

Key Steps for a Successful Session:

- **Come Prepared** - Review materials and gather necessary equipment, including printing worksheets.
- **Set the Tone** - Share about yourself to create a welcoming atmosphere for vulnerability.
- **Prioritise Safeguarding** - Follow your school's safeguarding policy and outline it for the group to set expectations.
- **Engage in Gardening** - Use gardening as a fun, practical resource to encourage open dialogue on deeper topics.
- **Manage Time** - Keep track of time to ensure you give space and time to explore the core theme of the session.
- **Utilise the Border** - Regularly engage with your school's border, allowing children and young people to enjoy and own the space.

Learning Objectives

- To think about all the many emotions the children experience each day
- To learn about the importance of letting our feelings out and not keeping them inside
- To learn some helpful tools to let out big feelings
- To learn how to tidy and care for the border in the winter
- To look for and log any insect life in the border

You will need:

Balloon
Pin
Gloves
Bag/Compost bin
Printed Calming
Activities Worksheet
Extra resources for
the calming activities
you want to try

OPENER

Start with a fun illustration game to help the children to think about their feelings. You are going to take a balloon and blow it up slowly as you talk. Explain that each day we all have lots of feelings. Give some examples and each time you share an example blow up the balloon a bit more.

- Excitement at seeing a friend
- Cross that you didn't get to finish watching your program
- Happy you got your favourite snack at lunch time
- Frustrated that someone took your toy
- Worried about having to go to the dentist for a check up
- Annoyed with your sibling for hogging the TV
- Energetic to be playing on the field
- Giggly because your friend made you laugh
- Frustrated because you have to pack away the toys

Continues on next page...



Give as many examples as you can and show that each feeling is making the balloon fill and get bigger. Sometimes we have so many feelings in us we feel like this balloon, like we are fit to burst! When we don't know what to do with our feelings they can burst out unexpectedly and those feelings can come out in a big bang of emotion. Pop the balloon to illustrate this. Or you can simply let it go and hear a great big fart noise if the children may be worried about the pop. Either way sometimes our feelings can come out in a very loud and unexpected way and it doesn't feel good for us or others when that happens. Explain that today we are going to learn about how to help let out big feelings in a calm way and also do some work on our border.



GARDENING GUIDE

In the winter our border will often look messy and not very beautiful. Some of the plants go into a hibernation type state and die back for the winter and so they look brown and dry. This is natural and they will spring back beautifully come spring. You can help your plants by doing the following;

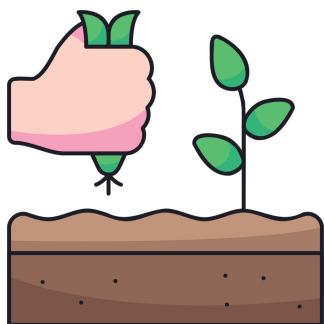


1 Tidy up. Remove fallen leaves and debris from in between your plants so they don't get buried in fallen leaves. Don't remove everything, but leave a thin layer of fallen leaves on top though as this keeps your plants cosy like a blanket and acts as a food for them as it rots down.



2 Don't cut away old stems and seed heads on your plants. Winter is a hard time for insects and they need a bit of extra help. What's amazing is that if you leave your plants and don't cut them back, they create shelter for all kinds of insects. Look for insects on your border.

3



Remove weeds. This will make your life easier come spring time. Add weeds to your compost.

GET STUCK IN

Help the children to do the above activities and talk about how you are bringing order and tidiness to the mess in your border. Talk about how sometimes we have some very big feelings and it makes us feel bad. Sometimes just like that balloon our feelings come out in a big mess. Chat about the following;

- have you ever felt really really cross - what happened?
- have you ever felt so excited that you couldn't sit still? - what made you so excited?
- have you ever felt really distracted so it was hard to listen? - did that get you into trouble?
- have you ever felt nervous about something and you couldn't stop thinking about it?

Help the children to understand this by sharing examples of when you have had these experiences. Help them to see that big feelings are normal but that we all need a good way to let them out.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

When our big feelings feel like they are going to burst then there are some things we can do to help us. Calming activities can help us focus and tidy up our feelings just like we have tidied up our border. Print out a copy of the accompanying worksheet which includes 6 calming activities you could do with the children to ground them, refocus them and help them process their feelings. Now is a good time to practice but you could use these activities in the future whenever the children are a ball of emotion and need a way to release and calm down.

CLOSE

Everyday we feel lots of different emotions and that is sometimes hard to handle. Sometimes that can make us feel full to the brim, unsure of how to let our feelings out. Remind the children of some of the calming activities they have tried and encourage them to have a go at them again this week. Keep working your way through the sheet of suggested activities and help the children find something that works for them as an individual.

Top tip: Make an insect diary and log any creatures you find. That way you can keep track of who is living in your school border!