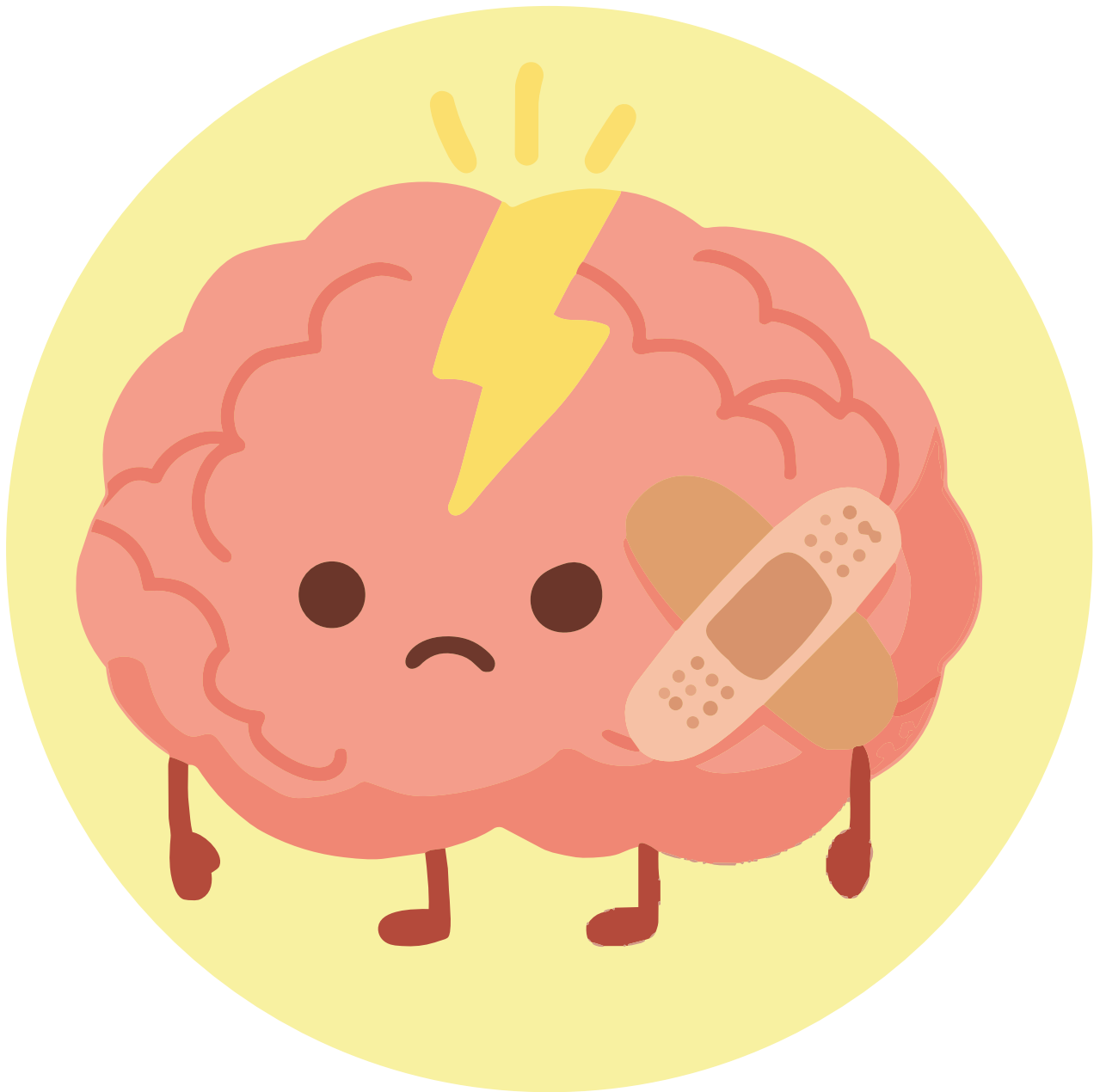


Mental Illnesses

Teacher's Guide



Primary school activities

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health is part of the **comprehensive well-being** of children in 3rd and 4th grade of primary school, although it is often not spoken about directly. Just as the body needs care to stay healthy, the mind also requires attention, rest, support, and spaces where we can express what we feel. During this developmental stage, students are building their **emotional identity**, their social sensitivity, and their ability to understand both their own needs and those of others.

This module aims to bring the concept of **mental health** closer in an **accessible, respectful, and age-appropriate** way. It is proposed that children learn to identify how they feel, recognize internal signs that indicate well-being or distress, and understand that **asking for help is a valid and necessary action**. Through experiential activities, guided reflections, cooperative work, and small expressive dynamics, students will be able to explore what helps them when they do not feel well and who are the **trusted people** they can turn to.

Additionally, this module seeks to **normalize the conversation about emotional distress**, banishing ideas of shame or guilt, and promoting **empathy** towards those going through difficulties. It is intended that children understand that **everyone may need help at some point**, and that different types of support exist: from friends or family to professionals such as psychologists or doctors.

The **teacher's role is essential**: to provide a **safe environment** where each student can share what they wish without pressure, sustain sensitive conversations, and act as a **bridge to other professionals** when necessary. Throughout the module, the teacher will be able to observe how students understand their own needs, how they interpret the emotions of others, and how they practice respectful ways of accompanying others.

Module Objectives

- Understand that **health includes both the body and the mind**.
- Recognize **internal signs of emotional well-being and distress**.
- Identify **own needs** and express them appropriately.
- Get to know different **emotions** and validate that they are all normal and useful.
- Develop **sensitivity** to recognize how others might be feeling.
- Learn **what to do when they do not feel well**, including basic **self-care strategies**.
- Explore **who can offer support** (friends, family, teachers, health professionals).
- Practice asking for help and offering help in a respectful and safe manner.
- Promote an environment of **trust, empathy, and mutual care** in the classroom.

Key words

- Health
- Mental health
- Needs
- Emotions
- Feelings
- Well-being
- Support
- Asking for help
- Health professionals (psychologist, doctor)
- Trusted people / adults
- Respect
- Confidentiality

Expected results module 4

By the end of this module, children will understand that **health also has to do with what we feel**, they will be better at recognizing their **needs and emotions**, and they will know **which people they can ask for help** when they or others do not feel well.

Recommendations for the teacher

- Create a **safe climate** in which sharing emotions does not generate shame or mockery.
- Ensure that children understand that this is not about diagnosing, but about talking about **well-being and support**.
- **Validate all emotional experiences** without minimizing or over-dramatizing.
- Encourage **active listening** among peers and model how to offer support.
- Guide reflections gently, without forcing emotional exposure.
- Observe how students talk about their needs and what strategies they mention when facing distress.
- Reinforce the idea that **asking for help is an act of care**, not a weakness.
- Remember that **only specialized professionals** can evaluate or diagnose difficulties.
- **Close each session in a calm manner**, ensuring that children leave regulated and at peace.



The proposals in this module are designed as a flexible guide to work on mental health with naturalness and sensitivity. You can adapt the dynamics to the rhythm and needs of your group: divide the module into several sessions, expand the activities, or simplify them as needed.

Use this material as a starting point and adjust it to the reality of your classroom. You know your students better than anyone and will know how to accompany them in the most appropriate way.

A1

Day 1. What is mental health? (75 minutes duration)

Activity 1: What is mental health? (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

1.1.1 Objective:

1. Introduce the **concept of mental health** and **open an initial reflection**, normalising the topic as part of general health.

Materials

- ☐ Board or screen
- ☐ Felt-tip pens
- ☐ Visible initial question (optional)

1.1.2. Activity Description:

1. Initial activation

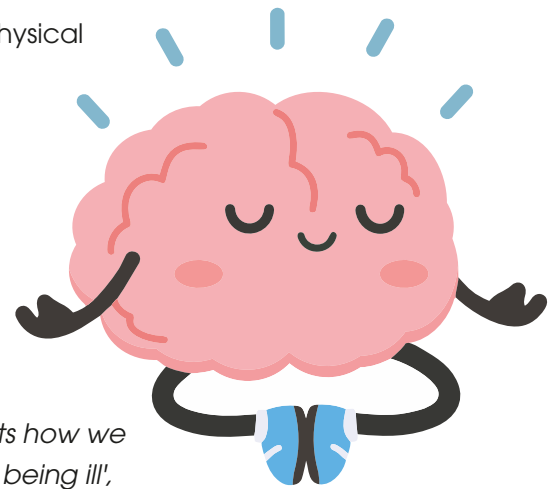
- Briefly explain that we all have mental health, just like physical health.
- Ask the group:
 - *"What does mental health mean to you?"*
- You can support this with:
 - *"Does it influence how you think or feel?"*
 - *"Does it only have to do with problems?"*
 - *"How does it relate to life at school?"*

2. Brief explanation: Clarify

- *"Mental health is part of general well-being. It affects how we think, feel, act, and relate to others. It is not just 'not being ill', but being able to manage stress and everyday life."*
- Emphasise:
 - *"We all have mental health and we need to look after it."*

3. Quick wrap-up

- Voluntary final question:
 - *"What new idea are you taking away about mental health?"*



Note for the teacher

- Keep the dialogue general, not personal. The objective is to open the topic, not to delve into individual experiences.

A2 Activity 2: What influences my mental health? (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

1.2.1 Objective:

1. Identify **internal** and **external** factors that influence mental **well-being**.

Materials

- ☐ Board or screen
- ☐ Felt-tip pens
- ☐ (Optional) Sticky notes

1.2.2. Activity Description:

1. Introduction: Explain

- *"Mental health is affected by things we experience, think, and feel every day."*
- Ask:
 - "What things influence how you feel mentally and emotionally?"

2. Brainstorming:

- On the board, create two columns:

Factors that help

Factors that hinder

- Examples to trigger ideas: sleep, social media, friendships, academic pressure, physical activity, conflicts, expectations.

3. Optional mini-activity:

- Each student identifies:
 - 1 thing that improves their well-being
 - 1 thing that hinders it
 - 1 thing they would like to improve
- (They can think about it or write it on sticky notes.)

4. Teacher's synthesis

- Close by highlighting:
 - *"Mental health does not depend on a single thing, but on a set of elements that we can learn to recognise."*

Note for the teacher

- Prevent the conversation from becoming clinical or personal. If something sensitive arises, continue the activity and manage it outside the classroom.

A3

Activity 3: POSTER — Factors that influence mental health (20 - 25 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

1.3.1 Objective:

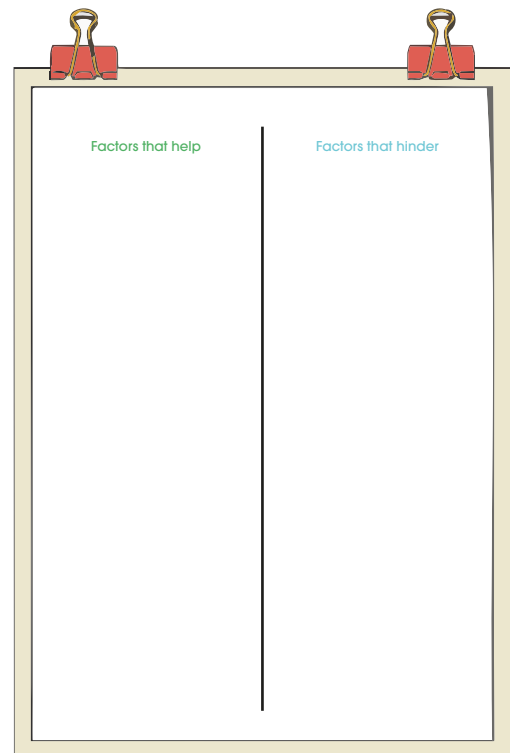
1. Que el alumnado organice visualmente los factores que influyen en la salud mental y consolide lo trabajado en las actividades anteriores.

Materials

- ☐ Sugar paper / large card (1 per group)
- ☐ Felt-tip pens / coloured pencils
- ☐ Tables for cooperative work
- ☐ Adhesive tape or space to hang them

1.3.2. Activity Description:

1. **Organisation into groups**
 - Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students.
2. **Clear instruction**
 - Explain:
 - *"You are going to create a poster about what things influence children's mental health."*
 - The poster must include, in a simple way:
 - Factors that help
 - Factors that hinder
 - (They can use words, drawings, symbols.)
3. **Cooperative work**
 - Guided free work time.
 - Walk around the groups resolving doubts without directing the content.
4. **Brief presentation**
 - Each group explains their poster in 1–2 minutes.
 - There is no debate, only listening.



Note for the teacher

- Do not look for "pretty" posters, but **understandable** ones. The value lies in organising ideas, not in aesthetics.

A4 Activity 4: Daily wrap-up (10 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

1.4.1 Objective:

1. Integrate learning and close the session in a **contained manner**.

Materials

- ☐ Board or flipchart
- ☐ Felt-tip pens
- ☐ (Optional) Sticky notes

1.4.2. Activity Description:

1. **Guided reflection**
 - Pose:
 - *"What important idea are you taking away today about mental health?"*
 - You can support this with:
 - *"Is there something you hadn't considered before?"*
 - *"Why is it important to talk about this in school?"*
 - Note **keywords** on the board: **well-being**, emotions, stress, support, balance...
2. **Optional mini-dynamic**
 - *"One word to close"*
 - Each student says or writes one word that represents how they feel as the session ends.
3. **Final message of the day**
 - Reinforce aloud:
 - **We all have mental health**
 - **Talking about well-being helps**
 - **Looking after the mind is as important as looking after the body**
 - Anticipate:
 - *"In the next session, we will see what we can do to look after ourselves and manage stress."*

Note for the teacher

- Ensure the group ends the session feeling **calm and regulated**. Observe possible signs of distress for subsequent follow-up.

A1

Day 2. How am I and how are others? (62 min duration)

Activity 1: How do I feel? (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

2.1.1 Objective:

1. Help students to become **aware of their own emotional state** and begin to name it.

Materials

- ☐ Drawings from the Day 1 voluntary homework (if completed)
- ☐ Emotion cards (optional, highly recommended)
- ☐ Text for the A2.1 guided meditation
- ☐ Chairs in a circle

2.1.2. Activity Description:

1. **Presentation of the task (if applicable)**
 - Children show their drawing of the need and the group tries to guess it.
2. **Brief review:** needs and health
 - Quick reminder: body + mind.
3. **Basic emotions**
 - Open question: *"What emotions do you know?"*
 - Clarification: **all emotions are normal and useful.**
4. **Brief meditation**

Emotional journey: a brief meditation

Sit or lie down comfortably, gently close your eyes and breathe in deeply through your nose... and breathe out through your mouth. Very calm, very relaxed.

Imagine that you are now taking a small journey inside yourself. You are visiting the place where your feelings live. Perhaps they are like small colours or clouds that you can see, or like gentle waves that you can feel.

Breathe in deeply once more... and breathe out. Feel how your body calms down and becomes heavy. And now simply feel how you are feeling at this moment.

Can you perceive a feeling? Perhaps you feel happy or excited at this moment. Or maybe a bit quiet or tired. Is there any other feeling, like sadness or maybe anger?

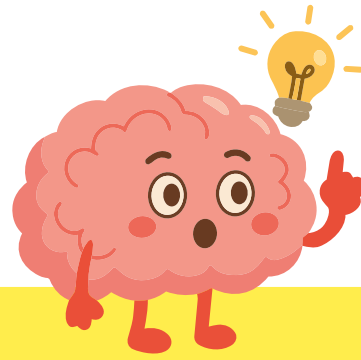
Remember: **it is completely normal to have many different feelings.** You don't have to change them or push them away. Simply look at them. They are like small clouds in the sky that come and go.

Breathe deeply again and say to yourself: "I recognise my feelings. They are all allowed to be there".

When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and return to the room with a gentle smile.

5. Short round

- In one phrase: *"Right now I feel..."*
- (They can use cards or say "pass").



Note for the teacher

- **Do not force verbalisation.** Observation is also part of learning.

A2 Activity 2: How might others feel? (20 - 25 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

2.2.1 Objective:

1. Develop the ability to **interpret emotions** in others, understanding that we do not always get it right.

Materials

- ☐ Drawing sheet (1 per student)
- ☐ Pencils or felt-tip pens

2.2.2. Activity Description:

1. **Individual activity**
 - Colour the drawing freely.
2. **Guided group debate**
 - Key questions:
 - *"What do you see in the drawing?"*
 - *"Do you think we always know how others are feeling?"*
 - *"Do we sometimes make mistakes?"*

Note for the teacher

- We do not always know how another person feels: **asking with respect is an act of care.**



A3 Activity 3: Why do I sometimes feel bad? (10 - 12 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

2.3.1 Objective:

1. **Normalise emotional distress** and connect emotions with needs.

Materials

- Chairs for pairs

2.3.2. Activity Description:

1. **Think:** think in silence.
2. **Pair:** share with a partner.
3. **Share:** voluntary group sharing.
 - Guide questions:
 - *"When was the last time I felt bad?"*
 - *"What did I need then?"*

Think

Think in silence

Pair

- "I felt bad when I argued with a friend and I **needed to talk.**"
- "It happened to me when I was sad and **needed company.**"
- "I felt nervous and **needed someone to calm me down.**"

Share

- "Sometimes we feel sad and **need to talk to someone.**"
- "When we feel bad, we sometimes **need help from an adult.**"
- "Many people said they **needed to feel listened to.**"

A4

Activity 4: Daily wrap-up + Voluntary homework (5 minutes).

Activity 4: Daily wrap-up + Voluntary homework

2.4.1 Objective:

1. Close the session in a **contained manner** and prepare for Day 3.

Materials

- ☐ No materials required

2.4.2. Activity Description:

1. Teacher's message:
 - "Sometimes we don't feel well, and that is normal. The important thing is to know what helps us."
2. Voluntary homework:
 - Think, write or draw:
 - "What can I do when I feel bad?"



A1

Day 3: Who can help me? (90 min duration)

Activity 1: Who can help me? (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

3.1.1 Objective:

1. That the students understand that **different types of help exist** and that **asking for support is normal** when we do not feel well.

Materials

- ☐ Board or visible poster
- ☐ Felt-tip pens
- ☐ Chairs in a circle

3.1.2. Activity Description:

1. **Trigger question:** The teacher asks the group:
 - *"Who knows someone who goes to the doctor when something hurts?"*
 - *"And who asks for help when something is not right in their head or in their heart?"*
2. **Group brainstorming**
 - Children give examples and the teacher notes them down:
 - Family
 - Friends
 - **Teaching staff**
 - Doctor
 - Psychologist
3. **Key idea:**
 - There are many types of help and **all are valid** depending on the situation.

Note for the teacher

- Keep the answers at a general level, without personal experiences.

A2 Activity 2: My Help Card (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

3.2.1 Objective:

1. That the students identify and record their **personal support network**.

Materials

- ☐ Small cards or large card (1 per student)
- ☐ Felt-tip pens or coloured pencils

3.2.2. Activity Description:

1. **Creation of the card**
 - Each student creates their own "Help Card".
 - **On the front:** "My Help Card".
 - **On the back:** They must write or draw 3 trusted people they can turn to (e.g., Mum, a teacher, a friend).
2. **Brief reflection**
 - Explain that this card is personal and they can keep it in a safe place (pencil case, folder).
 - Remind them: *"These people are your support team."*



A3 **Activity 3: How do we help someone who is not well?** (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom climate.

3.3.1 Objective:

1. Reflect on how to support others respectfully and understand the limits of what a child is capable of.

Materials

- ☐ Cards with questions
- ☐ Sheets of paper and felt-tip pens

3.3.2. Description of the activity:

1. Work in small groups (3–5 pupils)
2. Questions to discuss together
 - *How do I know if someone needs help?*
 - *When can a friend help?*
 - *When is it best to tell an adult?*
 - *What doesn't help?*
3. Group discussion
 - Each group shares one idea.

What can I do if I see someone who seems lonely?

How can I show that I care without invading their personal space?

How can I help if someone doesn't know how to ask for help?

What can I do if someone feels angry or frustrated?

A4

Activity 4: Role-play — Practising helping (15 - 20 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom atmosphere.

3.4.1 Objective:

1. Practise how to act when someone needs support and recognise when to ask an adult for help.

Materials

- ☐ Situation cards
- ☐ Space for role-playing

3.4.2. Activity Description:

1. Simple scenarios, for example:
 - A classmate is sad and doesn't want to play.
 - A friend is worried.
 - Someone is crying after breaktime.
2. Short role-play
 - Each group shows how they would act.
3. Quick group feedback
 - *What helped?*
 - *What didn't help?*

Someone trips and hurts their knee. How do you react?

A friend is nervous about a presentation in class. How do you cheer them up?

You see a friend on their own at break time. What do you do?

A teammate feels left out during a team game. How can you help them?

Someone is getting annoyed and shouting for no apparent reason. How do you react?

You notice that a friend is upset because they've lost something important. What do you say?

A5 **Activity 5: Module closure** (5 - 10 minutes). Adjust according to group size and classroom atmosphere.

3.5.1 Objective:

1. Close the module with a **message of safety and care**.

Materials

- ☐ Not required

3.5.2. Activity Description:

1. **Teacher's final message:**
 - We all need help sometimes
 - Asking for help is **taking care of yourself**
 - We can help each other
 - We are not alone
2. **Optional final question:**
 - *"What are you taking away from this module?"*



4.1.1 Objective:

1. Help pupils to **identify their emotions** and their intensity in a **visual way**.

Materials

- ☐ Card with a thermometer drawn on it (1 per pupil)
- ☐ Coloured pencils
- ☐ Emotion cards or a list of emotional words

4.1.2. Activity Description:

1. Give each pupil a **blank thermometer**.
2. Ask them to **choose an emotion** they have felt today: happiness, tiredness, anger, nervousness, calm...
3. Direct them to colour **in the thermometer** up to the level that represents the intensity of that emotion (from 1 to 5).
4. At the bottom, they write or draw what helped them with that emotion or what they think they could do.
5. **Reflection questions:**
 - *"What helped you to lower or raise your thermometer?"*
 - *"What did you realise when **assigning levels to your emotion**?"*
6. This activity promotes **emotional awareness, self-regulation and emotional language**.

AC2

Activity 2: "The classroom support wheel" (20 minutes).

4.2.1 Objective:

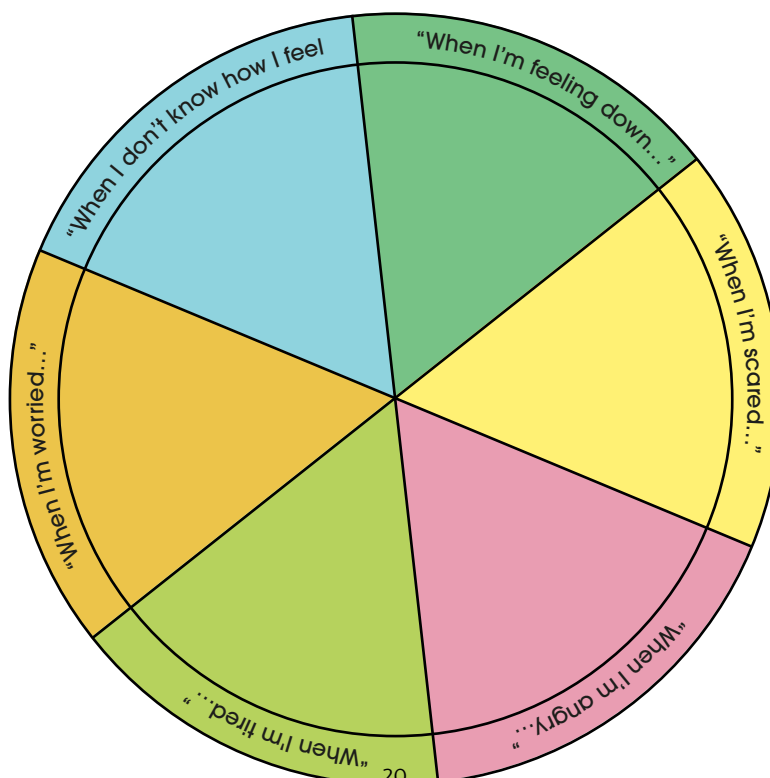
1. Identify who they can ask for help and strengthen the **group community**.

Materials

- ☐ Large piece of card
- ☐ Felt-tip pens
- ☐ Stickers or small cards

4.2.2. Activity Description:

1. Draw a **wheel divided into sections** on a large piece of card:
 - "When I am sad..."
 - "When I am scared..."
 - "When I am angry..."
 - "When I am tired..."
 - "When I am worried about something..."
2. Each pupil receives a sticker/card and writes: **a person in the classroom or an action** that could help them in that case.
 - They stick their cards in the corresponding section.
 - It is read as a group to **visualise the available support networks**.
3. **Reflection questions:**
 - "Who can you turn to in our group?"
 - "How can we be a class that looks after one another?"
4. This activity **strengthens the sense of belonging**, empathy and mutual support.



Material Checklist for all activities

Day 1: Health and needs

1.1 Emotional safety rules

- ☐ Poster board or whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ List of rules (can be printed or written on the board)

1.2 Conversation: What influences my mental health?

- ☐ Whiteboard or panel
- ☐ Chalk or markers
- ☐ Sticky notes (optional)

1.3 Poster: Factors that influence mental health

- ☐ Poster boards (1 per group)
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Colored pencils
- ☐ Tables organized for cooperative work
- ☐ Adhesive tape or space to hang the posters

1.4 Daily wrap-up

- ☐ Whiteboard or flipchart
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Sticky notes (optional)

Day 2. How am I and how are others?

2.1 How do I feel?

- ☐ Drawings from the Day 1 voluntary homework (if completed)
- ☐ Emotion cards (highly recommended)
- ☐ Text for the A2.1 guided meditation
- ☐ Chairs in a circle

2.2 How might others feel?

- ☐ Drawing sheet (1 per student)
- ☐ Pencils or colored marker

2.3 Why do I sometimes feel bad?

- ☐ Chairs for pair work

2.4 Daily wrap-up + Voluntary homework

- ☐ Does not require specific material

Day 3: Who can help me?

3.1 Who can help me?

- ☐ Whiteboard or visible poster
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Chairs in a circle

3.2 My Help Card

- ☐ Small cards or cardstock (1 per student)
- ☐ Markers or colored pencils

3.3 How do we help someone who is not well?

- ☐ Question cards for group work
- ☐ Sheets to jot down ideas
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tables or chairs for groups of 3–5 students

3.4 Role-play: Practicing how to help

- ☐ Cards with situations / scenarios
- ☐ Clear space to act out scenes

3.5 Module wrap-up

- ☐ Does not require specific material

Complementary activities

4.1 My emotional thermometer

- ☐ Card with a drawn thermometer (1 per student)
- ☐ Colored pencils
- ☐ Emotion cards or list of emotional words

4.2 The classroom support wheel

- ☐ Poster boards or sheets of paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Space for work in pairs or small groups



Relaxed





Bored





Strong





Motivated





Embarrassed





Offended





Happy





Hard-working





Confused





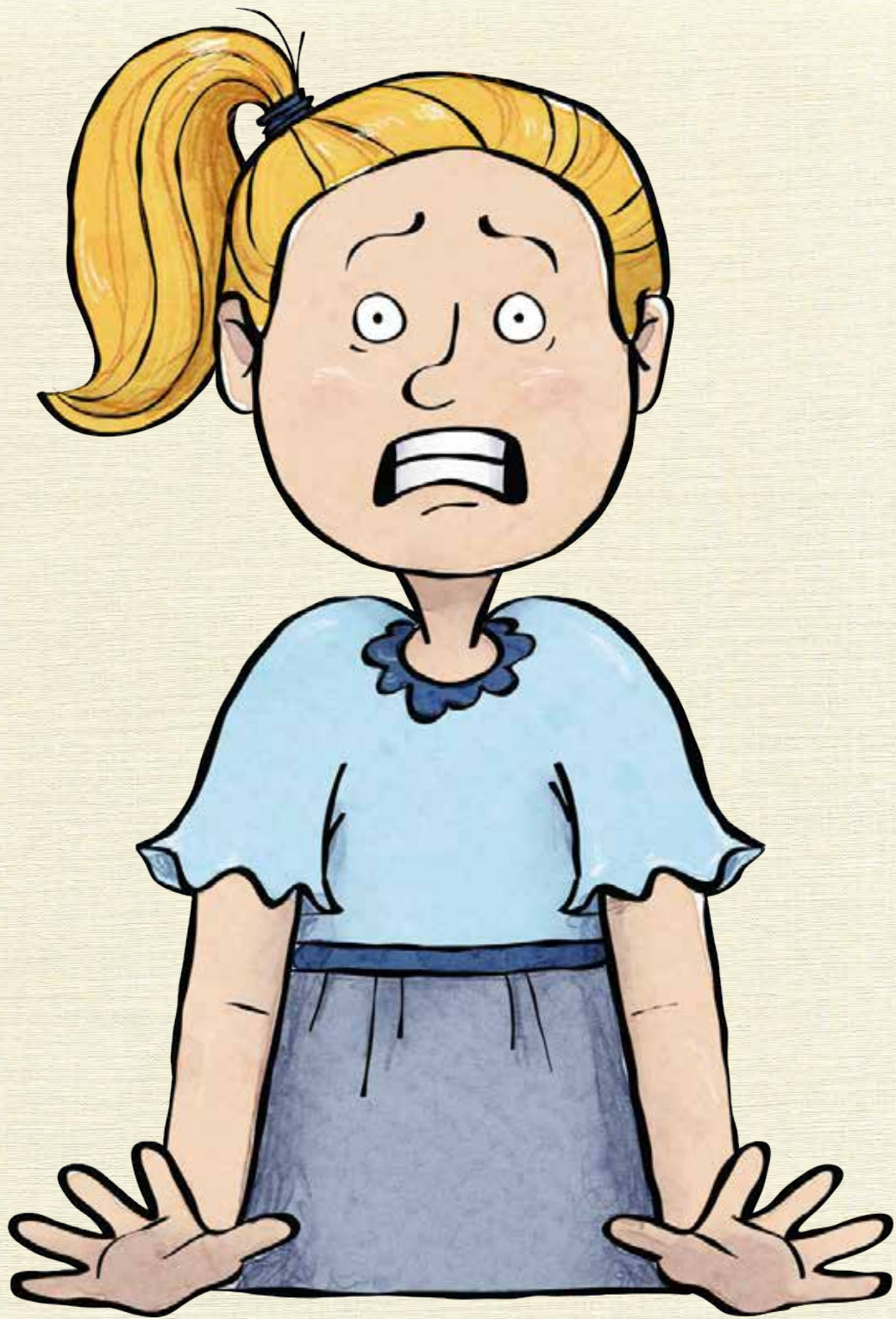
Awake





Surprised





Anxious





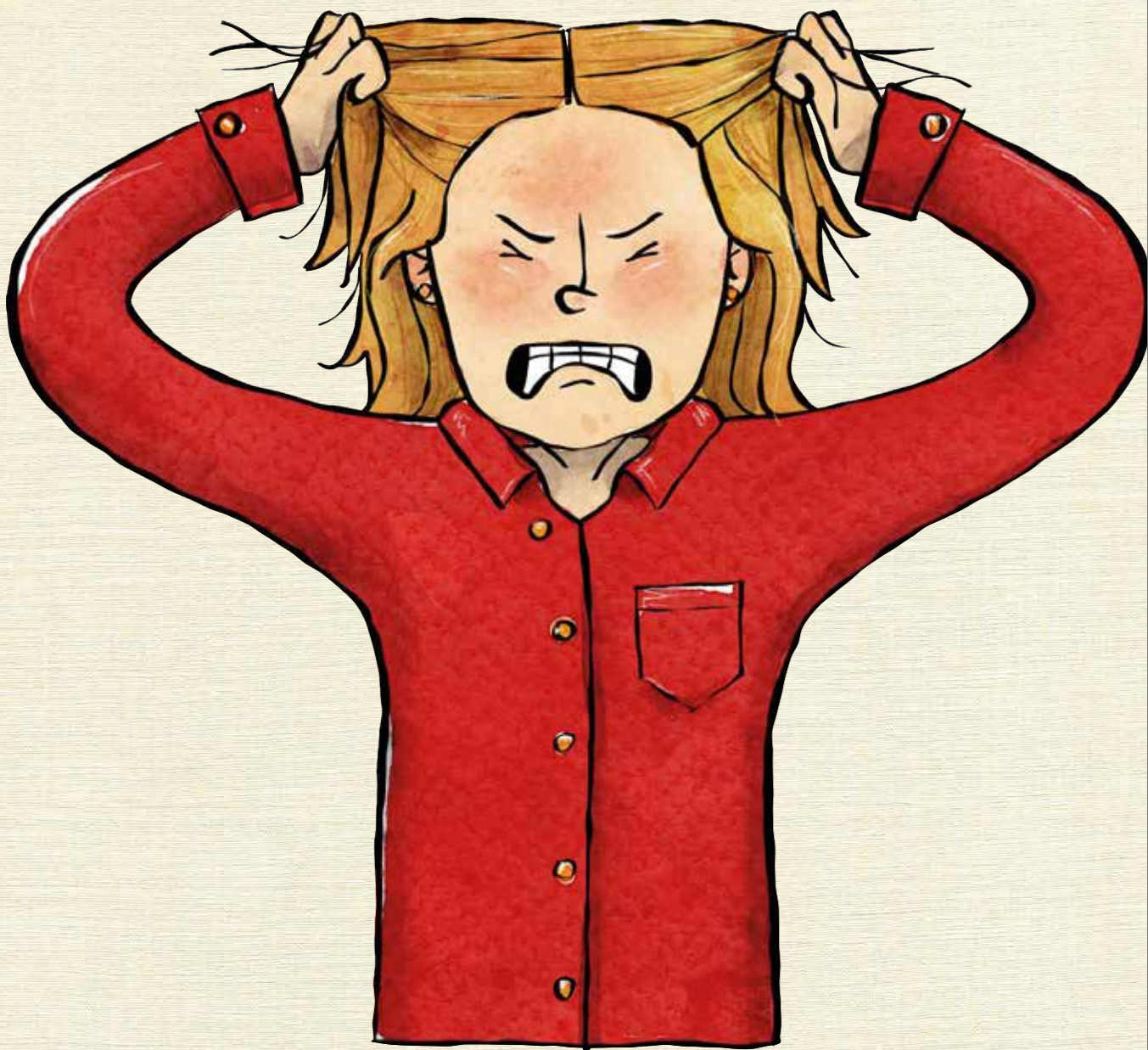
Proud





Enthusiastic





Frustrated





Excluded (o left
out)





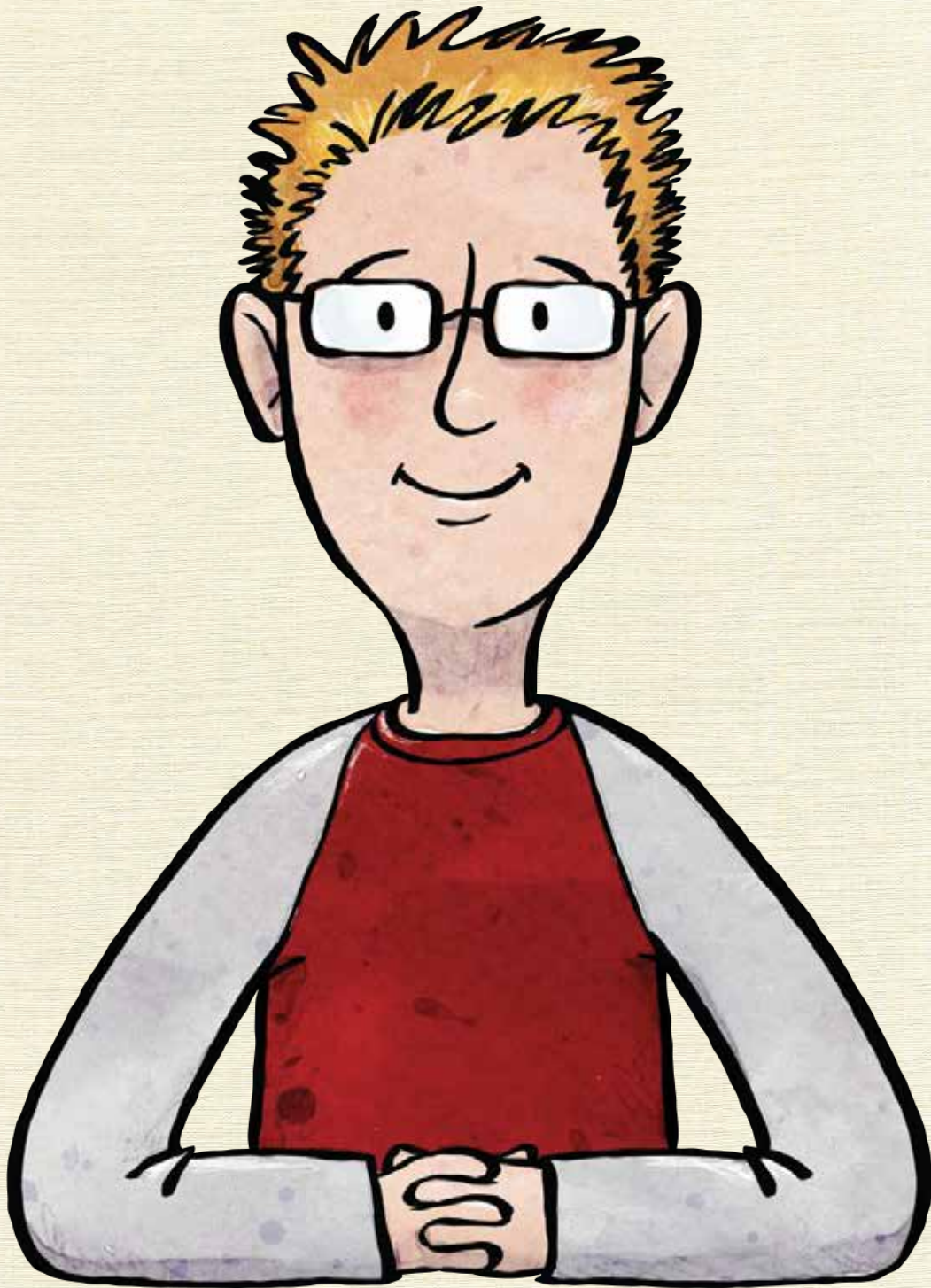
Tired





Silly





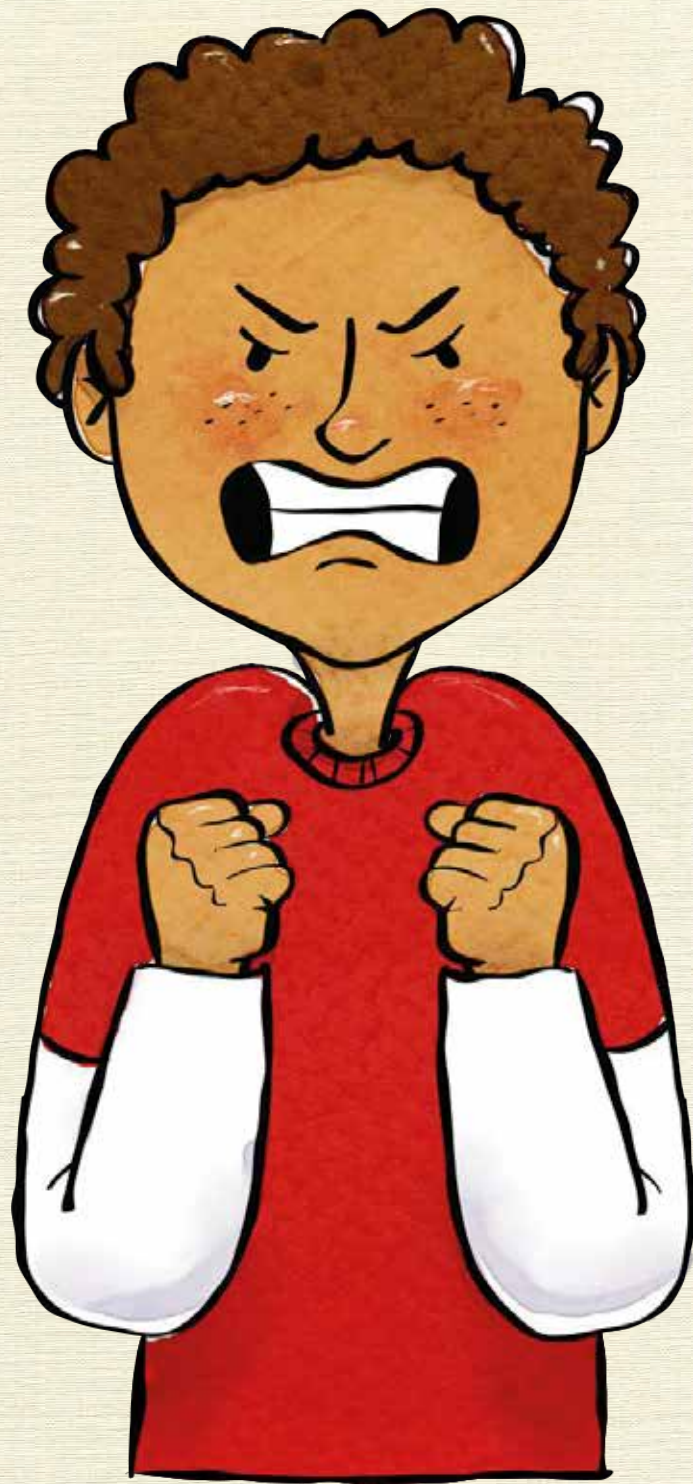
Attentive





Healthy





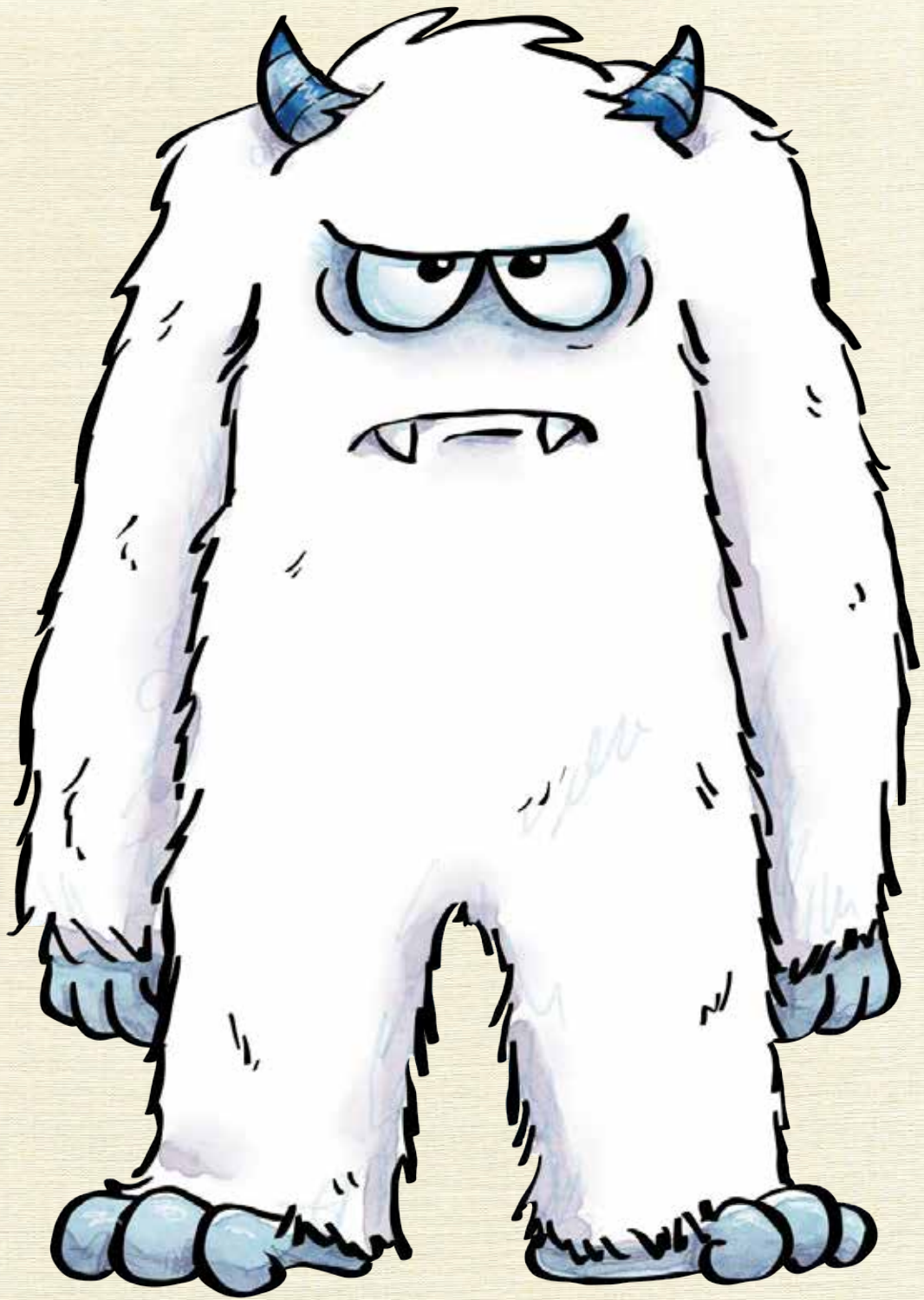
Angry





Amazed





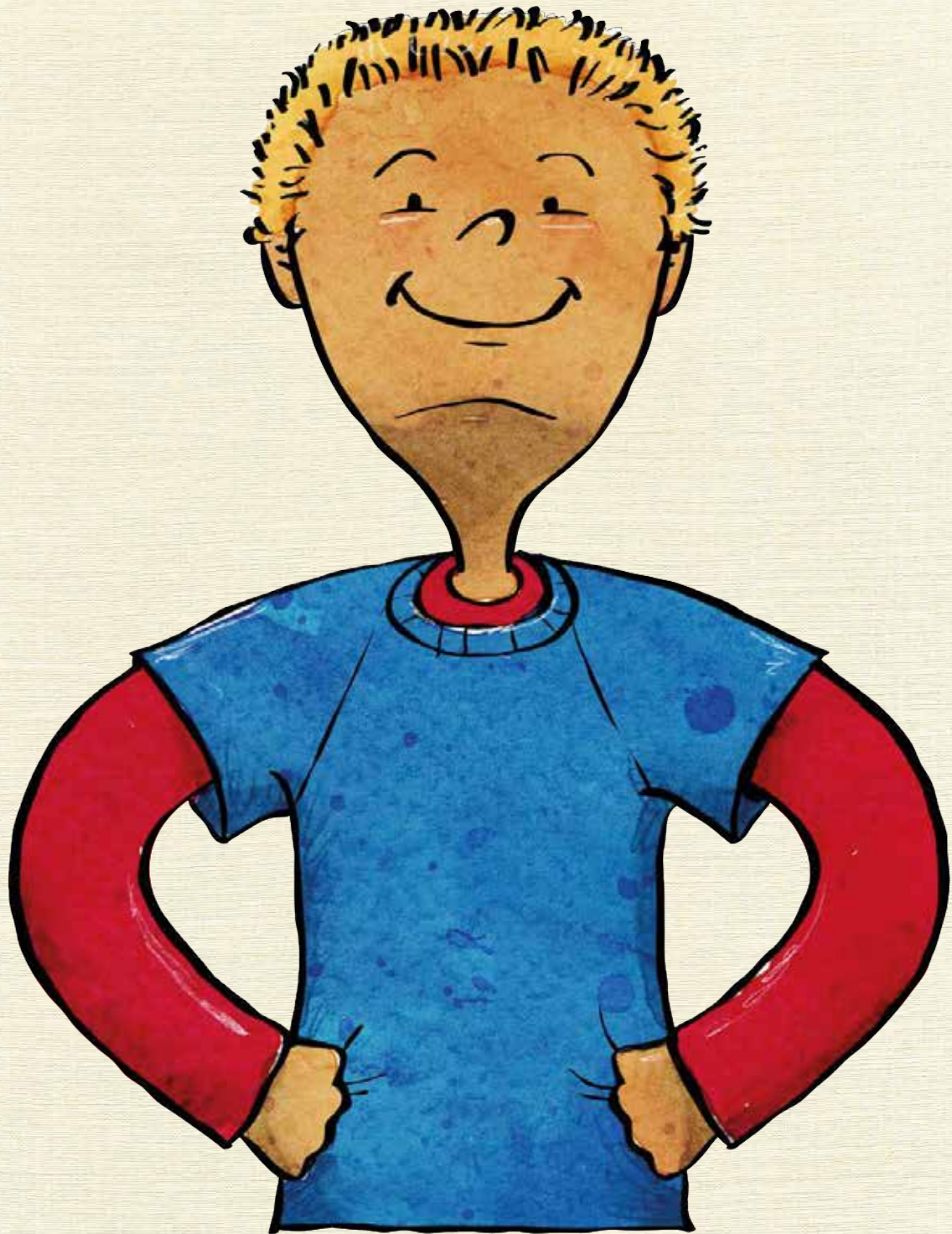
something
strange





Angry





Brave





Sad





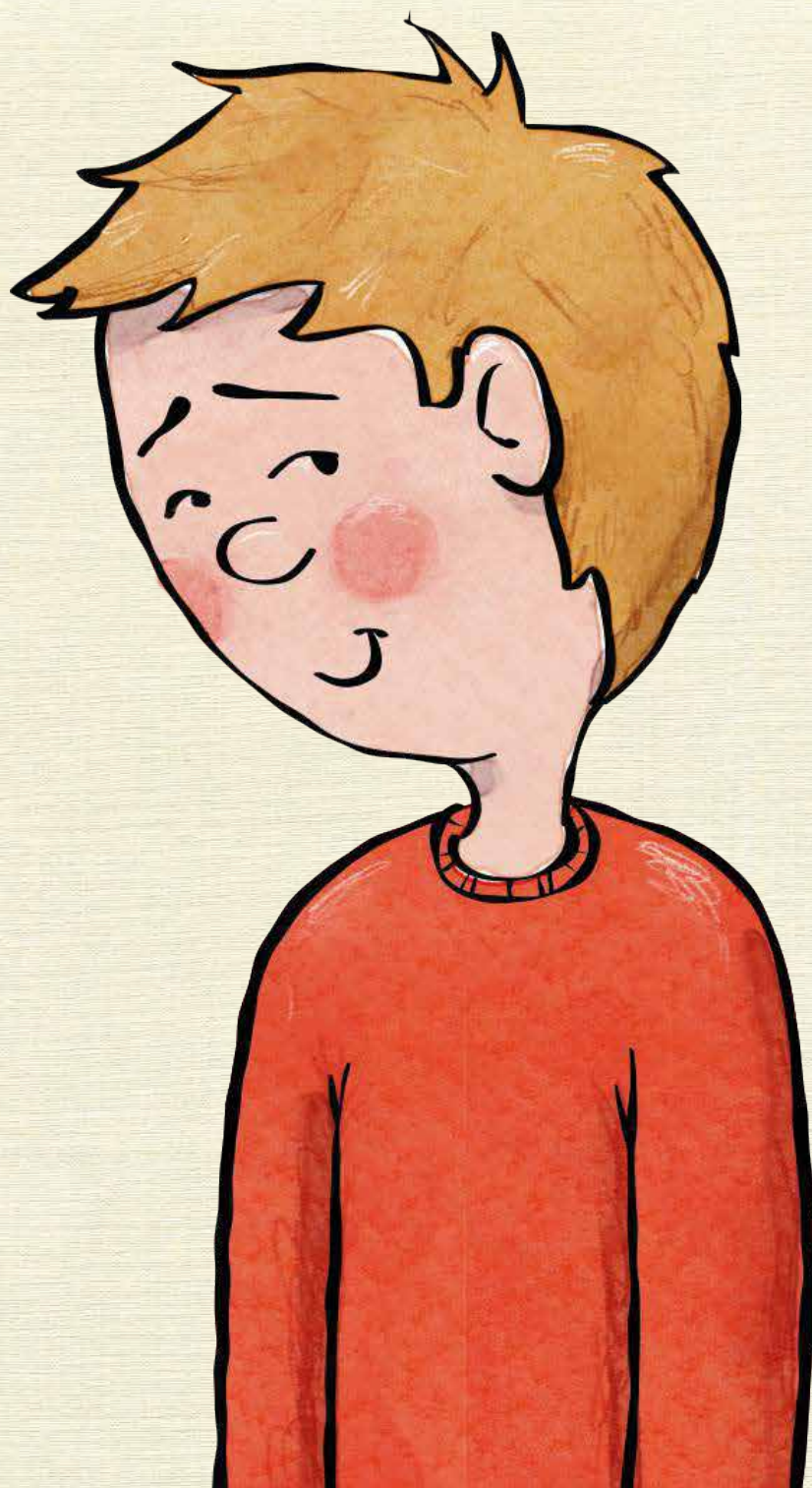
Fun (o playful)





Nervous





Shy





Disappointed





Curious





Thirsty





Printable Day 3 Activity 3: Question cards

How can I notice if a friend is worried or nervous?

What can I do if I see that someone feels lonely?

How can I show that I care without invading their space?

What can I say to cheer up someone who is discouraged?

How can I help if someone doesn't know how to ask for help?

What can I do if someone feels angry or frustrated?

How can I truly listen to someone telling me about their problems?

What can I do if someone asks for help but I don't know how to help them?

How can I be a good friend when someone is scared or worried?

What signs can I look for to know that someone needs support?

What can I do if I see a friend feeling rejected or excluded?

How can I help someone who is afraid of making a mistake?

What can I say if a classmate looks worried but doesn't speak?

How can I show support without making the other person feel bad?

What can I do so that someone feels safe and heard?

Printable Day 3 Activity 4: Role-play cards

Two friends are arguing and both feel offended. What do you do to help them resolve the conflict?

A friend seems happy in public, but you notice they are worried and sad in secret. What can you do to support them?

A classmate says "I don't care about anything" and withdraws from the group. What can you do?

A classmate is sad and doesn't want to play. What do you do?

A friend is very worried about something. What do you say to them?

Someone is crying after breaktime. How can you help?

A child gets angry and withdraws from the group. What would you do?

You see a friend is alone during breaktime. What do you do?

Someone trips and hurts their knee. How do you react?

A classmate feels insecure before an exam. What do you say to them?

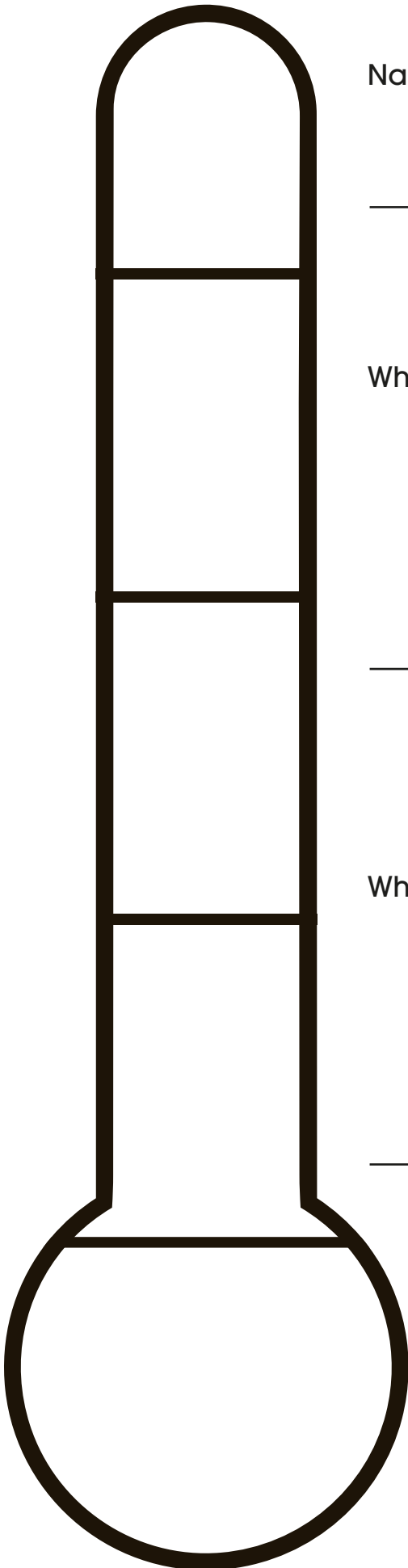
A friend is nervous about a class presentation. How do you encourage them?

A classmate feels rejected in a team game. How do you help them?

A friend feels lonely because they don't know who to play with. How do you support them?

Someone is annoyed and shouts for no apparent reason. How do you react?

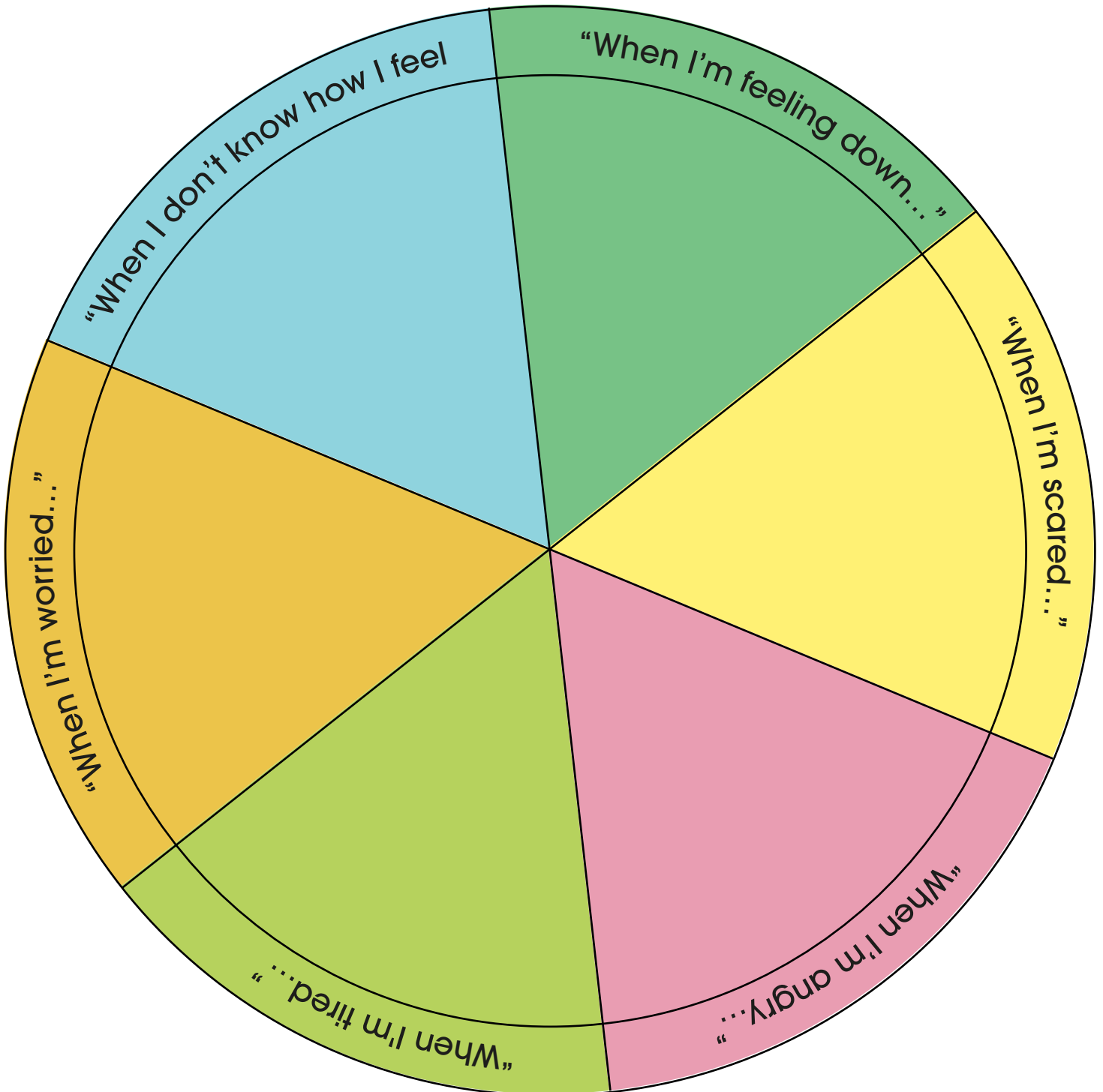
You see a friend is sad because they lost something important. What do you say?



Name of the emotion

Who can you turn to for help?

What helped you lower or raise your temperature?





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