

# Wild Wellbeing

## Learning aims:

- Understand that all living organisms can feel
- Acknowledge your own feelings and explore methods of dealing with negative feelings
- Understand that feelings change over time
- Use feelings and nature in art or creative writing

## Activity 1: Am I Alive?

Print out pictures of various living and non-living items. Challenge your class to identify which items/organisms belong to which groups.

Now ask your students whether the living things can feel things both physically and emotionally. Start with an animal they would identify with more (for example a cat or dog).

Lead a discussion as to how we should treat living creatures (including plants). You can create a poster of positive words and actions which can apply both to how to treat humans, and how to treat other living organisms. Do you think that you show the same kindness to yourself?

## Activity 2: Feelings

Start with a blank board and ask your class to call out a "feeling" that they might have (i.e. happiness, anger, sadness).

Now encourage a state of "reflection". Ask your students to close their eyes and remember a time that they were very happy. Encourage them to think of what was going on around them, as much as the moment - for example, were they indoors or outdoors, what was the weather like, who else was there?

Repeat this for a less 'helpful' emotion (i.e. a time they were very angry). Encourage them to think about how they reacted to this emotion, and whether they think it was a helpful reaction.

Try to allow the class to lead a discussion themselves and get them to think about "better ways to respond". You can use an example to direct this if necessary.

*Optional extra: create a "worry jar" for the students to use any time they're feeling worried/upset. It is your choice whether you introduce the option to speak to you or a safeguarding officer on a one-to-one basis, or have it as a completely anonymous stress-relief option.*

# Wild Wellbeing

## **Activity 3: Changing Feelings**

Use a time capsule to encourage students to understand that emotions change over time.

Give each student a piece of paper and an envelope. They should write something that they currently have strong feelings about (this could be either positive or negative. Perhaps they are struggling with a friendship, or they have a new hobby that they really love). They will then seal the envelope and write their name on the outside.

Seal all the envelopes in a box and put it somewhere secure for a month. When it is time to open the box, hand out each envelope to their writer and encourage the students to recognise how they feel about that situation now. Do they feel as strongly about this in the present day?

## **Activity 4: Using Feelings**

Let's create something beautiful! Encourage your students to create something that conveys one of the happiest, most fun or calming moments of their life. They can make a piece of art, or perhaps some creative writing.

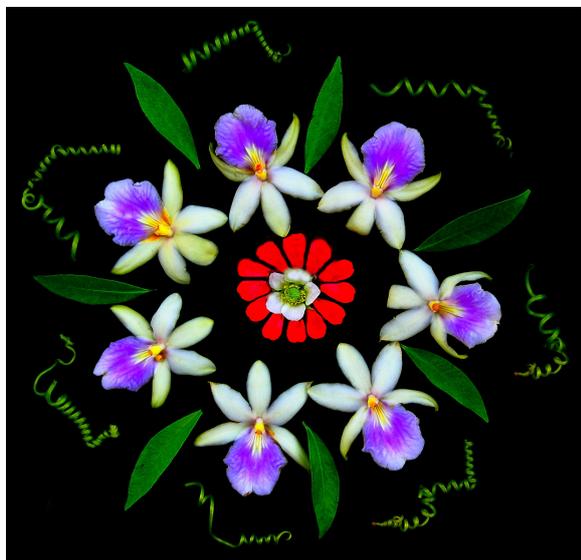
Encourage them to use different media if they are making a piece of art, and lots of adjectives if they are writing.

## **Activity 5: Wild Wellbeing**

Take your class into the school playground, or preferably, an area with some grass/trees/flowers. Ask them to find a spot where they feel calm and comfortable. Ask your students close their eyes, breathe in for the count of five, and out for the count of five. Now ask them to concentrate on senses which are not sight. What can they hear? *Can they hear any birds?* What can they feel? *Are they sat on something that has a nice texture? Is the sun on their face?* What can they smell? *Can they smell soil or flowers?*

After your meditation session, have the class join together to make a "nature mandala". Everyone should collect some natural items from the ground such as twigs or fallen leaves. Encourage them not to pick any living plants! Now challenge them arrange their items into a big class picture on the ground. Traditionally mandalas are a symmetrical/repeating pattern, but they can create whatever they like. If this is in a place where other students visit, you can encourage them to add to the piece. When you are finished, the wind will eventually clear everything away and put it back into nature.

# Wild Wellbeing



Examples of nature art mandalas and a leaf rabbit