves and relate to others with greater awareness and empathy.

Key Guidelines for Teachers

- Create an emotionally safe climate from the start.
- Validate all emotions as legitimate experiences — avoid classifying them as “good” or “bad”.
- Be a model of respectful emotional expression — both verbally and physically.
- Use the activities as a starting point for conversation, not an end in themselves.
- Adapt proposals to the needs of the group — don’t force intense emotional participation.
- Observe without judgment — every child has their own pace of emotional expression.
- Use the activities to identify emotional patterns, resistances, or progress in the group.
- Promote empathy and active listening as tools for connection and emotional support.
- Ensure emotional closure at the end of each session — avoid leaving topics open or states activated.

This material is organized into independent thematic units or sessions, rather than a rigid day-by-day sequence. Each unit includes learning objectives, detailed steps, and activities that can be applied autonomously in the classroom.

As a teacher, you can decide:

- **Which units to work on**, depending on the needs and characteristics of your group.
- **In what order to apply them**, adapting the progression to the context of your class.
- **How much time to dedicate** to each unit, as they are designed with flexibility: they may be carried out in a single session or expanded across several.

The purpose is to provide you with a set of practical activities to strengthen students’ emotional and social skills, with full freedom to adjust them to the rhythm and circumstances of your classroom.

A1

Activity 1: Perception of signals – Experiencing and expressing

(Approximately 30 to 40 minutes) Adapt it to the pace and needs of your group.

1.1 Objective

1. Recognize and name feelings.
2. Express them creatively through music and the use of instruments.
3. Reflect on how one's own expressions are perceived and better understand the feelings of others.

Materials

- ☐ Drawings, images, or emojis that represent different emotions (joy, sadness, anger, fear, calm, etc.).
- ☐ Simple musical instruments available in the classroom (drums, xylophones, maracas, etc.) or everyday objects that can produce sound.
- ☐ Space to work both in a circle and in small groups.

1.2 Steps to facilitate the activity:

1. Beginning – Recognizing emotions

- Distribute drawings or emojis of different emotions around the classroom.
- Ask each student to go to the station that represents how they feel at that moment.
- Each student briefly shares why they chose that emotion, first with a partner and then, if they wish, with the whole class.

2. Explanation of the musical dynamic

- Present the two work options and let the students choose according to their preferences:

Option 1 (individual): each student chooses a musical instrument and practices how to express an emotion (joy, anger, sadness, calm...) with it, using sound variations (high/low, fast/slow).

Option 2 (group): in teams of 3–4 people, students develop a short musical piece that expresses a common feeling, paying attention to cooperation and coordination.

- As the teacher, give simple examples: loud and fast sounds to express anger, soft and slow sounds to express calm, etc.

3. Creation and rehearsal

- If it is individual work, give students a few minutes to explore with their instrument.
- If it is group work, give them time to agree on which feeling they will represent and how they will do it with the instruments available.

4. Presentation of results

- Each student or group presents their musical piece to the rest of the class.
- After each presentation, open a short round of comments with questions such as:
 - How did the listeners perceive the emotion?
 - How did the students feel when expressing it?

5. Final closing round

- Ask the group:
 - “Which emotion especially moved you today?”
 - “What did you like or find helpful about this exercise?”
- To close symbolically, each student may play a brief sound on their instrument that sums up their impression of the day.



Note for the teacher:

- Remember there is no “right” or “wrong” way to **express emotions** with music: everything that arises is valid.
- Pay attention to the quieter students, giving them space and security to participate.
- **Reinforce the final reflection** so that it is not just a game, but that students become aware of the connection between **feeling – expressing – sharing**.

A2 Activity 2: Interpretation of signals – Expressing through images or emotional theater (Approximately 30 to 40 minutes) Adapt it according to the group's participation and rhythm

2.1 Objective

1. Recognize emotions in non-verbal signals such as facial expressions and gestures.
2. Compare one's own interpretation of emotions with the perception of others.
3. Develop empathy and observation skills.

Materials

- ☐ Images of people (children, adolescents, adults) showing different emotions (joy, fear, sadness, surprise, anger, calm...).
- ☐ Sheets of paper and colored pencils/markers for drawing.
- ☐ Space in the classroom to organize short theater performances.

2.2 Steps to facilitate the activity:

1. Beginning – Recognizing emotional signals

- Show the class images of people expressing different emotions.
- Ask students to identify which emotion they think the image represents and to move to a place in the classroom marked with that emotion.
- Pose the key question after each image:
 - “How did you recognize it?”

2. Explanation of creative options

- Present two possible paths to continue and let students or groups choose:
 - **Option 1: Emotional drawing:** each student creates a drawing that reflects their current mood or feelings.
 - **Option 2: Emotional theater:** in groups of 3-4 pupils, create a short play of 3-5 minutes showing three emotions in one place (e.g. in the playground, at home, at a party).

3. Development of the productions

- If they work with drawings: guide with examples (“use colors, shapes, or symbols that represent your emotion”).
- If they work with theater: remind them there are no “right” or “wrong” interpretations and foster an appreciative climate.

4. Presentation of results

- **Option 1:** students present their drawings. The class tries to interpret the feelings before each author shares a sentence explaining their work.
- **Option 2:** each group performs their short play. The class tries to identify which emotions were intended to be expressed.

5. Final group reflection

- Guide the discussion with questions such as:
 - *“How was it to express feelings through images or theater?”*
 - *“What details helped you interpret what others represented?”*
 - *“What did you learn about yourself and about others?”*

Note for the teacher:

- Emphasize that there are no single answers when interpreting emotions: what matters is to listen and observe with respect.
- You can give prompts such as:
 - *“Which gestures or facial expressions helped you most in the interpretation?”*
 - *“What differences did you notice between what you felt and what others perceived?”*
- Reinforce the importance of diversity of perspectives and empathy in coexistence.



A3

Activity 3: Considering and clarifying personal goals – Recognizing and changing emotions (Approximately 40 to 50 minutes) Adapt it according to the group's level of involvement.

3.1 Objectives

1. **Formulate personal goals and think of concrete steps to achieve them**, taking into account strengths, resources, and motivation.
2. Recognize the influence of body posture and emotions on one's own experience.
3. **Reflect on experiences and perspectives** to apply them to school and everyday challenges.

Materials

- ☐ Images or symbols representing different areas of life (work, hobbies, family, friendships, studies, professional future).
- ☐ Sheets of paper and colored pencils/markers.
- ☐ Space to work in pairs or small groups.

3.2 Steps to facilitate the activity:

Part 1 – Clarifying personal goals

1. Place images or symbols related to different areas of life around the classroom.
2. Ask initial questions to activate reflection:
 - “Which of these images represents something you like?”
 - “Which area is especially important to you at this moment?”
3. Ask students to move toward the image that attracts them most and share in pairs why they chose it and what it means to them.
4. Deepen the reflection with new questions:
 - “Is there something you would like to achieve in this area?”
 - “What would be a small step toward that goal?”
5. Each student draws a goal route with intermediate stops, answering:
 - *What can I do to achieve this goal?*
 - *Who can help me?*
 - *What do I tell myself to stay motivated?*

Part 2 – Recognizing and changing emotions through the bod

1. **Ask students to represent a specific emotion with their body** (e.g., anger, rage, shame) using posture, voice, and gestures.
2. Then explain that **they should deliberately change their posture** to the opposite (e.g., from shrinking to opening up, from looking down to looking straight ahead) and reflect on how their sensations change.
3. In pairs or small groups, **they share how they felt in each posture and what differences they noticed.**

Part 3 – Group reflection

1. Bring the group together and open a dialogue with questions such as:
 - *“Which goals are worth pursuing at school or in everyday life?”*
 - *“Which body attitudes triggered stronger feelings?”*
 - *“How did your emotional state change when you modified your posture?”*
 - *“How can we use this in our daily lives to feel better or face challenges with more confidence?”*

Note for the teacher:

- **Emphasize that goals should be realistic and achievable**, and that every step counts.
- Explain that emotions and body posture are closely linked, and that practicing conscious changes can be a useful tool for managing emotions.
- You may mention the study by Amy Cuddy (2015) about how adopting open postures for 2 minutes increases confidence and reduces stress.
- If the group seems unsure, do an example yourself to model how sensations change when posture is modified.

A4

Activity 4: Action project – Creative and cooperative strategies

(Approximately 40 to 50 minutes) Adapt it according to group dynamics and available time.

4.1 Objectives

1. Develop different courses of action to achieve individual and collective goals.
2. Expand the repertoire of problem-solving strategies through flexible and cooperative action planning.
3. Identify personal strengths and interests that can help achieve goals and solve difficulties.

Materials

- ☐ Prepared puzzle cards (with images or words forming pairs or groups).
- ☐ Large sheets of paper or poster board.
- ☐ Four-leaf clover templates (or paper for students to draw one).
- ☐ Scissors, glue, and colored markers.

4.2 Steps to facilitate the activity

Part 1 – Initial puzzle and group connection

1. Hand out one puzzle card to each student.
2. Students walk around the room until they find the card that matches theirs (their “puzzle partner”).
3. Once found, they form pairs or small groups.

Part 2 – “The Clover” exercise

1. In pairs, students ask each other the following questions:
 - *What was your last positive event?*
 - *Which hobbies do you enjoy alone and which do you share with others?*
 - *What do you like most about yourself and what do you think you do well?*
2. Each answer is written on a four-leaf clover sheet.
3. They cut out the clover and paste it onto a common group or class poster.

Part 3 – Sharing and reflection

1. Each pair presents their partner’s clover to the rest of the class, highlighting their strengths and positive qualities.
2. Reflect as a class on which activities or qualities appeared most often and what they contribute to the group.

Unequal commitment
of the group members

Involve and motive each member
according to their strengths

Problems understanding the task

Divide the task into smaller steps and ask for help

Part 4 – “The Machine” exercise

1. **Divide the class into groups and explain the task:** design a “living machine” in which each student represents a part:
 - It can be a **real machine** (a car, a clock, a television) or an **imaginary one** (a time machine).
 - Each member must assume an important role (e.g., steering wheel, engine, gear, pedal, etc.).
2. Groups decide together how to organize themselves and practice coordinating movements or sounds to make the machine work.
3. As the teacher, guide with questions:
 - *“How did you organize yourselves so that all parts worked well together?”*
 - *“How did you ensure that everyone had an important role?”*
 - *“What happens if one part of the machine doesn’t work?”*

Part 5 – Presentation and final reflection

1. **Each group presents their machine** to the rest of the class, showing how it works.
2. Open a dialogue with questions such as:
 - *“How did you decide what role each person would have?”*
 - *“What was the biggest challenge in collaboration?”*
 - *“How does it feel when the machine works well?”*
 - *“How important is it that all the pieces work together?”*

Teacher’s note

- Reinforce the idea that each person is essential for the machine (the group) to function.
- Highlight how cooperation and coordination help solve problems.
- Encourage valuing each other’s strengths and how they complement one another.
- If the group becomes unfocused, remind them that the objective is to learn how to design collective strategies and recognize the value of each individual’s contribution within the group.

A5

Activity 5: Reflection on personal reaction patterns – Making conscious decisions (Approximately 30 to 40 minutes) **Adapt it according to the group's level of involvement.**

5.1 Objectives

1. **Reflect on personal patterns of reaction and decision-making processes** in different situations.
2. Recognize how social and emotional factors influence decisions.
3. **Learn to identify and consciously control these factors** to improve personal autonomy.

Materials

- ☐ Sheets of paper or notebooks.
- ☐ Markers or pens to create mind maps.
- ☐ Space for individual work and small group discussions.

5.2 Steps to facilitate the activity

1. **Introduction with teacher prompts:** pose situations to activate reflection, for example:
 - “**Think about a recent decision**, such as how you divided your time between studying, hobbies, and friends.”
 - “**Was there a moment when you had to decide how to react** in a conversation or conflict with friends or family?”
 - “**What did you do to stay calm or change something** in a stressful situation?”
2. **Individual work – Recalling a situation**
 - Each student recalls a recent situation where they had to make a difficult decision.
 - They briefly write down what happened and how they reacted.
3. **Creating a mind map of reactions**
 - Students create a mind map showing how they decided to act in that situation.
 - They include:
 - **Emotions involved.**
 - **Moral considerations.**
 - **Social influences** (friends, family, environment).
 - **Possible consequences they considered.**
4. **Sharing in small groups**
 - In small groups, **they share their mind maps and explain how they made their decisions** and which factors influenced them.
 - **They listen for similarities and differences** with their peers.
5. **Final reflection in plenary**
 - Return to the whole group and guide a discussion with questions such as:
 - “***What did you discover about how you make decisions in difficult situations?***”
 - “***Which emotional or social factors influence you the most?***”
 - “***What can you do to have more conscious control over your decisions?***”



Teacher's note

- Create an atmosphere of respect and trust, reminding students that shared experiences are personal and should not be judged.
- Encourage students to see that there are no “right” or “wrong” decisions, but different ways of approaching situations.
- Reinforce the importance of recognizing emotions and external pressures as part of the decision-making process.
- If some students do not want to share in groups, they may remain in individual reflection.

A6

Activity 6: Carrying out the reaction – The friendship web and the value of mutual respect

(Approximately 30 to 40 minutes) Adapt it to the time and energy of the group.

6.1 Objectives

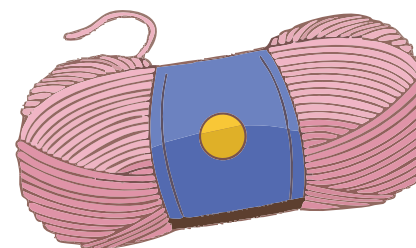
1. Identify personal strengths and share them with the group.
2. Recognize the importance of respect and mutual support in the school community.
3. Practice expressing positive appreciation toward oneself and others.

Materials

- ☐ Ball of yarn or long string.
- ☐ Classroom with enough space to form a large circle.

6.2 Steps to facilitate the activity

1. **Introduction to the game**
 - Explain the task: ***“We are going to create together a friendship web that will remind us that every person in the group is important and contributes something valuable.”***
 - Place everyone in a large circle, standing or sitting.
2. **Starting the web game**
 - Hold one end of the yarn ball and introduce yourself by saying your name and a personal strength or something you do well.
 - ***Example: “My name is Laura, and I am good at helping others.”***
 - Then gently toss the ball of yarn to another classmate in the circle (without passing it to the person right next to you), while keeping hold of your end.
3. **Continuing the web**
 - The student who receives the yarn repeats the same process: they introduce themselves, name a strength or positive quality
 - ***“My name is Max, and I am good at listening”,*** and toss the yarn to another student.
 - **The process continues until all students have participated** and the yarn forms a web connecting the whole group.
4. **Additional round of positive reinforcement (optional)**
 - If desired, do a second round in which each student returns the yarn to the person who threw it to them and says something they value about that person.
 - This further strengthens mutual recognition.
5. **Final reflection in plenary**
 - Look together at the web created and reflect with questions such as:
 - ***“What does this game teach us about friendship and coexistence?”***
 - ***“How does it feel to be part of a web where everyone contributes something good?”***
 - ***“What strengths did you discover in others that you didn’t know before?”***
 - ***“What can we do to keep this web strong and support all members of the group?”***



Teacher's note

- Reinforce the idea that all contributions are valuable, even if someone names small or simple qualities.
- Foster a climate of trust so students can speak without fear of judgment.
- If the group is very large, divide it into two smaller circles so everyone can participate without the activity taking too long.
- Use the web as a metaphor: each person is an essential thread that sustains the community.

AC1

Complementary activities (Approximately 30 minutes)

Complementary activity 1: My Emotional Week Map

(Approximately 15 to 20 minutes) It can be adapted according to the available time.

7.1 Objectives

1. Encourage emotional self-observation and help students identify how their emotions vary throughout the days.

Materials

- ☐ Sheet with a table or template of 5 columns (Monday to Friday).
- ☐ Colored pencils or pens.
- ☐ (Optional) Panel for voluntary sharing at the end.

7.2 Steps to facilitate the activity

1. Hand out to each student a sheet with a table of 5 columns (one for each day of the week).
2. Ask them to think of **one predominant emotion** for each day.
3. They write or draw a symbol, color, or word that represents how they felt
4. Afterwards, they reflect individually:
 - Which days were emotionally more intense?
 - Do similar emotions repeat on certain days?
 - What helped them feel better when they weren't feeling well?
5. (Optional) Invite those who wish to share part of their map with the group

Teacher's note

- You can use this activity weekly as a routine or at the end of the module. It provides useful insights about recurring emotional states in the group.

Sunday



Notes

Monday



Notes

Tuesday



Notes

Wednesday



Notes

AC2

Complementary activity 2: The Invisible Mailbox

(Approximately 10 minutes + weekly review as a routine)

8.1 Objectives

1. Provide a safe space for students to express emotions, thoughts, or requests anonymously.

Materials

- ☐ A decorated box or mailbox (physical or virtual).
- ☐ Small pieces of paper.
- ☐ Pencils or pens.

8.2 Steps to facilitate the activity

1. Explain that there will be an “invisible mailbox” in the classroom where they can leave their **emotions, thoughts, or things they want to express** but don’t dare to say out loud.
2. Remind them that they can **write whatever they want**: something that happened to them, how they feel, if they need help, or simply something they want to be acknowledged.
3. Once a week (or at the end of the module), open some of the messages (keeping anonymity) and use **them as a basis for group conversations, reflections, or adjustments** in classroom dynamics.

Teacher’s note

- This tool can help you **detect hidden emotions, silent discomforts**, or even individual concerns.
- Make sure to **maintain confidentiality and respect** for the messages received.



Checklist material by activity

Act 1. Perception of signals – Experiencing and expressing

- ☐ Drawings, images, or emojis showing different emotions.
- ☐ Simple musical instruments (drums, xylophones, maracas, triangles, etc.) or everyday objects that can make sounds.
- ☐ Large space for circle work and small groups.

Act 2. Interpretation of signals – Expressing through images or emotional theater

- ☐ Images of people showing different emotions
- ☐ Blank sheets and colored pencils/markers for drawing.
- ☐ Open classroom space for short theater performances.

Act 3. Considering and clarifying personal goals – Recognizing and changing emotions

- ☐ Images or symbols representing different areas (work, family, hobbies, friends, studies...).
- ☐ Paper and colored pencils to draw goal routes.
- ☐ Classroom space for pair or small group work.

Act 4. Action project – Creative and cooperative strategies

- ☐ Prepared puzzle cards (pairs or groups).
- ☐ Large sheets of paper or poster boards.
- ☐ Four-leaf clover templates (or paper to draw one).
- ☐ Scissors, glue, colored markers.
- ☐ Space for large group work.

Act 5. Reflection on personal reaction patterns – Making conscious decisions

- ☐ Individual sheets or notebooks.
- ☐ Markers or pens.
- ☐ Classroom space for individual work, pairs, and small groups.

Act 6. Carrying out the reaction – The friendship web and the value of mutual respect

- ☐ Ball of yarn or long string.
- ☐ Classroom with enough space to form a large circle.

Complementary Act 1. “My Emotional Week Map”

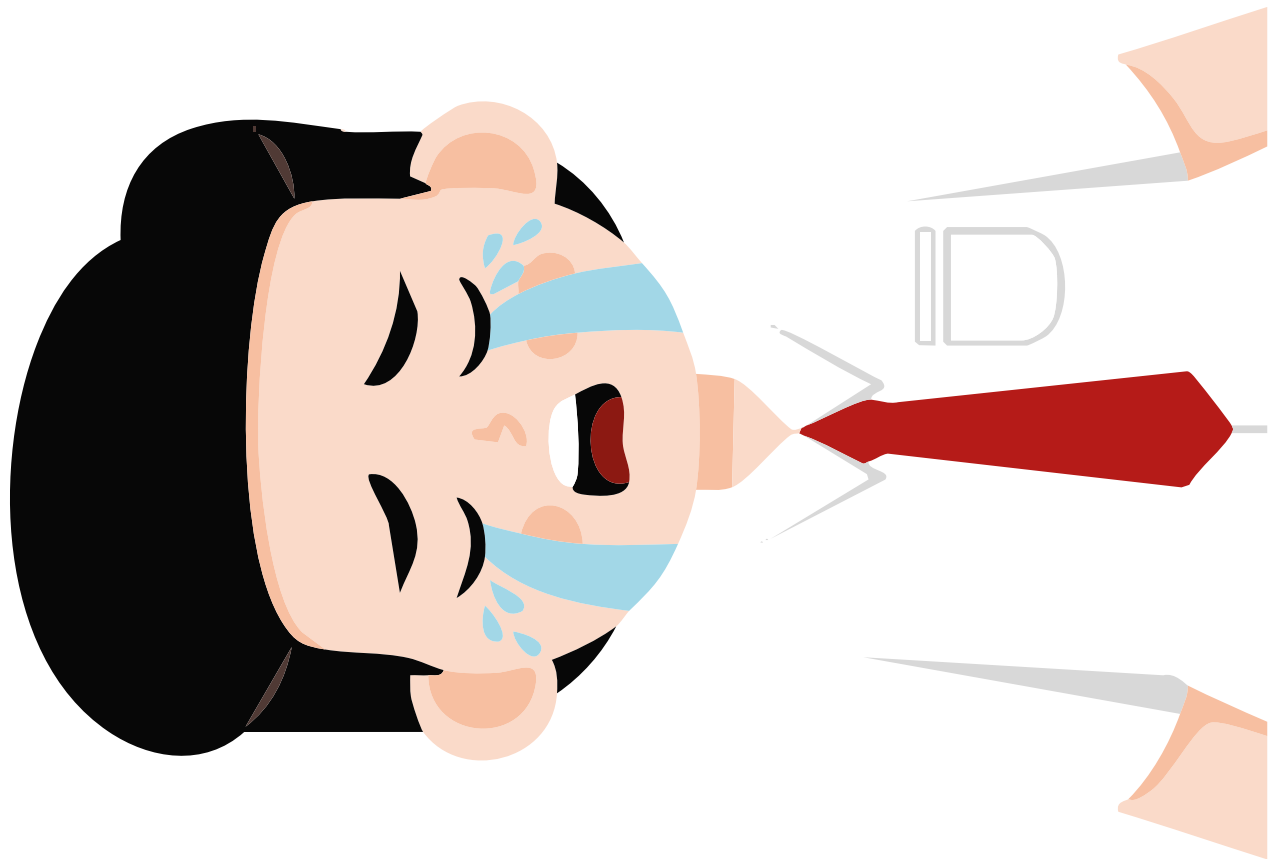
- ☐ Sheets with a table or template of 5 columns (Monday to Friday).
- ☐ Colored pencils or pens.
- ☐ (Optional) Panel to share results voluntarily.

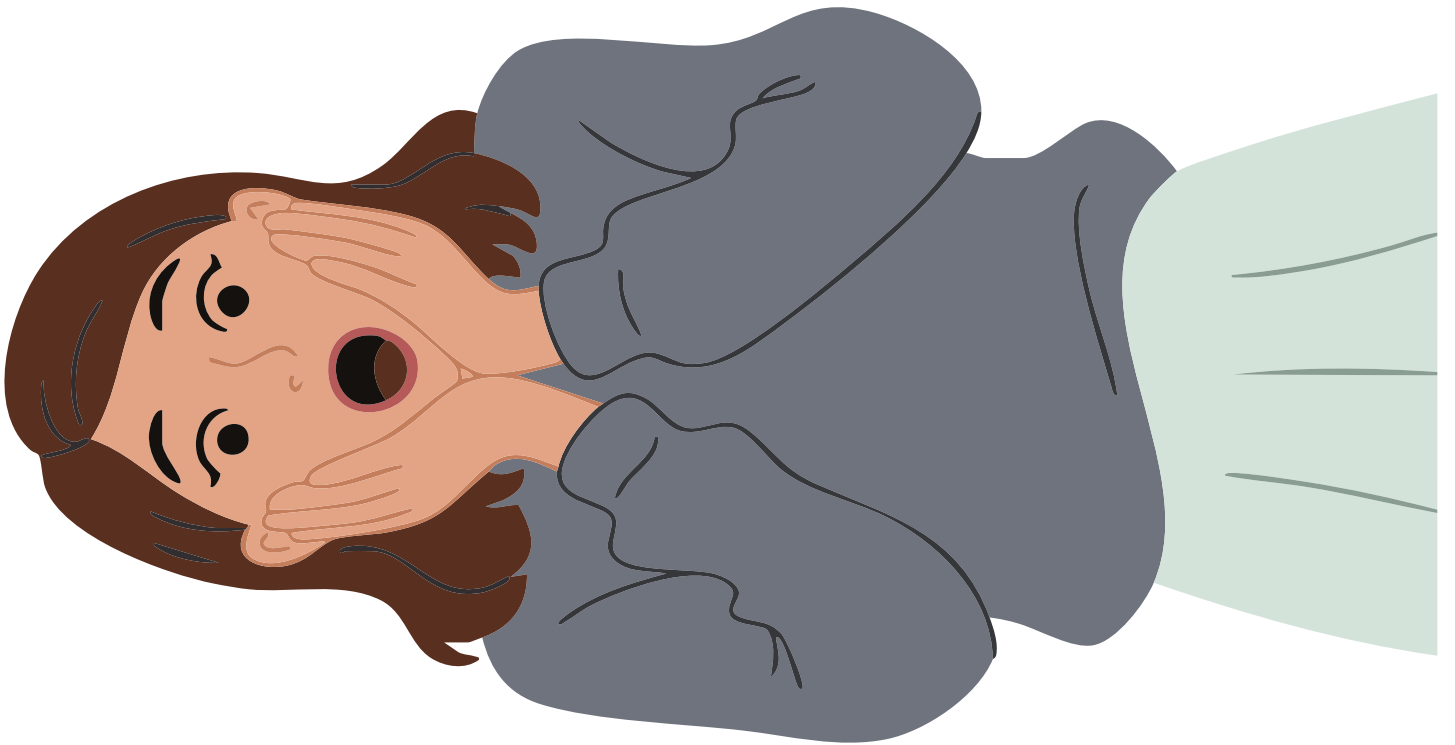
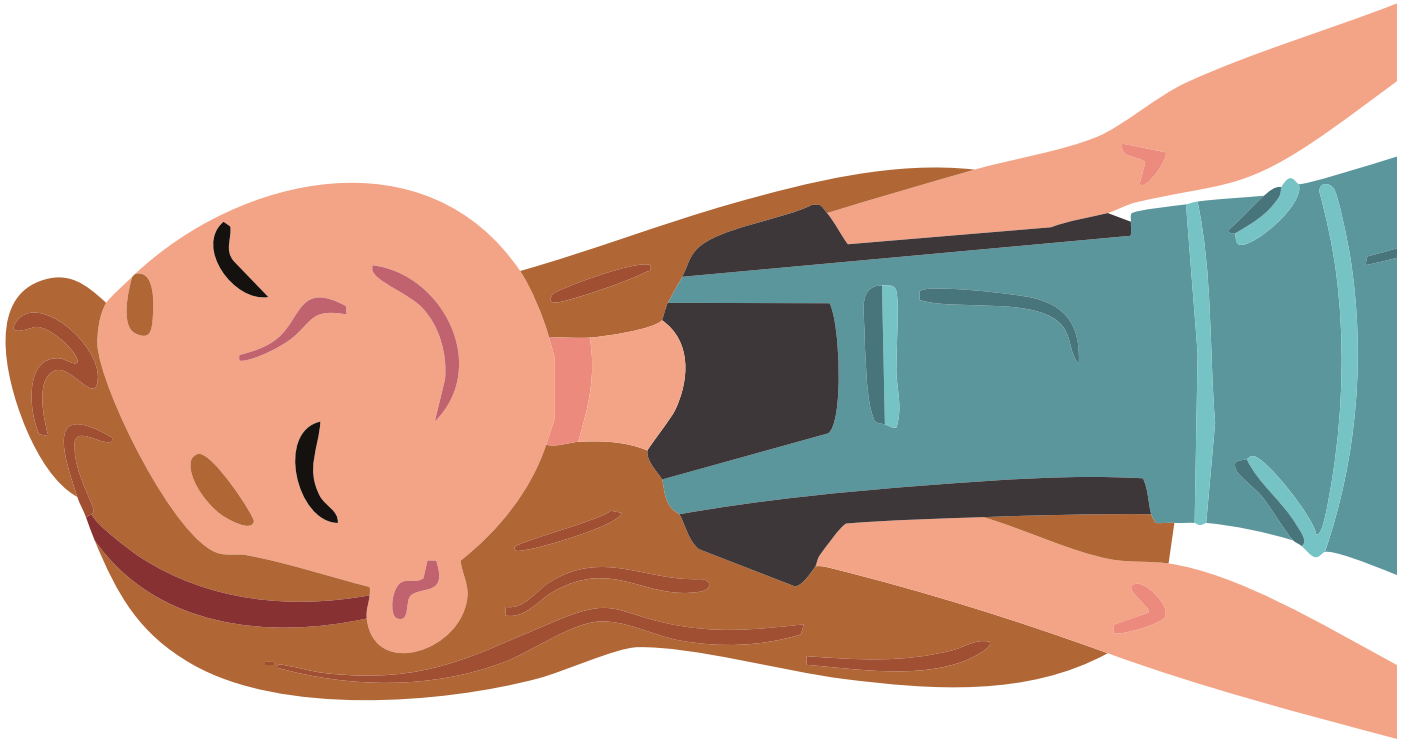
Complementary Act 2. “The invisible mailbox”

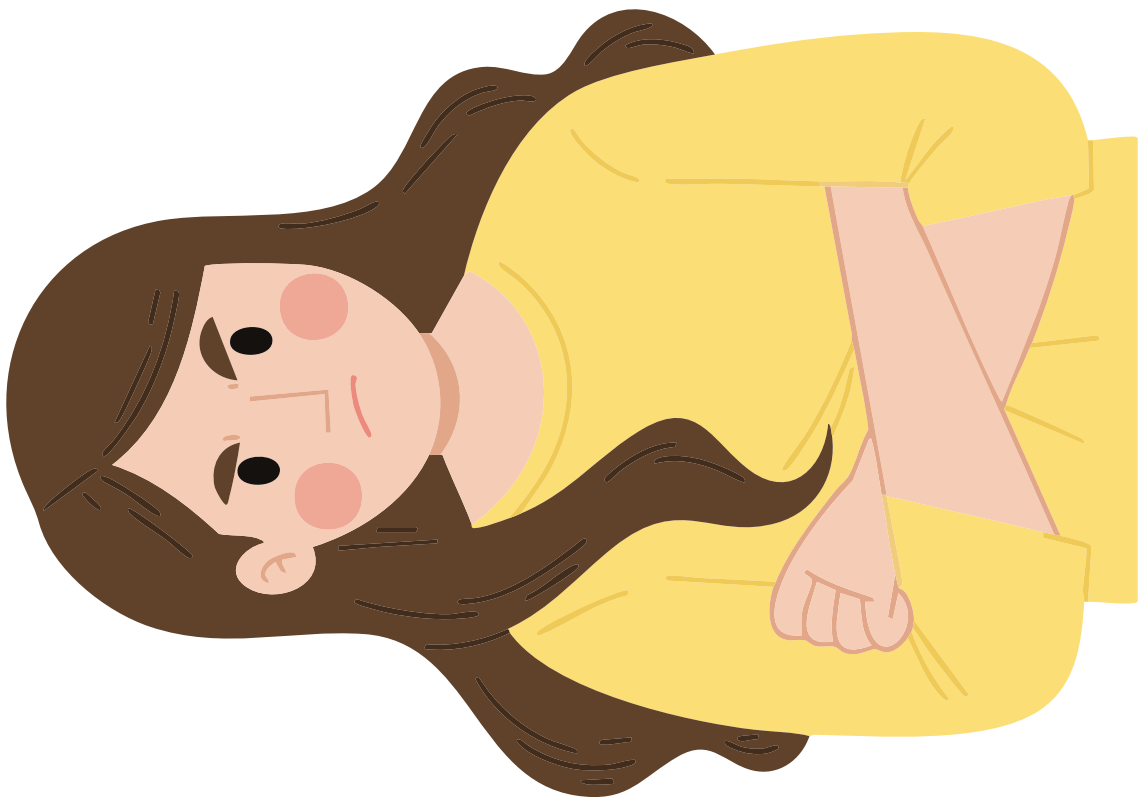
- ☐ A decorated box or mailbox (physical or virtual).
- ☐ Small pieces of paper.
- ☐ Pencils or pens.

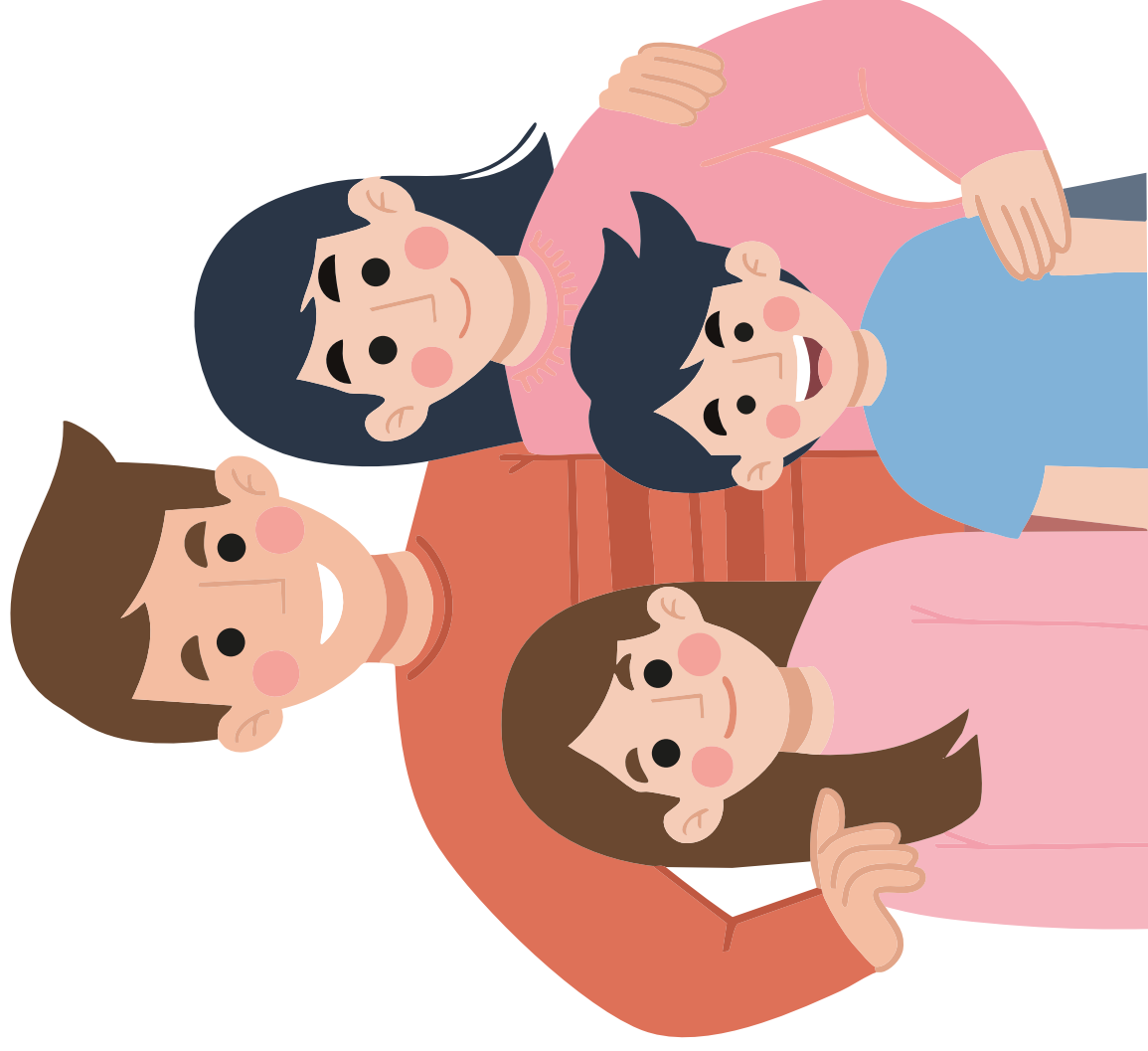






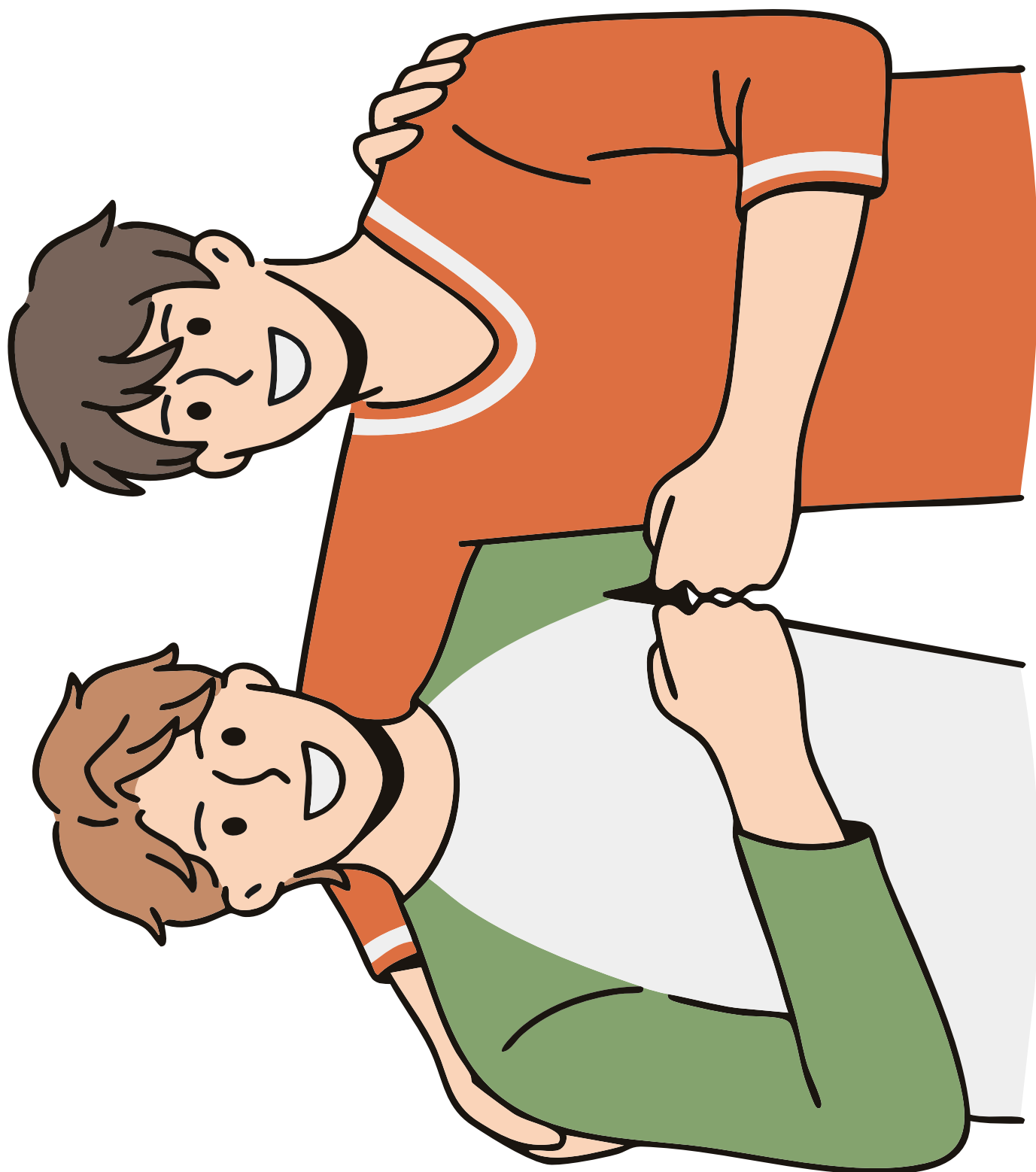


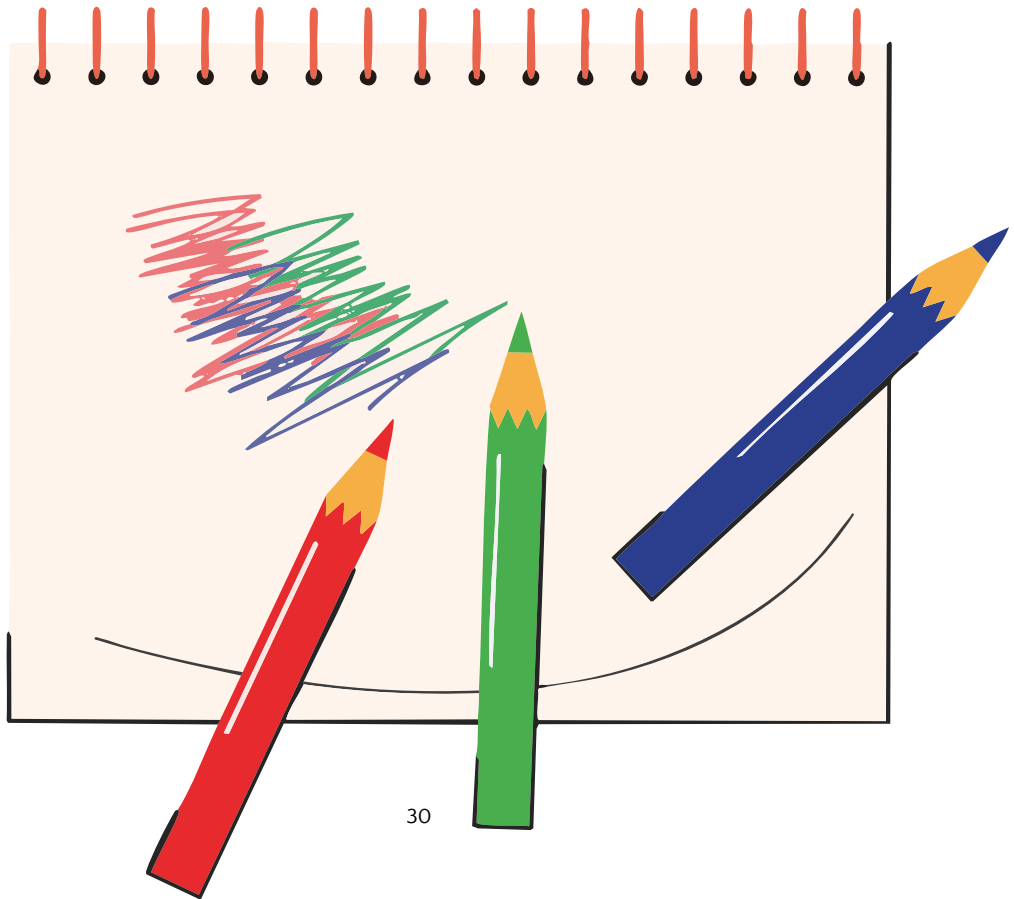










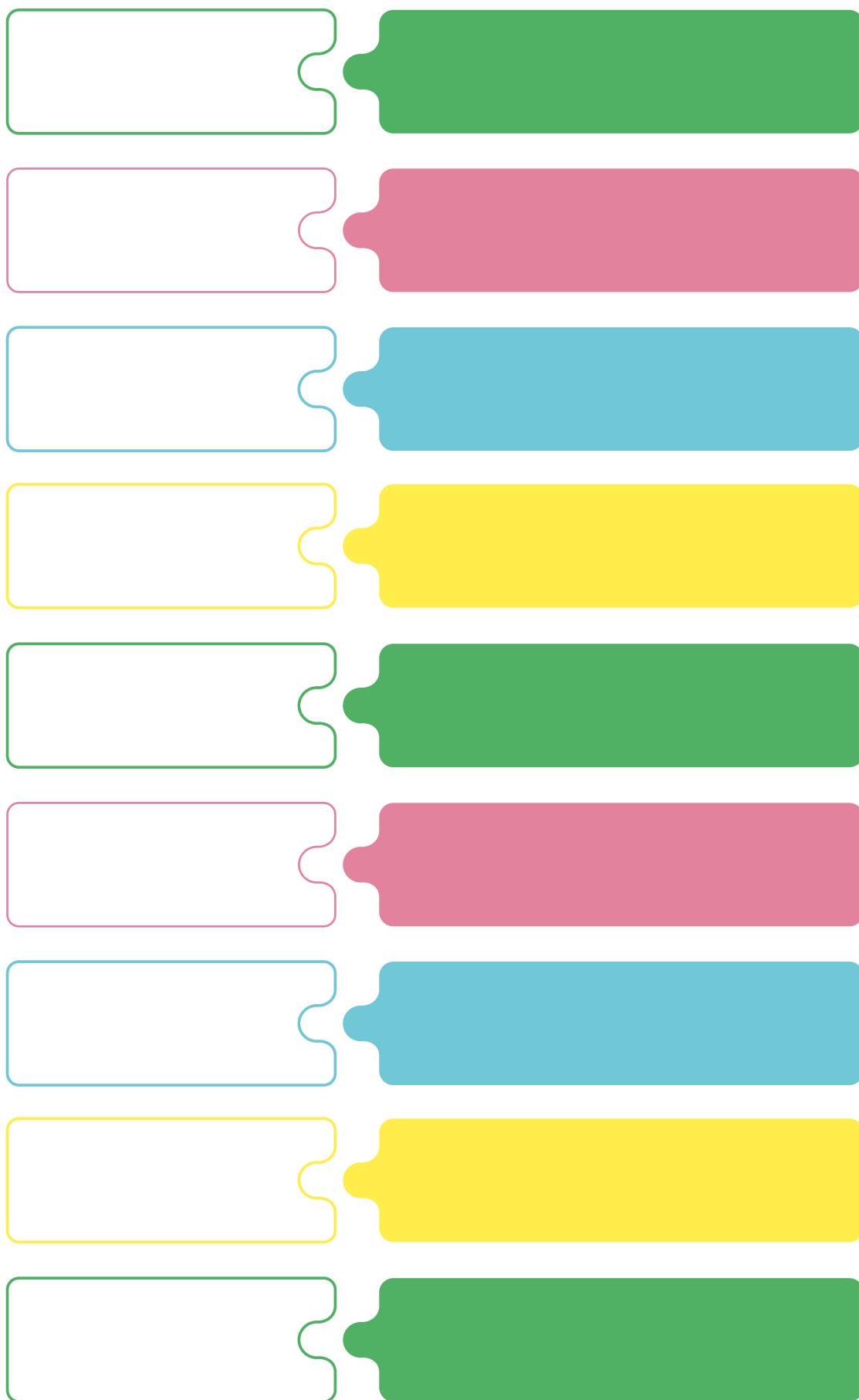


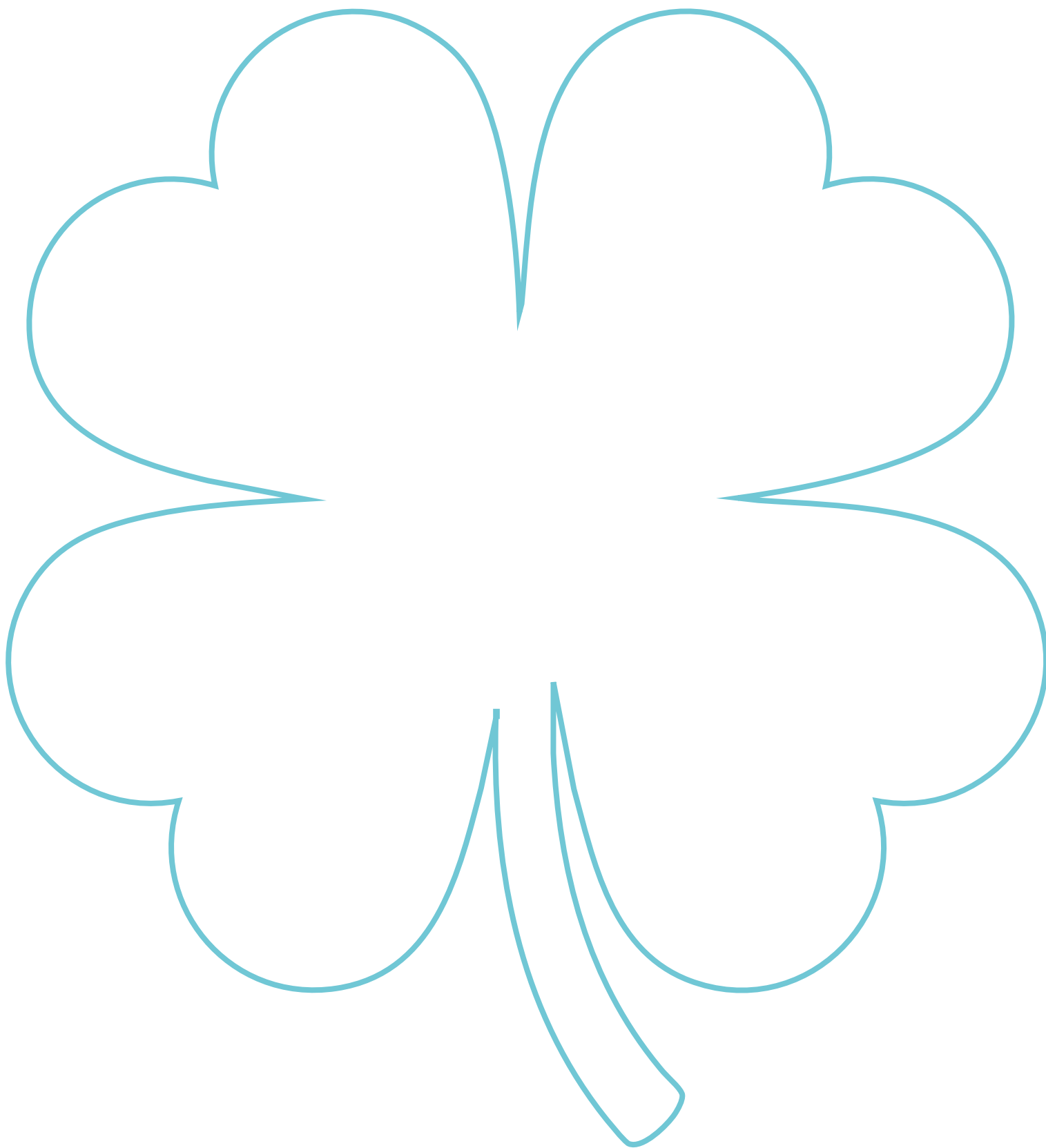




Printable activity 4: Creative and cooperative strategies

Difficulties with time management	Create a to-do list and set priorities
Unfair division of labour	Distribute tasks evenly and take responsibility
Too many distractions	Find a quieter place or take a break
No ideas for the task	Brainstorm and gather different perspectives
Team members are demotivated	Giving positive feedback and defining common goals
Unequal commitment of the group members	Involve and motivate each member according to their strengths
Not enough material or resources	Find creative solutions or ask for help with procurement
Problems understanding the task	Divide the task into smaller steps and ask for help
Conflict in the group	Make agreements and speak respectfully with each other





Montly dashboard

Complementary activity 1: My emotional weekly/monthly map

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Priorities	Notes

Weekly dashboard

Sunday


Notes

Monday


Notes

Tuesday


Notes

Wednesday


Notes

Thursday


Notes

Friday


Notes

Saturday


Notes

Priorities

_____**Guide**

1. Choose an emotion
2. Write down why that emotion started
3. Write down what went through your mind at that moment



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