

Our faces aren't the only places where we feel. Sometimes somebody who is smiling, isn't happy. Sometimes someone who is crying, isn't sad. Here are some ways you can help yourselves and your friends, no matter what their faces say.

Forgiveness

Ask for help

Compassion

Empathy

Support

This resource talks about these 5 attributes that make a positive improvement to any classroom when demonstrated by the teachers and children alike and suggests activities you could use to begin this work.

Forgiveness

Forgiving others is always hard to do when you are still feeling hurt. It takes courage to decide to forgive someone. In fact, forgiving someone shows strength of character, not weakness.

By forgiving someone, you are not saying that what the other person did is okay; but rather, that you have decided not to hold it against them.

Activity Idea

One of the most common reasons children have to forgive one another is for the use of hurtful language. You could begin by talking about how our words have an impact on other people; how they can have both positive and negative effects.

You could create paper plate pick-me-ups!

Each child receives a paper plate and leaves it on their desk. The other children can add a compliment or something they admire about that person in felt-tips and crayons.

These not only become an instant booster to self-esteem but also provide the children with a tool that could be useful for restorative conversations after a fall-out.

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Ask for help

Things to remember and questions that may make it easier to ask for help.

- **It's okay to ask for help.** Don't be embarrassed.
- **What are the consequences?** Think what might happen if you don't get help—or if you do.
- **What is the problem?** Identify what the problem is and what help you need.
- **Who can help you?** Think about who you can ask for help. Choose someone you trust and who will know how to help you.
- **What do I need to say?** Think about what you'll say when you ask for help. Do it.
- **Remember,** getting help when you need it is part of being responsible—to yourself.

Activity Idea

Your class could work in small groups to brainstorm different kinds of help they can get from others. Each group focus on a particular group of helpers such as teachers, emergency services, friends, siblings, or parents and can feedback to the class as to the way these people help us.

You could the discuss what each of these groups have in common and ways in which we could learn from these groups in the way we work alongside others.

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Compassion

Compassion is such a valuable school for the classroom. It's when we care about other people, treat them with kindness and look for ways to help and encourage them, even when they are struggling.

There are so many tools and books that can support this work in the classroom. You can learn something about compassion from any character in any book; whether through their lack of it or abundance.

Activity Idea

Talking about compassion in the classroom can help create a culture shift in the way children interact with one another and allows the chance for them to positively engage with one another.

You could get each child to create their own Random Acts of Kindness Bingo card and see how many activities they could complete throughout a day, week or month. There are plenty of examples of this sort of activity online as well as brilliant video resources you could use to encourage the message about being kind to those you know and care about.

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The Empathy Lab hosts a myriad of fantastic resources that will aid your teaching around this.

Empathy is about sharing an emotion with someone, or feeling the way they feel, even if you aren't in the same situation. When you feel an emotion along with someone, even if you aren't directly affected by whatever is causing their situation, that's empathy.

Discussing the phrase, 'Stepping into someone else's shoes' may be valuable in aiding children's understanding of empathy.

Activity Idea

Empathy can be a difficult concept for children to understand so it's always good to give it tangible context. A lovely activity is to watch a clip from a film, or even the whole film but to pause for discussion during scenes when the characters are experiencing difficult emotions.

When you stop the film, ask the questions:

- What do you think the character is feeling?*
- Why do you think they are feeling like that?*
- Do you think you would feel the same as them?*
- How could you help that person in their situation?*

These conversations will begin to allow children to develop these skills and identify the emotions others are experiencing.

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Feeling loved, valued and supported is absolutely essential to children flourishing and this is especially true when they are facing difficult choices, at times of change and uncertainty.

All children have skills, talents, ideas, passions, hopes, ideals and ambitions which can be nurtured and encouraged, which contribute to sense of wellbeing and achievement. Whilst it's important for children to know those people who can support them, it's also essential that they begin to understand they can offer that support to others as well.

Activity Idea

A lovely way to talk about supporting one another is to use the terms of 'reliance' and 'trust'. By doing some simple trust and balance exercises, using a blindfold or closing eyes- you begin to understand the importance of having someone you can rely on to be there for you.

You could then further support this idea back in the classroom by asking the children to build up 'Circles of support'. Creating rings for home, school and outdoors on a piece of paper and writing within them the people you can rely and trust to be there for you is a fantastic technique for reassuring children they have a support network they can access and tap into.

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