

## Feel Good Assemblies - Supporting Evidence

Feel Good Assemblies and our 'Feelings and Me' framework are based on educational and psychological research to help teachers develop healthy emotional awareness in children aged 3-7. The following is a useful guide explaining the research underpinning our resources as well as providing some insight that will help you as you seek to develop the emotional wellbeing of your learners.

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### 1. Glossary:

**Body Language:** the nonverbal communication expressed through physical behaviours, gestures, postures, and facial expressions. It encompasses the various ways in which we express our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and intentions without using words. Body language is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, and it often complements or contradicts the verbal messages being conveyed.

**Coping skills:** the strategies, behaviours, and techniques that we use to effectively manage and navigate challenging or stressful situations. Coping skills are adaptive responses that help people cope with various stressors, difficulties, or emotional upheavals in their lives.

**Core emotions:** Core emotions, also known as basic emotions or primary emotions, refer to a set of universal and innate emotions that are considered to be fundamental to human experience.

The concept of core emotions identifies the following primary emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise, shame and love. These emotions have a distinct facial expression associated with each of them, which can be recognized and understood across different cultures.

**Emotional development:** The growth and refinement of our ability to understand, express, and manage our own emotions, as well as to recognize and empathize with the emotions of others.

**Emotional expression:** the outward display or communication of our emotions through facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and other non-verbal cues.

**Emotional Intelligence:** also known as EQ, is the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions, as well as to perceive and navigate the emotions of others effectively. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist how we think, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

**Emotional states:** temporary and subjective experiences characterized by specific feelings, such as joy, sadness, anger, fear, or surprise, which influence our overall mood and well-being.

**Emotions:** a multifaceted psychological and physiological experience that encompasses subjective feelings, physiological responses, and behavioural expressions. Emotions are typically triggered by specific events, thoughts, or perceptions. Emotions play a fundamental role in human experience, influencing thoughts, motivations, and social interactions. Feelings are the individual's internal experience of emotion, while emotions encompass a wider range of psychological and physiological responses.

**Empathy:** the ability to understand and share the feelings, perspectives, and experiences of others. It involves not only recognizing and comprehending the emotions of another person but also having the capacity to emotionally resonate with them. Empathy allows us to connect on a deeper level, showing understanding, compassion, and support for others. It involves putting oneself in someone else's shoes and imagining how they might be feeling in a particular situation, fostering a sense of shared human experience and meaningful connections.

**Facial expressions:** the visible movements and configurations of the face's muscles that convey emotions and communicate nonverbally.

**Feelings:** Feelings are subjective experiences of our emotional state, often described with specific descriptors such as happy, sad, angry, or fearful. Feelings are the individual's internal experience of emotion, while emotions encompass a wider range of psychological and physiological responses.

**Progress criteria:** criteria to inform the decision to progress from one state to another

**Progression framework:** The Framework developed within Feel Good assemblies to enable each child to progress through the 4 stages of development of healthy emotional expression and empathetic understanding.

**Reflect:** to think deeply or carefully about something, often by considering past experiences, actions, or ideas, in order to gain insight, understanding, or perspective. It involves contemplation and examination of thoughts, emotions, or events, with the intention of learning, growing, or making informed decisions.

**Regulating emotions:** the ability to manage and respond to an emotional experience. People unconsciously use emotion regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations many times throughout each day.

**Social cues:** the unspoken part of virtually all interactions, and while they're common, we all recognise them to varying degrees and sometimes interpret them differently. Children with social skills issues have trouble picking up on social cues and if they miss social cues, they can misunderstand people and situations.

**Understanding:** Understanding is a higher level cognition, the recognition of connections between various pieces of knowledge. To understand something means to be able to interact with it flexibly and be able to apply it in various situations.

**Well-being:** Wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or illness. It's a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. It can be described as 'how we feel about ourselves and our life'.

## 2. Principles of Emotional Development:

The principles of emotional development outline the key concepts and factors that contribute to the growth and understanding of emotions in individuals. These principles are derived from research in Developmental Psychology and provide insights into how emotions develop and evolve throughout a person's life. Here are some fundamental principles of emotional development:

- **Emotions are innate:** Emotions are believed to be biologically based and emerge early in life, even in infancy. Basic emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, fear, and surprise are present from birth or develop shortly thereafter. These innate emotions provide the foundation for more complex emotional experiences.
- **Emotions are influenced by social interaction:** Emotions are shaped and influenced by social interactions with caregivers, family members, and peers. Children learn about emotions through socialisation, observation, and feedback from others. The quality of early relationships and the emotional climate of the environment play a significant role in emotional development.
- **Emotional regulation develops over time:** Emotional regulation refers to the ability to manage and control one's emotions appropriately. It develops gradually throughout childhood and continues into adulthood. Children learn to regulate their emotions through caregiver support, self-soothing strategies, and acquiring coping skills. The development of emotional regulation is essential for adaptive functioning and healthy emotional well-being.
- **Emotions are expressed in multiple ways:** Emotions are communicated not only through facial expressions but also through body language, vocal tone, gestures, and verbal communication. Understanding and interpreting these multi-channel expressions of emotions is a crucial aspect of emotional development.
- **Emotional development is context-dependent:** The development and expression of emotions are influenced by cultural, social, and environmental factors. Cultural norms, values, and social expectations shape how emotions are understood, expressed, and regulated. The socio-cultural context provides the framework within which emotional development occurs.
- **Emotional development is a lifelong process:** Emotional development continues throughout the lifespan, with emotional experiences becoming more complex and nuanced as individuals grow and mature. Emotional development is influenced by various factors, including cognitive development, life experiences, and the development of interpersonal relationships.

Understanding these principles of emotional development can help inform educational approaches, parenting strategies and interventions that support healthy emotional development in individuals across different stages of life.

### 3. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) – it's purpose and value to life skills:

Research on emotional intelligence has shown several key findings that highlight its importance and impact in various aspects of life. Here are some of the key research findings on emotional intelligence:

**Academic Performance:** Studies have found a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic performance. Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to have better problem-solving skills, adaptability, and self-motivation, which can contribute to improved learning outcomes and academic success.

**Mental Health and Well-being:** Research has shown that emotional intelligence is associated with better mental health outcomes and overall well-being. People with higher emotional intelligence tend to have lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. They also exhibit higher levels of resilience, coping skills, and overall psychological well-being.

**Relationship Quality:** Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in forming and maintaining healthy relationships. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to understand and empathize with others' emotions, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts constructively. They tend to have more satisfying and fulfilling relationships, both in personal and professional settings.

**Success and Leadership:** Numerous studies have found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and professional success, including leadership effectiveness. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to have better interpersonal skills, effective communication, and the ability to navigate and manage emotions in themselves and others. They are often perceived as more competent leaders and are more likely to succeed in their careers.

**Workplace Performance and Job Satisfaction:** Employees with higher emotional intelligence often exhibit better job performance, productivity, and job satisfaction. They can effectively manage workplace stress, work well in teams, and navigate social dynamics. Organizations that prioritize emotional intelligence in their workforce tend to have higher levels of employee engagement and retention.

**Conflict Resolution and Negotiation:** Emotional intelligence is closely linked to effective conflict resolution and negotiation skills. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence can manage their emotions during conflicts, express themselves assertively, and find mutually beneficial solutions. They are more likely to engage in collaborative problem-solving and maintain positive relationships in the face of disagreements.

These research findings highlight the significant impact of emotional intelligence across various domains, emphasizing its role in personal and professional success, mental health, relationships, and overall well-being. Developing and enhancing emotional intelligence skills can have far-reaching benefits in multiple aspects of life.

#### 4. Emotional Development Theories:

There are several theories that aim to explain emotional development in individuals. These theories provide different perspectives on emotional development, highlighting the various factors and processes that contribute to the growth and understanding of emotions in individuals. It's important to note that emotional development is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors.

Here are some prominent theories in the field of emotional development:

**Erikson's Psychosocial Theory:** Proposed by Erik Erikson, this theory emphasizes the development of emotional and social competence throughout the lifespan. Erikson's theory suggests that individuals go through eight stages of psychosocial development, each characterized by a unique developmental task or crisis. Successful resolution of these tasks contributes to the development of a sense of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity, and integrity.

**Bowlby's Attachment Theory:** Developed by John Bowlby, this theory focuses on the formation of attachment bonds between infants and their primary caregivers. Attachment theory suggests that a secure and nurturing attachment bond in early childhood provides a foundation for healthy emotional development. It emphasizes the importance of a secure base from which individuals can explore the world and seek support when needed.

**Social Learning Theory:** Developed by Albert Bandura, this theory emphasises the role of observational learning and modelling in emotional development. Individuals learn about emotions by observing and imitating others. Children acquire emotional expressions, regulation strategies, and social behaviours by observing the behaviour of parents, peers, and other influential figures in their environment.

**The Social-Emotional Theory of Development:** Proposed by Daniel Goleman, this theory highlights the role of emotional intelligence in social and emotional development. It suggests that emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, plays a crucial role in personal and interpersonal success. The theory emphasizes the importance of emotional competence in building positive relationships, managing emotions effectively, and achieving overall well-being.

*This theory has underpinned the development of the Framework for these Feel Good Assemblies*

## 5. Emotional Intelligence elements within The Social-Emotional Theory of Development:

Goleman's identifies five domain components which are essential for emotional intelligence

1. **Emotional self-awareness:** knowing what we are feeling at any given time and understanding the impact those moods have on others
2. **Self-regulation:** controlling or redirecting our emotions; anticipating consequences before acting on impulse
3. **Motivation:** utilising emotional factors to achieve goals, enjoy the learning process and persevere in the face of obstacles
4. **Empathy:** sensing the emotions of others
5. **Social skills:** managing relationships, inspiring others and inducing desired responses from them

### Relevance for teachers and schools:

There are very practical reasons to promote social and emotional learning in schools, from reception through to college. According to Goleman, bullying, disciplinary problems, violence and drug abuse are reduced in schools with a high EQ. With a solid basis in emotional intelligence, academic performance, as well as behaviour, improves. Additionally, learning stimulates curiosity and promotes feelings of satisfaction, even joy, when students immerse themselves in the process of learning new information.

The EQ of children starts developing long before they ever enter a classroom. But EQ levels will vary widely, depending on each child's home environment. It is important teachers are able to recognise those children whose emotional literacy needs a boost and feel supported to talk about feelings in the classroom. The message is that no emotion is "wrong," but certain ways of expressing those emotions or acting on them are indeed inappropriate.

In 2002, UNESCO launched an international campaign to promote emotional learning in the classroom. The U.N. body sent a statement of 10 basic EQ principles to education ministries throughout the world. Those principles drew heavily from Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence.

## 6. References:

- Bandura, A. (1979). **Social learning theory**. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bowlby J. (1969). **Attachment. Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Loss**. New York: Basic Books.
- Erikson, E (1980) **Identity and the Life Cycle**. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Garnet. H. (2019). **Developing Empathy in the Early Years**. London: Jessical Kingsley Publishers.
- Goleman, D. (2007). **Emotional Intelligence (10th ed.)**. Bantam Books.

### Additional useful resources:

<https://resilienteducator.com>

UNESCO Emotional Intelligence framework: <https://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/e/emotional-intelligence>