

STRONG KIDS

**Grades
6–8**



A Social & Emotional Learning Curriculum

by

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2–3
minutes

Review

To activate prior knowledge, review and discuss previous topics and main ideas. Obtain 3–5 adequate ideas. Discuss with students their responses to last week's homework assignment.

Sample Script

During our last meeting, we talked about inappropriate and appropriate ways to deal with your anger. Raise your hand if you can tell me an important idea we learned from this lesson.

Ideas Discussed in Lesson 4

- How do you define *emotion, anger, aggression, frustration, and anger management*?
- All people have emotions.
- Anger is a necessary and natural reaction.
- Aggression is not the best way to deal with anger.
- There are other ways to react to anger.
- What are the long-term problems to being angry and aggressive?
- What are the steps of the Anger Model?
- What are anger control skills?

2
minutes

Introduction

Communicate the lesson's purpose and objectives clearly. Introduce the concept of empathy, to understand and better identify other people's emotions.

Sample Script

Today, we will learn about a skill called empathy. We will learn how to notice other people's feelings, try to understand those feelings better, and see a situation from another person's perspective.

5–8
minutes

Name and Define Skills

Activity A

Use Supplement 5.1 as an overhead transparency to discuss the following terms. Choose students to read each definition. Facilitate brief discussions on each item.



Sample Script

Here are some important ideas that we will be discussing.

- **Emotion**—A feeling that comes from something happening to you that is meant to tell you something. An emotion is usually identified by feelings in your body or thoughts in your mind.
- **Empathy**—Understanding another person's feelings or emotions.
- **Perspective/point of view**—Feelings and opinions each person has in an experience.
- **Clues/cues**—Signals or signs you can see that tell you something about another person.

Activity B

Convey the following main ideas to your students using your own words or the sample script. Emphasize to students that looking for clues will help them in empathizing with others' feelings.

- The first part of empathy is finding out how someone feels.
- We can ask a person how he or she feels.
- It might be possible to tell someone's emotional state by looking for visual cues.
- People may or may not share the same perspective in the same situation.
- If we know how someone is feeling, we can better understand him or her and be empathetic.

Sample Script

The first part of empathy is finding out how someone else is feeling. We can ask a person how he or she feels, but first we can try to figure out how the person feels by looking for clues. If we can find clues, we might be able to guess how the person is feeling. Then, we can try to see things from the other person's perspective. Different people might feel different things and feelings, even in the same situation. If we can find the other person's perspective, we might be able to understand and get along with him or her better.

10–12
minutes

Modeling Emotions



This activity is designed to give students experience in showing how a particular event can bring about an emotion, which, in turn, can be discerned by visual cues.

Use the list of emotions on Supplement 5.2 as an overhead transparency. Without telling the students the emotion you choose, model “embarrassed” body language by putting your head down, your hand up to your face, and your arms close to your body. Ask students to guess the emotion that you are modeling.

Sample Script

I am thinking of an emotion that is on the overhead transparency, and I will act it out for you without telling you what it is. Pay attention to the physical cues that might tell you what emotion I am feeling. Think of the emotion and what might have happened to make me feel this way.



Yes, I am feeling embarrassed because I fell down when I was getting off the bus. Now, who would like to volunteer to show an emotion? This time, try to guess what they are feeling and why they might feel that way.

Then, have individual students choose an emotion without telling their classmates and have them model body language that reflects that emotion. Have the students guess the emotion that is being modeled. Reiterate that not everyone experiences or shows emotions the same way.



Emotions listed on Supplement 5.2 and their corresponding body language:

- *Happy*—smile, open arms, stand up straight, walk with head high, laugh
- *Sad*—put head down, pull arms close to body, shuffle feet, cry
- *Angry*—puff up lips, frown, clench fists, get red in the face (if possible!), bare teeth, cross arms, take up space (e.g., hold arms away from body), walk quickly, shake, make threatening eye contact
- *Scared*—drop head, open eyes, walk backwards slowly, tremble
- *Embarrassed*—turn head away, hunch shoulders, blush, avoid eye contact

Use as many examples as necessary for students to master identifying visual cues. Students may disagree on the emotions they feel for the same experience. This is an excellent point to discuss how people may feel differently depending on their perspective. This will be covered more in the role-play practice in Practice and Application. Probe the class for knowledge of emotions and cues that might help them discern someone else's feelings.

2
minutes

Integrate Key Concepts

This section can be taught separately or woven in throughout your lesson via the example situations, modeling situations, or the student role-play situations. Begin with a discussion linking emotional cues to perspective.

Sample Script

Now that we know some cues to look for, we can try to figure out what someone else is going through just by looking at him or her. When have there been times in your lives when you could tell how someone else was feeling? How did you know? Were you able to take their perspective and empathize with them?

Obtain the following main ideas from your students:

- Students can use cues to understand each others' emotions.
- Students can use this information to better understand one another.

15
minutes

Practice and Application

This exercise is designed to have students role-play situations, identify physical cues of others, and understand someone else's perspective.

Activity A

Using the example provided or your own example, engage in the following activity as an introduction to Activity B, a classwide activity. Act out the following situation (use physical cues, e.g., frowning, irritated voice, disappointed words, or annoyed look to demonstrate the physical cues that go with emotions).

Example

You are Emma. Today is Thursday. You come into the classroom excited about the class field trip that you have been waiting for all year. Your teacher tells the class that the field trip has been cancelled, but you will get to watch an educational video instead. Along with the video, there will be an assignment due for Monday. Now, you have homework over the weekend.

Discuss the following questions with the class:

- What do you think (name of person) is feeling?
- What physical cues lead you to that conclusion?
- Whose perspective could you also consider? Why?
- What would that perspective be?
- Why is it important to know someone else's perspective?



Activity B

Use Supplement 5.3 as an in-class handout. Photocopy or print out the handout page, and cut out each situation.

Have the students get into four groups. Give each group one situation, and ask the group members to read the situation. Once the groups have read their situations, have them nominate two people to act as the characters in the situation. Have the two nominated people act out the situation for their group. Then, have the students respond to the situation using the questions listed with each situation. Have students think about the following for each situation:

- What do you think (person) is thinking and feeling?
- What physical cues lead you to that conclusion?
- Whose perspective could you also consider? Why?
- What would that perspective be?
- Why is it important to know someone else's perspective?

Have the groups exchange situations so that they can practice each of the four situations.

Situation 1

You are Maylee. It's Sunday afternoon, and you're upset. A friend asked you to hang out at her house tonight to watch a movie, but you have a math test tomorrow morning. You know your parents won't let you go because they know about the test.



Situation 2

You are Jason. A new student, Juanita, started school today and has been assigned to your class. You said “hello” to her, but she didn’t say anything back and walked away. You noticed that when other students try to talk to her, she doesn’t say anything either. When the teacher introduces her to the class, the teacher says that she just moved here from a different country.

Situation 3

You are Tamika. You are sitting alone at lunch as usual. One of the popular girls, Nisha, tells you to move and that you are sitting at the wrong table. You take your lunch tray, look around the room, and can’t find anywhere to sit. So, you stand by the wall to finish your lunch. You feel like you’re going to cry but try not to because the kids are looking at you.

Situation 4

You are Lakota. You are working with José on a social studies project. The teacher told you to make a poster for your project. You have some great ideas about how to do the poster but noticed that José is already starting on it. You really want your ideas to be included in the poster, but José doesn’t seem to listen to your ideas. José just told you that your ideas are boring.

2–3
minutes

Closure

Gather your students together, and review the lesson’s main points.

- How do you define *emotion*, *empathy*, *perspective*, and *cues*?
- What visual cues can you look for to tell someone’s emotional state?
- People can have different perspectives in a similar situation.
- People may feel different emotions in a similar situation.
- People can use information about others’ feelings to be empathetic toward them.

(*Tip:* Ask students to model the emotions in Supplement 5.2 as a group when you call them out).



Sample Script

Today, we talked about empathy. We discussed some ways to recognize other people’s feelings and how to take their perspective. See if you can use the skills you learned today to better understand your friends and family and to find their perspectives. When you are not sure how someone is feeling, see if you can use cues to understand him or her. Using those cues, you can try to take their perspective.

2-5
minutes

Homework Handout



Pass out the homework handout, Supplement 5.4, Empathy Assignment. Students are asked to respond to questions about times when they could tell how someone was feeling, the cues they noticed, and what they did to help that person. They are asked to think of ways they could understand the feelings of someone whom they know is having a hard time right now.

Tips for Transfer Training

Precorrect

Prior to social situations, both occasional and routine, remind your students to use visual clues and change their perspective to try to understand the other person's point of view. Situations like physical education, pep assemblies, school dances, and competitive athletic and academic events may be particularly good times to use this precorrection.

Remind

If you notice a student is not using his or her empathy skills, remind the student to try to understand how the other person is feeling. The student should use physical or visual cues and try to see the situation as the other person would. This reminder may be particularly useful during confrontations.

Reinforce

If you notice your students using any of the skills related to empathy, give them praise or other types of reinforcement. Remember to specify your reinforcements by naming the particular skill you observed. For example, a reinforcement given to a student for comforting another may resemble the following statement: "Jason, I noticed you used your empathy skills to understand how Jim may be feeling. Very good!"



Definitions

Emotion/feeling

A feeling that comes from something happening to you that is meant to tell you something. An emotion is usually identified by feelings in your body or thoughts in your mind.

Empathy

Understanding another person's feelings or emotions

Perspective/point of view

Feelings and opinions each person has in an experience

Clues/cues

Signals or signs you can see that tell you something about another person



Emotions

Happy

Smile, open arms, stand up straight, walk with head high, laugh

Sad

Put head down, pull arms close to body, shuffle feet, cry

Angry

Puff up lips, frown, clench fists, get red in the face, bare teeth, cross arms, take up space (e.g., hold arms away from body), walk quickly, shake, make threatening eye contact

Scared

Drop head, open eyes, walk backwards slowly, tremble

Embarrassed

Turn head away, hunch shoulders, blush, avoid eye contact



Small-Group Student Role Plays

Situation 1

You are Maylee. It's Sunday afternoon, and you're upset. A friend asked you to hang out at her house tonight to watch a movie, but you have a math test tomorrow morning. You know your parents won't let you go because they know about the test.

- What do you think Maylee is thinking and feeling?
- What physical cues lead you to that conclusion?
- Whose perspective could you also consider? Why?
- What would that perspective be?
- Why is it important to know someone else's perspective?

Situation 2

You are Jason. A new student, Juanita, started school today and has been assigned to your class. You said "hello" to her, but she didn't say anything back and walked away. You also noticed that when other students try to talk to her, she doesn't say anything either. When the teacher introduces her to the class, the teacher says that she just moved here from a different country.

- What do you think Juanita is thinking and feeling?
- What physical cues lead you to that conclusion?
- Whose perspective could you also consider? Why?
- What would that perspective be?
- Why is it important to know someone else's perspective?

continued

Situation 3

You are Tamika. You are sitting alone at lunch as usual. One of the popular girls, Nisha, tells you to move and that you are sitting at the wrong table. You take your lunch tray, look around the room, and can't find anywhere to sit. So, you stand by the wall to finish your lunch. You feel like you're going to cry but try not to because the kids are looking at you.

- What do you think Tamika is thinking and feeling?
- What physical cues lead you to that conclusion?
- Whose perspective could you also consider? Why?
- What would that perspective be?
- Why is it important to know someone else's perspective?

Situation 4

You are Lakota. You are working with José on a social studies project. The teacher told you to make a poster for your project. You have some great ideas about how to do the poster but noticed that José is already starting on it. You really want your ideas to be included in the poster, but José doesn't seem to listen to your ideas. José just told you that your ideas are boring.

- What do you think Lakota is thinking and feeling?
- What physical cues lead you to that conclusion?
- Whose perspective could you also consider? Why?
- What would that perspective be?
- Why is it important to know someone else's perspective?



Empathy Assignment

Name (optional): _____

Think of two times when you could tell how someone else was feeling.

1. _____

2. _____

How could you tell? (What were the cues that you noticed?)

1. _____

2. _____

What did you do, or what could you do to help that person?

1. _____

2. _____

Think of someone who you think might be having a hard time now. Think of some ways you can understand this person's feelings using the skills you have learned in this lesson.

1. _____

2. _____

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