

Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Drawing Your Feelings



Description

Developing emotional literacy is an important skill for a child's social and emotional development. Steiner (1984) proposes that "To be emotionally literate we need to know both what it is that we are feeling and what the causes for our feelings are. It is not sufficient to know that we are angry, guilty, happy or in love. We must also know the origin of our anger, what causes our guilt, why we are in love, and how angry, guilty or in love we are." Similarly, Figueroa-Sánchez (2008) defines literacy as "the ability to create meaning and the ability to apply that understanding to our own lives" and argues that children's emotional readiness can be nurtured by engaging them in literacy-focused activities including narrative storytelling and games that express their feelings and emotions.

Enhancing a child's vocabulary for their feelings is one way of helping them to understand and learn to manage their internal world. The *Drawing Your Feelings* exercise was developed for younger people, or for those whom clinicians think would benefit from exploring their emotional experiences. This exercise is a non-threatening introduction to an exploration of emotion in which young people are given prompts for a range of situations which might promote a variety of emotional states and are asked to draw how they would feel in these situations. The exercise helps them to imagine, anticipate, and explore emotional states. Blank space is left for the therapist to introduce situations that are especially meaningful or relevant to the client.

Instructions

This exercise can be introduced by the therapist as a within-session exercise, or as a homework task which can be discussed in the next session. It is helpful to inform young people that there is no 'right answer' but that the therapist is simply interested in how they might feel in a range of situations. As important as the drawing itself is the therapeutic discussion which the exercise can facilitate. Clients might be prompted to consider:

- "What would you feel like doing if that happened to you?"
- "What might you feel in your body if that happened to you?"
- "What expression do you think you would have on your face if you experienced that?"
- "What emotions is it OK to show at your house?"

References

Figueroa-Sánchez, M. (2008). Building Emotional Literacy: Groundwork to Early Learning. *Childhood Education*, 84(5), 301–304.

Steiner, C. (1984). Emotional Literacy. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 14(3), 162–173.

Drawing Your Feelings

Do a drawing to show how you would feel if you were in these situations:

You are congratulated for doing well at something important ...



You have to eat something that tastes bad ...



Someone thanks you for helping them ...



Someone takes something of yours without asking ...



You get told off for doing a naughty thing...



Something you are dreading turns out better than you had expected ...



Drawing Your Feelings

Do a drawing to show how you would feel if you were in these situations:

You eat your favorite food ...



You get chased by a big dog ...



Someone nice takes care of you ...



You lose something that is precious to you ...



You get something that you have wanted for a long time ...

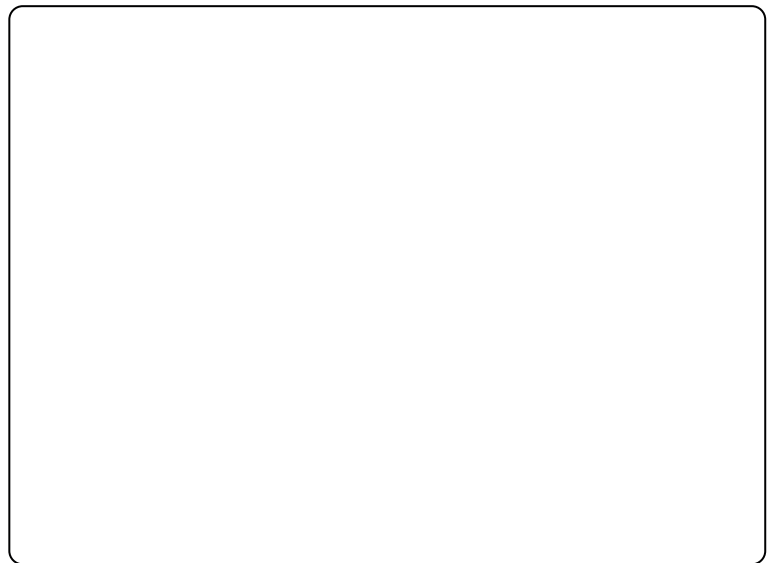
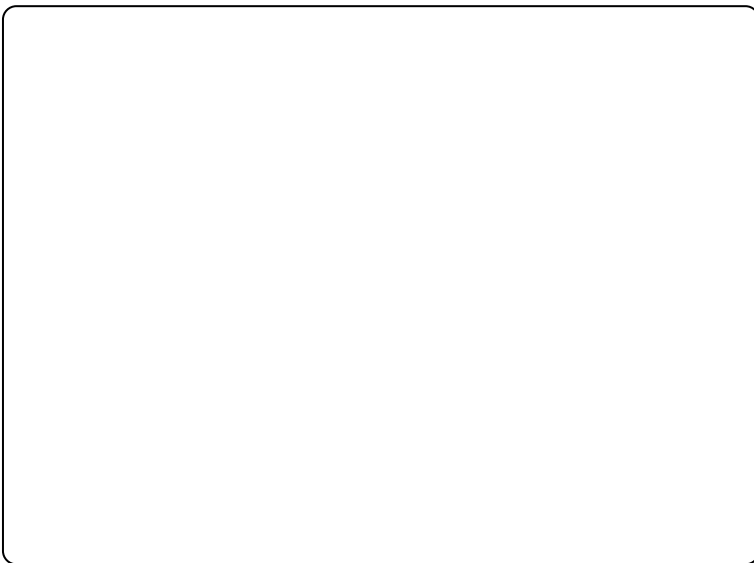
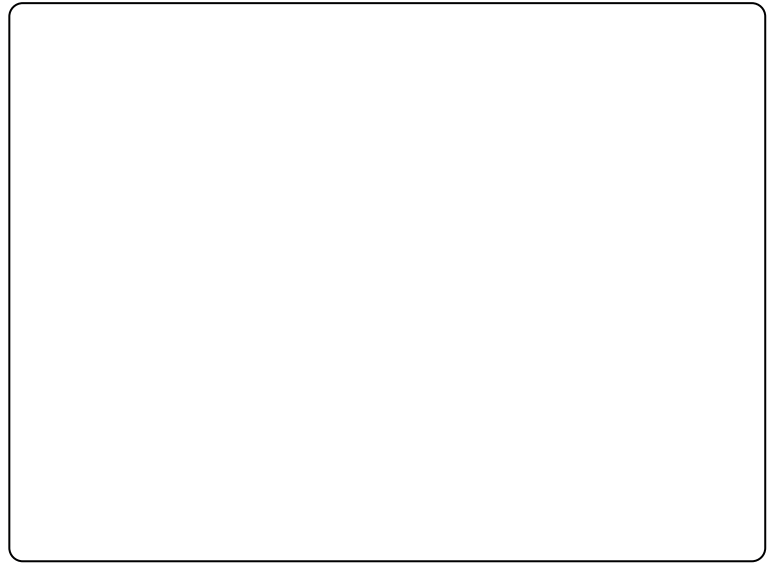
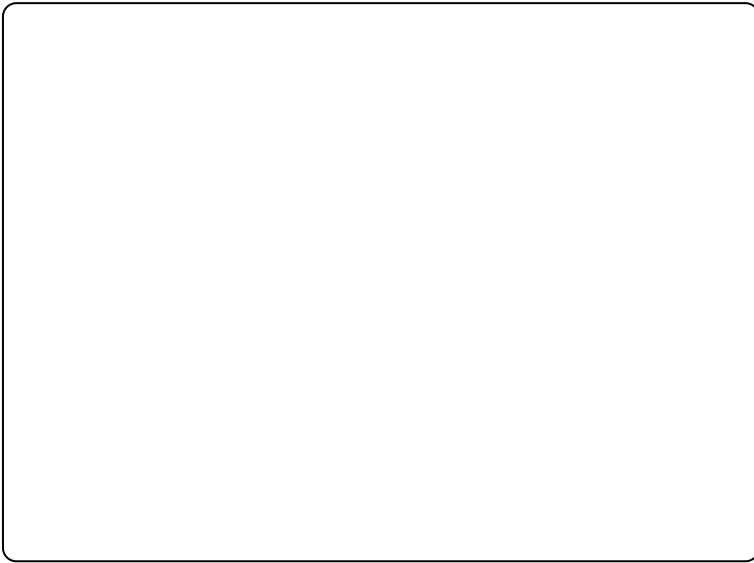
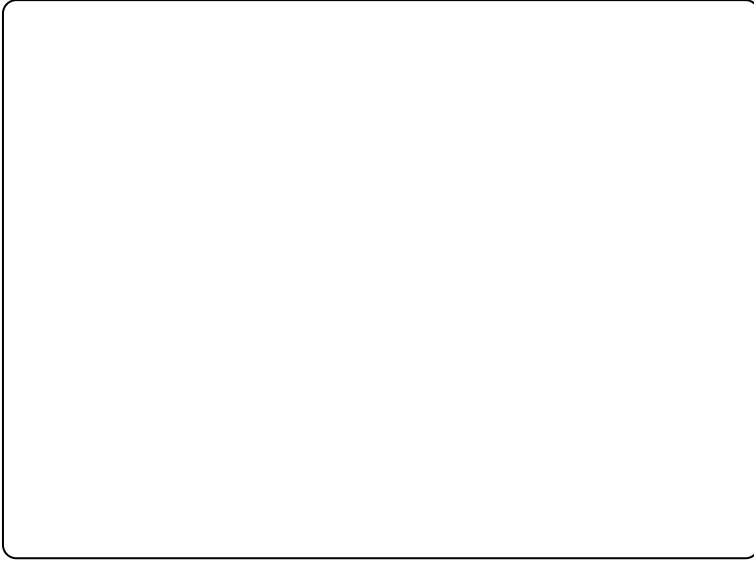


Your break something and your parents tell you off ...



Drawing Your Feelings

Do a drawing to show how you would feel if you were in these situations:



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