

Coping with Crisis

Elementary School

Social Emotional Learning Unit

5 Lessons, 1 Project

Introduction (for teachers)

We often use the word crisis to describe an event that creates emotional **stress**, trauma, difficulty, instability, and/or danger. A person's response to a crisis is influenced by many personal and situational factors, which may determine the degree of psychological and emotional impact the crisis has on those involved. Elementary students may present a wide array of emotional, social, cognitive, and psychological reactions after experiencing or witnessing natural disasters, accidents, neglect, personal loss such as death of a pet, relative or friend or acts of violence. In the aftermath of a crisis children may demonstrate one or more common responses to trauma including detachment, depression, guilt, anger, uncharacteristic behavior, fatigue, headaches, stomach aches or other physical ailments. Young children may act out in inconsistent ways or regress in a previously mastered skill.

Regardless of our age, traumatic events shake our sense of safety and can fuel chronic anxiety and recurring thoughts that the event may happen again. Resulting **stress** in the aftermath of a crisis impacts physical health, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Many who are going through a major life crisis find it challenging to understand and cope with their feelings. Young children are vulnerable to being overwhelmed by stressful emotional experiences because they lack **coping** skills of older children and adults. They are typically not as equipped to process traumatic events independently and are highly influenced by the reaction of the adults around them. Adults supporting students in times of crisis can mitigate the intensity of a student's response by managing their own **emotions** and thoughts, by responding proactively to protect students from actual dangers that may exist while giving clear directions, and by avoiding intense emotional displays that might increase the likelihood of a panic response from others.

In teaching this lesson to elementary students, you may want to adapt content based on each student's readiness. You know your students, their emotional maturity and personal circumstances to appropriately decide what details or conversations need to be adjusted to provide emotional safety.

In the aftermath of a crisis, caring adults can provide meaningful support and even impact the duration and intensity of a student's response through active listening. Active, empathetic listening where listeners non-verbally and verbally communicate understanding and concern for the student's experience reduces feelings of isolation and counters the withdrawal response. In active listening, adults build trust and provide non-judgmental feedback to help students acknowledge and label their feelings. Active listening and then paraphrasing student language demonstrate that the listener is connecting to the student's experience. Young children may not be able to identify why they are feeling a certain emotion or to even identify the emotion. Saying, "I think you may be feeling angry" can help a young child understand their feeling and recognize it moving forward. Allowing for times of silence can also be a valuable strategy for increasing student awareness of their own thoughts and feelings, allowing space for students to continue talking about their experience.

Many who experience a crisis may recover significantly within a few weeks after the traumatic event, especially if they are supported by a caring circle of family and friends, given the opportunity to express their feelings, and are protected from other intense stressors immediately following the crisis. However, it is important to remember that intense grief and emotional distress following a crisis may overload our natural **coping** mechanisms, and, in many cases, may require professional, clinical support or intensive interventions to support long-term **recovery**. A formal school process for identifying and referring students who need additional support following trauma is key to ensuring all students get the help they need. As schools prepare and plan for this unit, it is recommended that school leaders ensure that all staff members have adequate training to recognize the warning signs of high risk and have access to, and clearly understand, the district and school student referral process and policies. It is important to remember that common responses to trauma for young children are acting in any manner that is uncharacteristic for that child; from acting aggressive to quiet withdrawal, lack of excitement toward previously enjoyed activity, headache or stomach ache.

During this unit, students will learn about the importance of **resilience** following a difficult time, learn to identify and understand **emotions**, and create positive healthy **coping** strategies or **outlets** for big **emotions**. At the end of the unit, students will collaborate to create a **Peer** Support Group and **Toolbox** for the classroom as a resource for the students to use to help their classmates when they are having a bad day, a challenging time or experiencing a crisis.

An event that is universally experienced is the death of a loved one. According to the National Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Assistance Center, most children will experience the death of a relative or friend before high school graduation, and five percent of young people will experience the death of a parent by sixteen.¹ These losses and other difficult life events can have a dramatic impact on the direction of a child's life by having a significant and long-term influence on a student's school performance, behavior, social and emotional wellness, physical health, and relationships. Due to the COVID pandemic, it is possible that elementary students will have lost someone they know. As their teacher, you have the opportunity to mitigate some of the negative effects of the students' traumatic experience by offering support and helping students learn and practice **empathy** which can contribute to the **recovery** process.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Huston and DiPietro found that most students perceived even the smallest effort by their professors as beneficial to their **recovery**.² The only response that engendered consistently negative feedback from students was when teachers barely acknowledged the occurrence of the event and urged the class to move on without offering strategies for **coping** or opportunities for discussion.

¹U.S. Department of Education's Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Assistance Center (2007). Coping with the death of a student or staff member. *Emergency Response and Crisis Management Express*, 3(2), 1-12.

²Huston, T. A. & DiPietro, M. (2007). In the eye of the storm: Students' perceptions of helpful faculty actions following a collective tragedy. *To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*, 25, 207-224.

Informed by the research and best practices developed by organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for PTSD, and the American Counseling Association (Links to resources are found on the following page.), teachers can positively impact student's **recovery** from a crisis. Young children are often left to process strong **emotions** and make sense of difficult situations from their own limited understanding. Having a safe place to talk about difficult situations, in age appropriate ways, is important for the emotional wellbeing of young children.

Recommendations for Coping with Crisis

1 Establish a Safe Space

Because discussions about problems and crisis may serve as emotional triggers for some of your students, it is recommended that you proactively take the following steps to make your classroom a comfortable sharing space:

- Ensure that a high level of familiarity and trust is already established in your classroom. Consider introducing other social emotional unit topics before teaching **Coping with Crisis**.
- Inform guidance counselors, school psychologists, and parents/guardians that you will be engaging students in this unit topic. Invite the participation of counselors and psychologists in the lessons.
- Be sensitive to ethnic, racial, and cultural differences as you read books and open discussion. For example, some of your students may be refugees who have already experienced very traumatic events in their young lives.
- Collaboratively draft a set of ground rules with your students to define appropriate expectations for listening to one another, and for ensuring a classroom culture of kindness and respect. If already established, review the class guidelines. (Note: this activity is included in the first lesson.)
- Allow students time to **reflect** and process after each lesson. (Note: time for this is offered through reflection questions included after each lesson.)
- Be aware that some students may find certain conversations or activities in this unit to be difficult or uncomfortable. Be prepared to support those students with an alternative related task, such as journaling, practicing mindfulness, creating art, playing or listening to music, writing a private letter or drawing a picture. Consider making arrangements with another teacher ahead of time in case working in a different classroom is necessary for any student during specific components of this Unit.

2 Plan Ahead

The final project of this unit requires your students to develop a **Peer Support Group** and **Toolbox** which they can use to support their classmates.

Additional Resources

Below are additional resources that teachers can use to further expand their understanding of the unit topic and social emotional learning for kids.

- "Trauma and Disaster Mental Health"
<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/trauma-disaster>
- "In the Eye of the Storm: Students' Perceptions of Helpful Faculty Actions Following a Collective Tragedy"
https://podnetwork.org/content/uploads/In_the_Eye.pdf
- "Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters: What Parents Can Do"
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-parents-trifold/index.shtml#pub1>
- "Teaching in Times of Crisis"
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/crisis/>
- "The Inclusion Lab"
<https://blog.brookespublishing.com/second-post-back-practical-tips-for-peer-supports/>
- "Activities to Build Social and Emotional Skills in Elementary Students"
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/sel-for-elementary-school-randy-taran>
- "Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Preschool and Elementary School Edition"
<http://www.casel.org/preschool-and-elementary-edition-casel-guide/>
- "Great Reads for Building Character and Friendship"
<http://kindergartensquared.blogspot.com/2013/09/great-reads-for-building-character-and.html>
- "Social awareness + emotional skills = successful kids"
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2010/04/classrooms.aspx>

Lesson 1: Beyond a Bad Day

Lesson Focus

What should we do when something makes us feel sad or afraid? How do we talk with the adults in our life to help each other feel better while we are working together to solve a problem? This lesson will help students understand that difficult times happen in every person's life. They will learn to express their feelings and to choose activities that help them and others around them feel better. They will learn about **resilience** and become more able to find an optimistic point of view, to bounce back, and to adapt to difficulties as they arise.

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *recognizing strengths and self-efficacy*
- **Responsible decision-making:** specifically, *identifying problems and reflecting*

Learning Standards

Students will:

- Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility. (ASCA B-SMS)

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to be resilient?

Key VOCABULARY TERMS for Students

- **A challenge:** Something that creates a problem that needs to be solved.
- **Resilience:** The ability to recover or bounce back from something that makes you feel sad or afraid.
- **Optimism:** Picturing a good or happy ending. Believing that things will be ok.

Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand what **resilience** is and what it looks like.
- Understand how to take responsibility for their own **resilience**.

Materials

- Enough whiteboard markers for each student
- A poster or piece of chart paper ready to be taped to the whiteboard
- **Superhero** worksheets, one for each student. [Supergirl Hercules Superman Wonder Woman](#)
- [Alexander and the Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day](#) Video (6:29)
- [Resilience in Kids](#) video (3:10) or similar

Time Frame

Preparation: 10 min

Instruction: 30 min

Lesson Preparation (10 minutes)

- 1 Obtain enough whiteboard markers for every student.
- 2 Obtain a poster board or piece of chart paper.
- 3 Preview [Alexander and the Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day](#)
- 4 Preview [Resilience in Kids](#) video (3:10) and have it ready to play.



Lesson Activator (10 minutes)

[Suggested Script]: “For the next few weeks we are going to be talking about how we can stay strong and bounce back when we have a problem. Some problems are easy to solve, like forgetting to bring your lunch to school. Other problems may last longer and we may have stronger feelings because of the size of the problem. Sometimes we have feelings that get too big for us to handle alone and we need help to handle them in the best way. It is important to understand that we are in charge of our feelings and the actions that we can take to help ourselves and others. What has happened that caused a problem for you? (allow for short discussion). It may be hard for some of us to talk about our bad days or difficult times. Talking about difficult times can often bring up memories that may be sad or make us scared. It helps to talk about these feelings if we have a safe space to share. Let’s create a list of rules to make sure our classroom is a place where everyone is treating each other with kindness, respect, and understanding as we talk about these things. (If such a list of rules already exists, now is the time to review them and skip the bullet points below).

Ask the students what some rules may be. As the teacher writes responses on the whiteboard, suggest rules that you find appropriate that the students did not suggest and add them to the list. Give students a few minutes to suggest at least two original rules on the whiteboard (e.g., listen respectfully to one another, don’t judge others’ stories or reactions, conversations that happen in the classroom stay in the classroom). Write the top five guidelines on the poster board. Have a student tape the list somewhere visible within the room. Emphasize that the expectation is that students will follow these ground rules throughout the unit. Ask for a show of hands that this is something they can agree to. For advance grade elementary, allow students to write responses on the poster board.

Lesson Procedure (20 minutes)

1 *Ask. [Suggested Script]:*

“Have you ever had a day when lots of things go wrong? Allow for responses. Let’s watch a short story about Alexander, a young boy who is having one of those days”. For older elementary students, explain that while this is a book they may have read when they were younger, the message of the book is for all ages.

“Have you ever had a day that felt like this?” Allow for responses. “We have all had days like this”.

“What are some things that Alexander could do to have a better day?” (he could change the way he looked at certain situations, been grateful for a new pair of shoes, run cold water into his bathtub, etc.)

2 *Explain. [Suggested Script]:*

“You were good at solving problems and finding solutions! When we are able to stay calm and think positively to overcome a problem that is called **resilience**. We all can learn how to be more **optimistic** (see vocabulary and support student understanding of this word) and resilient during a bad day or in a challenging time.”

3 Read the definitions of the vocabulary words.

A challenge: Something that creates a problem that needs to be solved. **Resilience:** The ability to recover or bounce back from something that makes you feel sad or afraid. **Optimism:** Picturing a good or happy ending. Believing that things will be ok. For older elementary students, suggest that a challenging time can also be called a crisis. A crisis is a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger.

4 Ask. [Suggested Script]:

"Can you think of a challenging time that you or someone you know has had?" As the teacher, write their suggestions on the board. As the teacher, consider the ages of the students when offering additional examples. Examples may include: breaking your arm, an argument with a friend, death of a pet or family member, parents divorce, moving to a new school, the COVID pandemic, natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, fires, tornados, and earthquakes. What were some solutions that you, or adults in your life brought to the situation?

5 Explain. [Suggested Script]:

"We all can sometimes expect to face tough days. When we are strong, **resilient**, and **optimistic**, we can help ourselves and others to find comfort and solutions during hard times. Talking about how to be **resilient** when we have challenging times helps us to be prepared so that when we have a difficult time we are in a better position to take action and/or take care of ourselves.

6 Remind. [Suggested Script]:

"Since the beginning of time people have walked through and bounced back from all kinds of hard times. Just think about some of the stories you have heard from your parents or from books that you have read. You, your family and your friends have been through and bounced back from hard times as well.

7 Activity. [Suggested Script]:

"We are now going to watch a short video about **resilience** (3:10)." Play [Resilience in Kids](#). Stop the video at 2:35.

- Ask: "What did you like about the video?"
- Ask: "What did you learn from the video?"
- Pass out a **Superhero** cartoon. Ask: "What are your **superhero** words for **resilience**?" (cope, keep focused, thrive, **optimism**, being flexible, keep going, reaching out, asking for help, stick with it, don't give up.) Write responses and some of these from the video on the whiteboard.
- Tell students to write some of these **resilience** words on their **superhero**.

Assessment

- Allow students who would like to share their worksheets for understanding of **resilience**.

Reflection Questions

- What do I know about **resilience**?
- Why is it important to practice **resilience**?

Variations / Extensions

- Have the students break into small groups to share their "**resilience superheroes**" with each other.
- Lead a discussion with older elementary students about the COVID crisis. Allow them to share personal stories in small groups.

*"Oh yes, the past can hurt, but the way I see it
you can either run from it or learn from it."
- Rafiki, The Lion King*

Lesson 2: Understanding Feelings

Lesson Focus

This lesson will help build the students emotional vocabulary. They will identify and better understand feelings and **emotions**. Students will learn that it is normal to have feelings and **emotions** and know that we feel **emotions** in our hearts and in our bodies at the same time. Students will understand that there is more than one way to respond when they are feeling big **emotions**. They will learn how to choose appropriate responses. This Lesson can be covered in two sessions.

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *identifying emotions*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *communication*

Learning Standards

Students will:

- Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility (B-SMS.1)
- Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (B-SS.1)

Essential Questions

- What are feelings and **emotions**?
- How does my body respond to my **emotions**?
- How can I express my feelings in healthy ways?

Key VOCABULARY TERMS for Students

- **Emotions:** strong feeling (as anger, love, joy, or fear) often accompanied by a physical reaction
(We use the words feelings and **emotions** interchangeably in this lesson.)

Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify their feelings.
- Understand that feelings are ok and normal.
- Begin to see the relationships between physical responses and emotional responses to circumstance.

Materials

- Projector or interactive whiteboard (to play video)
- Speakers (if needed so students can adequately hear video)
- [Inside Out, Guess the Feelings](#) video.
- [Feelings Worksheet](#), enough for one for each student..
- One Book: possible choices- [The Color Monster](#) by Anna Llenas, [The Way I Feel](#) by Janan Cain, [My Heart](#) by Corrina Luyken or similar
- [Inside Out Feelings Chart](#) and [Feeling Faces Poster](#)
- Early Elementary: [Body shapes precut multicultural skin colors](#).
- Older Elementary: [Skeleton Graphic](#)
- Markers
- Pencils

Time Frame

Preparation: 15 minutes

Instruction: 55 minutes

Lesson Preparation (15 minutes)

- 1 Download Inside Out video
- 2 Create a *Feelings are All OK* worksheet. Draw circles on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper and label the circles: happy, sad, angry, afraid, surprised, disgusted.
- 3 Purchase or cut body shapes in cultural skin colors. Don't use white paper.

Lesson Activator (2 minutes)

[Suggested Script]: "Who can tell me what an **emotion** is?" Affirm and write student responses on the whiteboard. "Today we are going to learn more about our feelings and **emotions**. **Emotions** are feelings like anger, love, joy, or fear and sometimes they can make your body feel differently. For example, who can think of a time when they were riding on a roller coaster and you were so excited or nervous and you felt a little upset in your tummy? Or maybe watching a scary movie and your body began to shake a bit? Sometimes we notice **emotions** in our bodies, for example a feeling of sadness or happiness in the center of our chest, near our heart. For our lesson, we will use the words feelings and **emotions** to mean the same thing.

Lesson Procedure (45 minutes)

1 Introduce feelings/emotions. [Suggested Script]:

"Everyone has feelings and **emotions**, they are part of who we are and how we are made. It is important to understand what they are and how we use our **emotions** to think and act in our best selves. Feelings are OK. Some feelings are comfortable and others might be uncomfortable. Our feelings can change and we can have more than one feeling at the same time. Learning about our feelings and **emotions** is the first step in understanding ourselves better. People can feel differently about the same thing and that's okay too. There are no right or wrong feelings, but when we respond to our feelings we can make choices.

- Read one of the suggested books or a similar one. Ask questions. [The Color Monster](#) by Anna Llenas or [The Way I Feel](#) by Janan Cain, For [My Heart](#) by Corrina Luyken, ask questions like, "what does the author mean when she says, "my heart is a window", "my heart is a slide"?"

2 Feelings Activities. [Suggested Script]:

"Here is a poster with kids' faces showing different feelings or **emotions**. Look at the expression on the face of this child who is afraid". Go through several of the faces and tape the poster to the wall where all students can see it. "Let's play a game to identify **emotions**. Watch and play along with the [Inside Out Guess the Feelings](#) video.

[Suggested Script]: "Understanding what our **emotions** might look like on our faces can help us to understand what we are feeling and what others may be feeling as well". Pass out [Feelings Worksheet](#). "Draw the faces to match each feeling listed. For early elementary, do this activity as a group.



3 Introduce the concept of feeling emotions in your body. [Suggested Script]:

"Sometimes we feel our **emotions** in our body. We talked earlier that when you are scared your body may shake. When you are sad, you may also have a headache or a stomachache. When you are angry, your body temperature may feel hot. Everyone feels their **emotions** differently because we are all unique people. What you feel, I may not feel. How does your body feel when you are excited or nervous?" (Allow for responses, ask about a couple more **emotions** to give students time to think about themselves and do some self-reflection)

- Choose one of the following based on the age of your students. Pass out the [Body shapes precut multicultural skin colors](#) or the [Skeleton Graphic](#).
- Tell the students to draw or write **emotions** they feel in specific places in their body, using different colors to represent different feelings. They can use words or pictures to illustrate the **emotions**.

4 [Suggested Script]:

"Sometimes we feel our **emotions** so strongly that we show them in ways that are not OK. We know that all feelings are acceptable, however not all behaviors are acceptable. Let me say that again another way, all feelings are OK, but not all choices we might make as we respond to that emotion are good choices. For example, feeling angry is OK. We all feel angry from time to time. There are lots of ways people show anger: some ways are acceptable, and some are not. Using your words to tell someone you are angry is appropriate and OK. Hitting or screaming in someone's face is not acceptable and is NOT OK. "

- Create a chart and write or have students write three big **emotions** on the board: Angry, Happy, and Sad and make two columns underneath each. Label one OK and the other NOT OK. Go around the room and ask students to write or draw 3 different ways they could choose to respond to each emotion.

Assessment

- Do a pop-up exercise.
 - a) Say an emotion and ask for a student to show that emotional face.
 - b) **Ask** where the **emotions** of anger, fear, and excitement shows up in their body. (For some students they may not be aware of how they feel **emotions** physically. Affirm again that we are all different and our bodies uniquely respond)

Reflection Questions

- Why is it important to be able to name our feelings and **emotions**?
- What are some ways that are OK to show anger, fear, or happiness?

Variations / Extensions

- Feelings Charades: Using the feelings chart play charades. Ask: Who would like to be “it” first for a game of charades? Give the child one of the feelings to act out. Continue until time for the session ends.
- Play the **I Feel Game**. The **purpose** of the **I Feel Game** is to help children identify and accept their own feelings. To play, go around in a circle asking questions such as these or have the students create the questions:
 - When it rains, I feel _____.
 - When it’s my birthday, I feel _____.
 - When no one will play with me, I feel _____.
 - When I draw a great picture, I feel _____.
 - When my mother says I have done something wrong, I feel _____.
 - When my friend gets a toy I really wanted, I feel _____.
 - When I snuggle with someone I love, I feel _____.

*“Feeling unsure and lost is part of your path.
Don’t avoid it. See what those feelings are
showing you and use it. Take a breath. You’ll be
okay. Even if you don’t feel okay all the time.”
- Louis CK*

Lesson 3: Processing Your Emotions

Lesson Focus

Students will learn **coping** strategies and positive activities to build **capacity** to self-regulate and explore healthy ways to express their big **emotions** like sadness, anger, or fear. They will use one of the healthy **coping** activities to process and improve how they are feeling when they are having a bad day or going through a difficult time. This lesson can be covered in two sessions.

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *stress management*
- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *identifying emotions*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *communication*
- **Responsible decision-making:** specifically, *solving problems, evaluating*

Learning Standards

Students will:

- Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (B-SS.1)
- Create relationships with adults who support success (B-SS.3)
- Demonstrate effective **coping** skills when faced with a problem (B-SMS.7)

Essential Questions

- What can I do when my **emotions** feel big?
- How do difficult times change my **emotions**?

Key VOCABULARY TERMS for Students

- **Coping:** to deal with, overcome problems and difficult times
- **Outlet:** a way of releasing or expressing a feeling
- **Stress:** is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something.
- **Capacity:** the ability to develop a skill

Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Learn healthy **coping outlets**.
- Understand why these **outlets** are important.

Materials

- Projector or interactive whiteboard (to show chart)
- White paper
- Pencils
- [Listening to My Body by Gabi Garcia](#)
- Suggested for younger students [Coping Strategy Chart 1](#)
- Suggested for older students [Coping Strategy Chart 2](#)

Time Frame

Preparation: 15 minutes

Instruction: 40 minutes

Lesson Preparation (15 minutes)

- 1 Purchase or borrow the book mentioned or similar.
- 2 Write definitions on the whiteboard.
- 3 Coping Strategy Charts, one for each student.
- 4 Secure the chart site on the screen

Lesson Activator

[Suggested Script]: “We are going to continue learning about our feelings and **emotions**. In the first lessons we talked about the different problems that life can bring us all. During the last sessions we talked about our feelings and **emotions** and why it is important to understand them and recognize them in our bodies. We talked about ways that are acceptable and ways that are not acceptable to show **emotions**. Sometimes when our **emotions** get big we feel **stress**. **Stress** is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something. You may feel angry, frustrated, scared, or afraid, which can give you a stomachache or a headache. When you’re stressed you may not feel like sleeping or eating, or you might sleep or eat too much. Today we will learn about ways we can help ourselves feel better when an emotion gets too big or we feel **stress**.”

Lesson Procedure (40 minutes)

1 Introduce Coping. [Suggested Script]:

Anger is an emotion that can get real big, real fast. Can you think of a time when you were angry? How did you feel inside? Was there something you did to feel better, less angry? Allow for several students to share. The positive things we do when we have big **emotions** are called **coping** strategies or **coping** outlets. Read the definitions - **Coping**: to deal with, overcome problems and difficult times, **Outlet**: a way of releasing or expressing a feeling. These **coping outlets** are positive, healthy things that we can do to help ourselves feel better when we are having big **emotions**."

2 Use the Coping Strategies / Positive Outlet Chart

Put one of the **coping** strategy charts on the screen, [Coping Strategy 1 Chart](#) or [Coping Strategy 2 Chart](#) on the screen.

[**Suggested Script**]: "Let's explore the activities on the chart." Go around the room and ask students read aloud one of the pictures. "Have you ever tried any of the activities on the graphic?" Upon response, "Why do you think that activity helped you feel better (got my mind thinking about something else, feels better to do something I like, made me think)?" Allow for several students to reply. "One **coping** strategy is to talk with a trusted adult." "Who, in our school, is a trusted adult for you?" (teacher, para-professional, office staff, counselor, social worker). "How could you approach them if you wanted to talk?" Listen and affirm suggestions and encourage the students to talk with a trusted adult when they are having a problem.

3 Introduce capacity. [Suggested Script]:

"Through understanding our feelings and **emotions**, we can have the power to manage them and help ourselves feel better with **coping** strategies and positive **outlets**. By practicing these **outlets**, we build **capacity**. **Capacity** is the ability to understand and deal with something. We build **capacity** to handle our big **emotions** by practicing and being prepared so that when we feel big **emotions**, we know what to do. Let's read a book that illustrates some ways in which to build **capacity**.

- **Read then practice.** Choose a book to read and then practice one of the calming activities mentioned in the book, i.e. deep breathing.
- [Listening to My Body by Gabi Garcia](#) (or similar)

Assessment

- Hand out a [Coping Strategy 1 Chart](#) or [Coping Strategy 2 Chart](#) to each student. Ask them to write their name on their chart. Ask: "What can you do to help big negative **emotions** or during a challenging or difficult time?" Circle the things that you like to do. Collect and save the paper for the final project.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it helpful to have **coping** strategies and positive **outlets**?
- Why is it important to build **capacity** with **coping** strategies and positive **outlets**?

Variations / Extensions

- **Practice using exercise as a positive outlet**

Lead a Jumping Jack Attack. Tell the students they will do an exercise activity that helps with anger **outlet**. Have students stand up and spread out where they have plenty of room to do a jumping jack. Demonstrate a jumping jack. Tell the students that you will read a poem and then have a **Jumping Jack Attack** together. Tell the student that you will read this question before they start jumping. "I am mad because... ". The students will yell out what they are mad about and begin jumping. After the activity, tell the students that anger is a fleeting emotion, but what we do when we get angry is what can be lasting, so that it is important to not hurt others just because we feel hurt. Exercise helps us feel better.

- **Read this poem to your students:**

Hi, my name is Jack, and I am going to tell you about my anger attack.
See, one day I got so mad at my brother that I hit him harder than I had hit another.
He cried and cried and asked me why, but all I could do was apologize.
My anger flared and I didn't know where to get it out so I used my fist and hurled it about.
My bad choice didn't make me feel better, as a matter of fact, it made me feel heavier.
Sad now I replaced anger and was to blame for my brother being in pain.
So, now I have a plan, so I won't be sad.
When I get angry, I stop and have an attack, I call it a Jumping Jack attack.
Do you want to have one with me?
First stand with both feet apart and your hands down to your side.
Next as you bring your hands up for a jumping jack take a big deep breath in through your nose
and push your tummy out.
When you get to the top, let it out slowly through your mouth. And say what you are mad about.
Now, repeat after me while doing jumping jacks:
I am having a jumping jack attack. I am mad right now, but won't be mad later.

Additional Resources

- To accompany *Listening to My Body* <http://bit.ly/gabigarciabooks>

Lesson 4: Finding a Bright Spot



Lesson Focus

Students will continue to develop and discover the positive **outlets** that help them overcome big **emotions** or a challenging time. As we learned from the **coping** strategy charts in the last lesson, this could include reading an enjoyable book, talking to a loved one, riding a bike, drawing a picture, or cooking or baking. Lesson 4 will focus on students' discovering their personal **coping** strategies and positive **outlets** that work best for them.

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *stress management*
- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *accurate self-perception*
- **Responsible decision-making:** specifically, *reflecting*

Learning Standards

Students will:

- Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (B-SS.1)
- Demonstrate effective **coping** skills when faced with a problem (B-SMS.7)
- Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (B-SMS.10)

Essential Questions

- What positive **outlets** can students take to support themselves during challenging times or following a crisis?
- Why is it important to **reflect** and explore activities that make you happy?

Key VOCABULARY TERMS for Students

- **Reflect:** to think about something deeply or carefully
- **Recovery:** a return to a normal feeling
- **Resilience:** the ability to recover or bounce back from something that makes you feel sad or afraid.

Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- **Reflect** on what makes you happy.
- Identify at least four activities that can positively affect the **recovery** process after a crisis.

Materials

- Projector or interactive whiteboard (to play video)
- Speakers (if needed so students can adequately hear video)
- Enough copies of the [Self-Assessment](#), one for each student.
- Video (4:17) [Resilience in the forest with Kiri and Lou!](#)
- Video (2:17) [Resilience but what is it? Here's 5 ways to build resilience](#)

Time Frame

Preparation: 10 minutes

Instruction: 30 minutes

Lesson Preparation (10 minutes)

- 1 Print copies of the [Self-Assessment](#), one for each student.
- 2 Connect to the YouTube video. Choose one video or use them both.
 - [Resilience in the forest with Kiri and Lou!](#) (4:17)
 - [Resilience what is it? 5 ways to build resilience](#) (2:17)

Lesson Activator (2 minutes)

[Suggested Script]: “The past few weeks we have been learning about our feelings and **emotions** and ways to feel better when we are having a difficult time. During the last lesson we talked about lots of **coping** strategies and positive **outlets** and why it is important to build **capacity**. Today you will discover what specific coping **outlets** are helpful to you in times of **stress**. Remember **stress** is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something.”

Lesson Procedure (30 minutes)

1 Definitions [Suggested Script]:

"Let's start by learning two new words: **reflect** and **recovery**. **Reflect** means to think about something deeply or carefully. To use that word in a sentence, I will reflect on all the fun things I learned in school last week. **Recover** is to return to a normal feeling. To use that word in a sentence, My grandmother is recovering from the flu. By reflecting on things that make us happy we can discover our own personal **coping outlets** that help us recover from big **emotions** and difficult times when we feel **stress**." Write these words and definitions on the whiteboard. For upper elementary, allow a student to do this.

2 Watch video: [Suggested Script]:

"Who can remember what **resilience** is?" Allow for response. "Yes, **resilience** is the ability to recover or bounce back from something that makes you feel sad or afraid. We are going to watch a video to help us better understand what **resilience** is and see why it is important"

- (4:17) [Resilience in the forest with Kiri and Lou!](#)
- [Suggested Script]: "Let's talk about the video. What were the **challenges** that the characters experienced?" Allow students to respond and share. Direct the conversation appropriately. "Who would like to share a time that you showed **resilience**?"
- (2:17) [Resilience but what is it? Here's 5 ways to build resilience](#)
- [Suggested Script]: "Let's talk about the video. What are the 5 ways to build **resilience**?" Have a student record the ways on the whiteboard as the class recalls the five ways. These five ways are all positive **coping** strategies!

3 Complete Assessment

[Suggested Script]: "Now I'm going to pass out an activity sheet called a [Self-Assessment](#). This is a checklist of different **coping** strategies for you to **reflect** on and think about. These are activities you can practice to build your **coping** strength. We can build a toolkit of activities to use when we are experiencing big **emotions** from a challenging time. Put a check mark in the box in front of each activity you enjoy and that makes you happy. Write your name on your assessment and put in on my desk when you are finished." For younger elementary students, do this as a group activity.

Assessment

- Tell the students to talk about their feelings and **emotions** with a friend or someone in their family. Ask the student to share what a **coping** strategy is and why it is important to build **capacity**. Suggest that students share a few from their checklist.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it important to **reflect** on what makes you happy?
- How will you respond the next time you feel **stress**?

Lesson 5: Create Your Tool Belt



Lesson Focus

Students will create a **tool belt** of their own positive strategies and **coping outlets** discovered in Lesson 4.

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *stress management*
- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *accurate self-perception*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *social engagement*

Learning Standards

Students will:

- Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (B-SS.1)
- Demonstrate effective **coping** skills when faced with a problem (B-SMS.7)
- Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (B-SMS.10)
- Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment (B-SS.9)

Essential Questions

- Why is it important to have a **tool belt**?
- How can I use my **tool belt**?

Key VOCABULARY TERMS for Students

- **Tool belt:** A belt for carrying tools; a utility belt. (figuratively) A skill set; one's accumulated capabilities.
- **Purpose:** the reason for which something is done or created.

Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify at least four activities that help students recover from **stress** or a difficult time.
- Students will be able to name at least two **purposes** for building a toolbelt of positive **coping outlets**.

Materials

- Poster board
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- 4 copies of [Coping Strategy 2 Chart](#)
- Tool belt to use as an example
- Interest Inventory

Time Frame

Preparation: 20 minutes

Instruction: 30 minutes

Lesson Preparation (20 minutes)

- 1 Create four center signs: a. Exercise/Sports, b. Writing (drawing, journaling), c. Personal (eating, drinking, talking), d. Hobbies (painting, scrapbooking, photography, music, cooking, building).
- 2 Cut poster board in half, enough for each student to have one.
- 3 Example of a poster board template- draw a large "t" and make the poster into four boxes.
- 4 Group tables together to make larger areas for the kids to work and share resources.
Print four copies of [Coping Strategy 2 Chart](#) to put on each center.
- 5 For older elementary, print copies of the Interest Inventory, one per student.

Lesson Activator (5 minutes)

[Suggested Script]: "Today we are going to each make a poster **tool belt** of our own personal **coping** strategies. You may have discovered new strategies in our last lesson. What is a **tool belt**?" *Allow students to respond.* "A **tool belt** is a belt for carrying tools; like a utility belt." Show the students the tool belt you brought in and explain what it is. "Here is a tool belt that is carried around by the carpenter to build his **capacity** to have the resources he needs when he needs them. For example, if he comes across a nail that needs to be removed while painting a wall he can just reach into his **tool belt** for a hammer to pull it out. A **tool belt** can also be an invisible skill set of ideas and strategies we can use when we need them. For example, we all have a tool belt of activities that make up our **coping** strategies!" "What do you think the **purpose** is for knowing what is in your tool belt of **coping** strategies?" (to be ready, to build **capacity**, to have a solution). "Well, the definition of **purpose** is the reason why something is done or created. Each of you will create your own personal **tool belt** of **coping** strategies and positive **outlets** to have ready when needed (emphasize). So that you have tools ready to use when you need them is the **purpose** of this activity. I want to help you to be prepared, to have tools you can use for building **resilience** and finding **recovery**."

Lesson Procedure (30 minutes)

1 Give Instructions. [Suggested Script]:

"Now that you know what activities you enjoy from the [Self-Assessment](#) checklist you created during the last lesson, let's put them into a poster for you to hang up in your room as your **tool belt** to be able to refer to these positive **outlets** when needed. You will create your poster by working in four centers. Listen to the instructions first then I will tell you when to begin. Listen first."

- Bring your [Self-Assessment](#) checklist to each station.
- In your first center you will draw two lines on your poster board, like a "t" to create four boxes on your poster. Show example. Label each box with a title: a. Exercise/Sports, b. Writing (drawing, journaling), c. Personal (eating, drinking, talking with a trusted adult or a friend), d. Hobbies (painting, scrapbooking, photography, music, cooking, building).
- In each center you will complete one box by drawing in at least one of the activities that fit the category. There will be a sheet of pictures you can use as examples for your drawings. For example, when you are at the Exercise/Sports table you may choose swimming or soccer or ballet to add to your box labeled Exercise/Sports.
- I will tell you when to move to the next center.
- You will number off, 1,2 ,3,4 and begin in that number center first.

2 [Suggested Script]: "Does anyone have any questions?"

3 *Complete the activity.*

- Number the class 1-4 and direct each number group into the corresponding center.
- Encourage conversation in the group, this is not to be a quiet activity. Ask students to share with each other what they are putting in their **tool belt**.
- Walk around the tables and monitor the groups to allow for questions and comments.
- Ring a bell or similar to have the students rotate to the next center, approximately 5 minutes.

Assessment

- Tell the students that their homework assignment is to share their tool belt with someone in their family. They will teach their family what a **coping** strategy is and what theirs are.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it important to be purposeful in knowing what is in your tool belt?
- How might you respond and recover the next time you experience a challenging time?

Variations / Extensions

- Required extension for older elementary: [**Suggested Script**]: "We will work on our final project for the **Coping** with Crisis unit in the next lesson time. We will create a **Peer** Support Group and **Toolbox**. By completing this survey, you get to choose some of the ways to participate in creating the **toolbox** we will use. Follow the directions on this survey that I'm passing out and hand it in to me when you have completed it."
- Divide the students into small groups, different from their numbered group, and give them time to share their tool belts with a different group of classmates.

Interest Inventory: Roles for Peer Support Group Development Project

Name: _____

The final project of this unit will ask you to work as a class to develop a **Peer Support Group** for your classmates who might be experiencing a crisis. Although you will be working as a class, each one of you will be assigned to a specific group. Please rank your top 3 areas of interest below (place a 1, 2, or 3 on the line next to the responsibilities you are choosing)

- 1 Handbook cover design _____
- 2 Tool-Box Design _____
- 3 Write a list of **emotions** _____
- 4 Create a poster of **emotions** _____
- 5 Write a list of healthy actions _____
- 6 Create a poster of healthy actions _____
- 7 Write a list of ways our bodies feel and the **emotions** we may have during a crisis _____
- 8 Create a poster of the ways our bodies feel and the **emotions** we may have during a crisis _____
- 9 Creating a list outlining the 'shoulds' and 'should nots' when supporting a friend who is experiencing a crisis (See example) _____

Project: The Peer Support Group

(Note: See alternate Project, *Creating a Calm Down Kit for K-3 students*)

Lesson Focus

This lesson will serve to launch the ongoing final project for this Unit. Students will work together to create a **Peer Support Group** and classroom **Toolbox** to develop support and show **empathy** for their classmates when they are having a bad day or experiencing a challenging time in life. Students will be able to use the resources learned in Lessons 1-5 to help their classmates in times of need. Option to have parent volunteers assist in the project. This Lesson will have an Extension for 5th grade students, following completion of their own project, to buddy with the K-2nd grade classes and mentor them in the completion of their classroom project.

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *organizational skills*
- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *self-confidence*
- **Social awareness:** specifically, **empathy**
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *communication and teamwork*
- **Responsible decision-making:** specifically, *ethical responsibility*

Learning Standards

Students will:

- Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (B-SS.1)
- Create positive and supportive relationships with other students (B-SS.2)
- Demonstrate **empathy** (B-SS.4)
- Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills (B-SS.6)

Essential Questions

- Why should we help our classmates and **peers** when they are having a bad day or challenging time?
- How can we show **empathy** to our classmates and friends when they are having big **emotions** such as feeling sad, angry or scared?

Key VOCABULARY TERMS for Students

- **Peer:** one that is of equal standing with another: same grade in school
- **Toolbox:** a box or container for keeping tools
- **Empathy:** the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Collaborate with one another to create a supportive resource for their **peers**.
- Compile information to create a **Peer Support Group** handbook and **toolbox** for the classroom.

Materials

- Projector or interactive whiteboard (to play video)
- Speakers (if needed so students can adequately hear video)
- One copy of either [Coping Strategy 1 Chart](#) or [Coping Strategy 2 Chart](#)
- For older elementary students, a 'Should' or 'Should Not' scanned resource
- Projector or interactive whiteboard (to show 'should' and 'should not' resource)
- Large Box
- Wrapping paper, decorative paper, ribbon, sticky letters and shape
- Thin Markers, Thick markers, colored pencils
- White paper
- Ten or so copies of [Self-Assessment](#)
- One folder with brackets
- Seven 3-hole punch for Centers C-I (or share if not available)

Time Frame

Preparation: 30 minutes

Instruction: 55 minutes (Recommend this lesson be delivered over 2 class periods).

Lesson Preparation (30 minutes)

- 1 Preview [Have You Filled a Bucket Today?](#) (5:24 minute)
- 2 For younger elementary students, pre-assign students to a center to work in. For older elementary students, assign them to a center based on their Interest Inventories if completed during the last session. Option is to have a parent volunteer make assignments.
- 3 Gather materials and set up centers (areas where a few students can work together).
- 4 On half sheets of white paper, write out instructions for each center:
 - a) Handbook cover design write and draw with the art supplies to decorate the folder.
Title the Handbook the name of the group the class chooses.
 - b) **Toolbox** Design- use the wrapping paper, ribbon and markers to decorate and label the **Toolbox**.
 - c) Write a list of **emotions** on white paper with the title, **Emotions**.
 - d) Create a poster of **emotions** by drawing faces with different **emotions**.
 - e) Write a list of positive **coping outlets** on white paper with the title Positive **Coping Outlets**.

- f) Create a poster of positive **coping outlets** by drawing pictures and word graphics.
- g) Write a list of ways our bodies feel and the **emotions** we may have during a crisis .
- h) Create a poster of the ways our bodies feel and the **emotions** we may have during a crisis.
Use the [Skeleton Graphic](#) if desired.
- i) For older elementary students, create a list on white paper the 'should' and 'should not's' which suggests guidelines on supporting a friend who is experiencing a challenging time.

Lesson Activator (5 minutes)

[Suggested Script]: "The past several weeks we have been learning about our feelings, **emotions**, positive **outlets** and we created a toolbelt to use when we have a bad day or are going through a challenging time. Today we are going to talk about supporting each other and create a **Peer** Support Group and Tool Box to share in our classroom. (For older elementary add: We will learn how to support a friend with "should and should not" actions and attitudes.) We will also create a **Toolbox** of purposeful resources for us all to use and can be shared to assist friends during difficult times." "What is a **toolbox**?" (allow for responses then give the definition: a box or container for keeping tools) "This project is designed to help you work together to put together everything that we have learned in this unit. Today we will extend what we have learned to support and share **empathy** with our friends and together we will be a Support Group to one another. We will use the resources we have learned to help us help ourselves and help each other."

Lesson Procedure (45 minutes)

1 Define Empathy.

[Suggested Script]: "Let's make sure we understand the word empathy. What do you think that word means?"

- Write responses on the whiteboard or ask a student with legible handwriting to record.
- Read the definition of **empathy**: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
- Ask the students, "Why is it important to understand what **empathy** is and how to show **empathy** when a classmate is experiencing a challenging time, emergency or crisis?"
- Listen to responses and respond appropriately.
- Watch [Have You Filled a Bucket Today?](#) to allow students to see kindness in action. Ask students how they have shown kindness today? Ask them how kindness and **empathy** can be the same.
- For older elementary students, display the Should and Should Not Screen. Discuss why each of the bullet points shows **empathy** or not. Ask how each would make someone feel.

2 Name the Group [Suggested Script]:

"Let's begin by understanding one of our word definitions: **Peer**: one that is of equal standing with another such as the same grades in school. Our project begins with naming our **Peer** (meaning our classmates and others in our school) Support Group. What should we name our group?"

- Write the suggestions on the whiteboard or choose a student with legible handwriting to record.
Suggestions include the Bucket Fillers, Responders, Action Heroes. As the teacher you may have to guide suggestions to be appropriate names. After several ideas, take a class vote.

3 Give Instructions. [Suggested Script]:

"Now that we have a better understanding of the **purpose** of our **Peer** Support Group (*to show kindness and empathy*) we will begin building our **Toolbox** of classroom resources."

- We will collectively build a handbook of resources that we have learned about in the unit. After the resources are ready, we will compile them into the folder (*show students the holepunch and folder*). The Handbook, along with other items will be put in the **Toolbox**.
- Each center group will create part of the **toolbox** or handbook which will stay in the **Toolbox** along with a few other items.
- What other items could be useful in a Support **Toolbox**? (*small stuffed animal, squishy ball, fidget, blanket, pictures of animals or nature, small container of playdough*)
- I am going to give out center assignments and when I call your name, move to that center letter, A-I.
- The instructions for your part of building the **toolbox** are in the center.

Parent volunteers and/or 5th grade students who work with the K-2nd grades, will guide the students in the center assignment, provide clean up and assist in compiling the handbook to put in the box.

4 Complete the Project.

Assessment

- As evidenced by the recall work.

Reflection Questions

- When should we help others?
- How will we use our **Toolbox** to help others?

Variations / Extensions

- For 5th grade students, arrange for them to work with the K-2nd grade classes to help in the creation of the **toolbox**. Several students will be assigned to each class to guide the younger students in each of the interest inventory activities. Timing would be after the 5th grade has completed Lesson 5 to ensure the modeling and guidance of the activity.
- For older elementary students, read [Code 7: Cracking the Code for an Epic Life](#) by Bryan R. Johnson.
- Create a Daily Class Gratitude Journal; as students arrive each morning, offer for them to write something they are happy or grateful for that morning.

<i>A supportive friend... Should</i>	<i>A supportive friend... Should not</i>
Give someone the time and attention to listen to what they have to say	Tell him/her to "move on"
Tell someone that you are there for them	Tell someone that things will be fine if he or she just stays strong
Acknowledge how the person is feeling	Try to relate by constantly bringing up your own personal story as he or she is talking
Respect the person's feelings and coping ways	Tell them that way is wrong
Ask this person to join a game on the playground or sit with you at lunch	Get annoyed whenever your friend comes to you to talk
Encourage them to talk with a parent/guardian or trusted adult friend, teacher or school counselor	Stop your friend from talking about their feelings
Check in on them	Offer advice without listening to what your friend needs first
Schedule a play date	Tell your friend that others have it worse off
Help think of healthy ways to manage the crisis	Believe that your friend will never recover
Talk about positive ways to cope with a challenging situation or crisis	Distance yourself from your friend

Alternate Project: K-3 Creating a Calm Down Kit

(Contributed by Bayfield Primary School Staff)



These fun kits hold concrete reminders of tools students can use to help manage strong feelings. Children love collecting the containers for the tools and decorating them.

Preparation

Read the project instructions. Find several small boxes from your pantry or cabinets at home. Decorate one or two (see #2 below) as examples to show students when you introduce this project.

1 Introduction Suggested Script:

"We have been talking about strategies and tools for managing our **emotions**. Today, we are going to decorate a box to create a calm down kit. You will fill your box with things that help you feel better when you are having a challenging time. We will continue to choose new items to put in our kits over the rest of this school year."

2 Help students to decorate their box for the calm down kit. Supply printer paper, construction paper, scissors, paste, crayons and markers, glitter, small beads or other decorative items. Cover the surfaces of the box with plain paper and paste onto the box. Decorate the surfaces using the materials above. Be ready to help younger students with design ideas (hearts, flowers, graphic designs, pictures of animals, toys, outdoor spaces, etc.)

3 Tell students that they are going to create a **calm down kit** that they can fill with items (or pictures of items) that make them feel better. Have them notice that the containers or boxes have limited space so students will only be able to select a limited number of tools to place in the kits. Reflecting upon the most effective tools to place in their individualized boxes encourages insight and is a meaningful part of the activity.

4 Over a few class periods, art classes, or mindfulness time, have students create mini glitter jars and **stress** balls made of double layered balloons filled with flour or rice. See instructions here. *You may want to add to their kits by bringing small snacks, mini bubble wands, etc. As time goes by, you may want to ask students to bring a mini stuffed animal or a picture of their favorite stuffed animal. You may provide coloring sheets with stickers and crayons, pictures of family or pets, index cards with positive self-talk prompts, reminders of other tools that are too big to be placed in the box or any number of other items or novelty.*

5 In the days following the introduction of the kits, to teach students how items in their kits can help, when students seem sad, lonely, or stressed, you may ask a student, "Do you want to choose something from your calm down kit to help you feel better?" Over time, students will learn to quietly choose an item out of their kit to comfort themselves.

6 Building empathy and compassion for others:

These **calm down kits** can help students understand and practice self-compassion, and can help students recognize the role they can play in showing compassion to others, and making them feel better.

To start a discussion about empathy, share this story with your class:

In another school where students were using **calm down kits**, a student was struggling with a sad event. Without even being asked, one of his classmates reached into her own kit, took out a pretty feather and handed it to her friend. She said "Maybe this will make you feel better". The student smiled through his tears and said "Thank you", as he took the feather gently. In a few minutes, he stopped crying and joined into the game the class was playing.

Questions for discussion:

- 1 Why did the girl share a feather with her friend?
- 2 How did the feather help the boy?
- 3 How can we tell that he felt better?
- 4 Is there something in your **calm down kit** you could share?