



**We're living through uncertain times. In the middle of all this, we know children need some structure, some 'normalness' – and that's not easy at the moment.**

World Vision has been working with children in difficult circumstances for 70 years, to help them deal with changing situations, create, play and thrive.

Today, many children across the UK are feeling anxious and lonely. So, we're sharing some simple activities from our teams in refugee camps with UK families, to help your children stay hopeful and healthy during this time.



## Emotion Wheel

During times of great change or trauma, children's mental health can suffer. Helping them to understand and talk about their emotions is a good way to maintain mental health and to start dealing with difficult situations.

This Emotion Wheel is a simple way for children to recognise and name their emotions. It can help them to tell you how they're feeling, even when they're not sure how to explain it in words.

**Ages:** For children age 6+



**Materials:**

- ~ 1 sheet of cardboard each
- ~ 1 sheet of paper each
- ~ Wax crayons, markers
- ~ Scissors
- ~ Circle templates – a side plate to draw around or print the templates on page 7-8
- ~ Paper fasteners (split pins) OR a length of wool or string



## EMOTION WHEEL

### Method:

1. Ask your children if they can name some emotions. Ask them to describe the emotion – what does it feel like? What might make them feel that way?
2. Write down the six main emotions they mentioned. Or, these universal emotions: anger, sadness, disgust, fear, happiness, surprise. If your children aren't familiar with all of these emotions, take a moment to talk about them together.
3. Ask your children to draw a circle on their sheet of cardboard (use Template 1 below or draw around a side plate) and cut it out. Then ask them to draw lines to divide their circle into six equal slices (see template).
4. Each slice is going to show a different emotion. Your children can do this in lots of different creative ways:  
Write the emotion and draw a face that matches; stick on a picture from a magazine that represents the emotion; colour the slice blue for sadness, red for anger etc.

5. Now make a second circle from paper (use Template 2 this time). Cut out and remove one slice.
6. Make a hole in the centre of both circles.

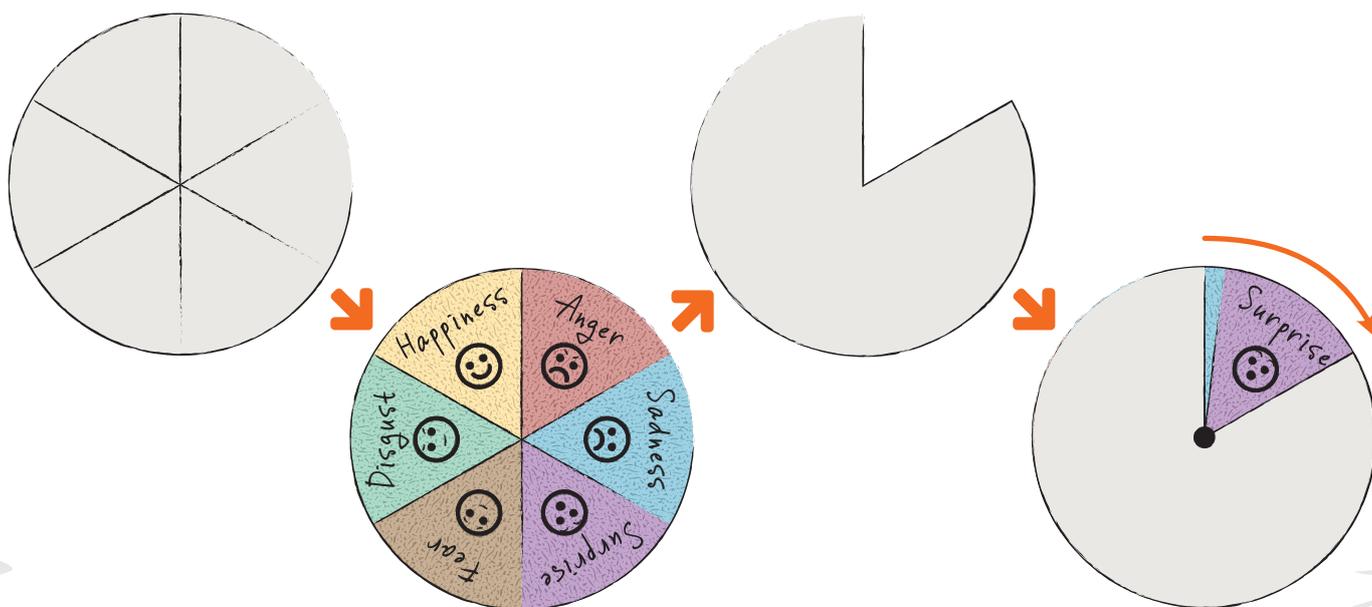
NB – a safe way to do this is to place sticky tac/plasticine on the underside, then press a sharpened pencil point through from the top.

7. Sit the paper circle on top of the cardboard circle and fix them together, so they can turn. You can do this with a paper fastener (split pin), or by threading some wool or string through the holes and tying knots either side.

### Try it out:

Now, try turning the top (paper) circle to reveal one emotion from the cardboard circle at a time.

Explain to your children that they can use these emotional wheels any time to name emotions they are having.



**World Vision**

NO CHILD WITHOUT A FUTURE

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## Talking about emotions

Sometimes it is difficult to name an emotion.

Use these questions to help:

1. Our feelings can be linked to situations in our lives. For example, I feel happy when I am with a good friend. When do you feel happy? When do you feel sad?
2. If the feeling were an animal, which animal would it be? If it were a colour, what colour would that feeling be? If it were a fruit or a vegetable, which one would it be and why?
3. Can you think of a song, a rhythm and/or a movement to represent one of the emotions on your wheel?

## Variations

Find the way that works best for your children, as well as the materials you have to hand. Here are some ideas:

- **Younger children:** They may need more help and support to make their wheels. For example, you could pre-cut the cardboard circles for them. Try to get child-safety scissors, or if not, make sure they are well-supervised when they are cutting paper. If there is a mixed-age group of children, older children may be able to help younger ones with some of the tasks.
- **A very simple emotion wheel:** It is possible to make a simpler version by drawing a picture of the wheel on a piece of paper. This is helpful if you don't have the materials as described above, or if it is too complicated for the children to make. They can use the emotion wheel by simply pointing to whatever emotion they want to talk about.
- **Older children:** Have children (especially older children and adolescents) name as many emotions as they want for their emotion wheel. They just have to draw lots of slices on their emotion wheels to represent their set of emotions.

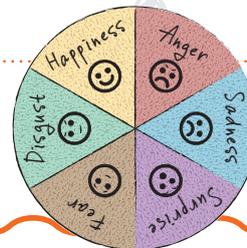
## Notes for grown-ups

- It's important for children to understand that there are no right or wrong emotions. It's completely normal for children and adults to feel all kinds of different things. Help to normalise their emotions by explaining that everyone has feelings, and that it is ok to have them. We can 'make friends with' all of our emotions and can learn to respond in safe and kind ways to each other.
- It might also be helpful to explain to the children that we all feel many emotions and sometimes we have different names for them. For example, sadness might be felt as grief or missing someone or feeling lonely. The six emotions used to construct the wheel are some common emotions, but other feelings and feeling words may come to mind.
- Give the children encouragement, help and positive feedback throughout the session as they construct their emotion wheels.

We hope you enjoy making Emotion Wheels and that you and the children in your home will find them helpful and fun.

Please feel free to share this activity with other families who might find it useful too. Together, let's help children, families and communities to feel connected, safe and supported.

**You can find more child-friendly activities on our website at [worldvision.org.uk](https://www.worldvision.org.uk)**



## ACTIVITY 1:

# Emotions and Behaviours

**Aim:** Be familiar with different kinds of emotions and how they're expressed through behaviour.

**Ages:** 6+

**Materials:** Emotion wheel, white paper, felt tip pens + some prepared pieces of paper with different emotions written on them.

**Optional:** Music



## Activity

1. Sit on the floor with your child/children and their emotion wheels. Name each emotion from the wheels and ask them to find that emotion on their wheel.
2. Now go through the emotions again and, this time, ask your children to make faces that correspond to each emotion in turn.
3. Repeat, but this time do actions to match the emotions. There could be a sound to go with the action, or some full-on acting.
4. Place the pieces of paper (with the emotions written on them) around the room.
5. **Musical Emotions game:** Ask your children to walk or skip around the room. Play music, sing or clap while they're moving. When you stop the music, the children need to find the nearest piece of paper and, taking turns, act out the emotion on that paper. Everyone else in the room can guess which emotion is being acted out.

## Reflection time questions

- Sometimes it can be hard to know how we really feel – or how another person is really feeling. Could somebody's behaviour give you a clue as to how they're feeling?
- What kinds of behaviours did you see for sadness, for anger, etc.?
- Did some behaviours fit with more than one feeling?

Also, point out to the children that sometimes we don't know how a person is feeling inside just by looking at them from the outside. Some feelings are hidden. A person may be smiling, but inside they might be feeling sad. It's important to know how to name our feelings, and sometimes to ask each other, "How are you feeling?"

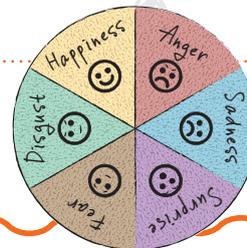
Write lots of different emotions on the pieces of paper, not just the six emotions that you started with.

Keep in mind that some behaviours can come from different emotions, and one emotion might be linked with different behaviours.

## Variations

**Children with limited mobility** can pull the pieces of paper out of a hat rather than move around the room. Everyone can clap or sing until the facilitator calls out "Stop" and tells everyone to act out their emotions.

**If your child isn't able to act out the emotions** invite them to draw their responses or express them through movement and/or music. Or ask them which animal might represent their feelings. For example, they might think of a lion to represent anger, and they could do a big lion's roar.



## ACTIVITY 2:

# Things to do when big feelings are in your heart

**Aim:** Learn helpful ways of responding to difficult emotions.

**Ages:** 6+ (modifications suggested below)

**Materials:** Emotion wheels, paper, drawing and colouring materials (pens, markers, crayons).

**Optional:** Toilet roll tube, crepe paper + string, twigs or lolly sticks + string.



## Activity

- Sit with your children. Explain to them that behaviour and actions are the outward ways we show our emotions. It is also important for us to understand how we feel our emotions inside – in our bodies. You can give examples, such as the way some emotions might cause us to feel tension in our muscles, or other emotions might feel like butterflies in our stomach.
- Select an emotion from the wheel and ask your children to close their eyes. Ask them to think of a time they felt [the emotion – e.g., sad, angry]. Where do they feel this emotion in their body? How does it feel?
- Open your eyes. Spend some time letting the children share where they felt that emotion. Explain that when we have big emotions, we may feel them very strongly in our body. For example, strong sadness might feel like a hurting in our heart, or big fear might make us feel sweaty and shaky.
- Give each child a sheet of paper and ask them to choose another feeling from their emotion wheels. Ask them to draw how these emotions make them feel, using colours or symbols. Your children may have different ideas about how to draw the feelings and can illustrate them differently in each of their drawings.
- Letting feelings out. Help your children find a simple, helpful way to release big feelings:
  - Make an Anger Horn** – Decorate a toilet roll tube or rolled up sheet of paper together. When children are feeling big, uncomfortable emotions, they can point to them on the emotion wheel and then ‘blow them away’ through the anger horn.
  - Fly away** – Write or draw feelings on crepe paper and make kites to fly in the air. Your children can imagine that big feelings are becoming lighter and lighter and floating up.
  - Dream catchers** – Dream catchers can be made simply with string or yarn, wound across a frame made of lolly sticks, twigs or other materials. Some children may like to hang the dream catchers above their beds and imagine that bad dreams will be caught, but good dreams let through.

Children might find it difficult to draw feelings. You can give them some materials to help, if needed. For example, some string can be stuck onto the head to represent mixed feelings or thoughts. Twigs, small and big rocks, cotton, and other materials can also be used.

## Discussion

Let your children know that learning where we feel different emotions in our bodies helps us to recognise what we are feeling. It's like a clue or a signal that our body sends us. When we notice a certain feeling in our bodies it can help us name our emotions and choose how we want to respond.

Example: Crying. When do people cry? Is it only when they are sad? Sometimes crying makes us realise we are feeling something strongly.

Explain that there are lots of ways to respond to our feelings – especially big feelings. We can react in ways that help us to feel better, or sometimes in ways that don't help us. We might also respond in ways that hurt other people.

Ask your children if they can think of any of the following:

- **What actions and behaviours are respectful and kind to others?**
- **What actions and behaviours can be hurtful to others?**
- **What behaviours and actions are helpful to us?**
- **What behaviours and actions may be hurtful to us?**
- **How else can you respond so that no one gets hurt?**
- **Can you name some ways to respond to sadness that can help you feel better?**

Examples include crying with a friend, talking to a trusted adult, drawing a picture or writing in a journal.

## Variations

**Older children:** Have older children and adolescents perform a play on different ways to manage big feelings. For example, they could do three scenes:

1. reactions that are hurtful to others,
2. reactions that hurt yourself,
3. responses that help you manage your emotion.

Another variation for older children is to have them work together and discuss happy feelings. This may help adolescents who don't want to engage otherwise.

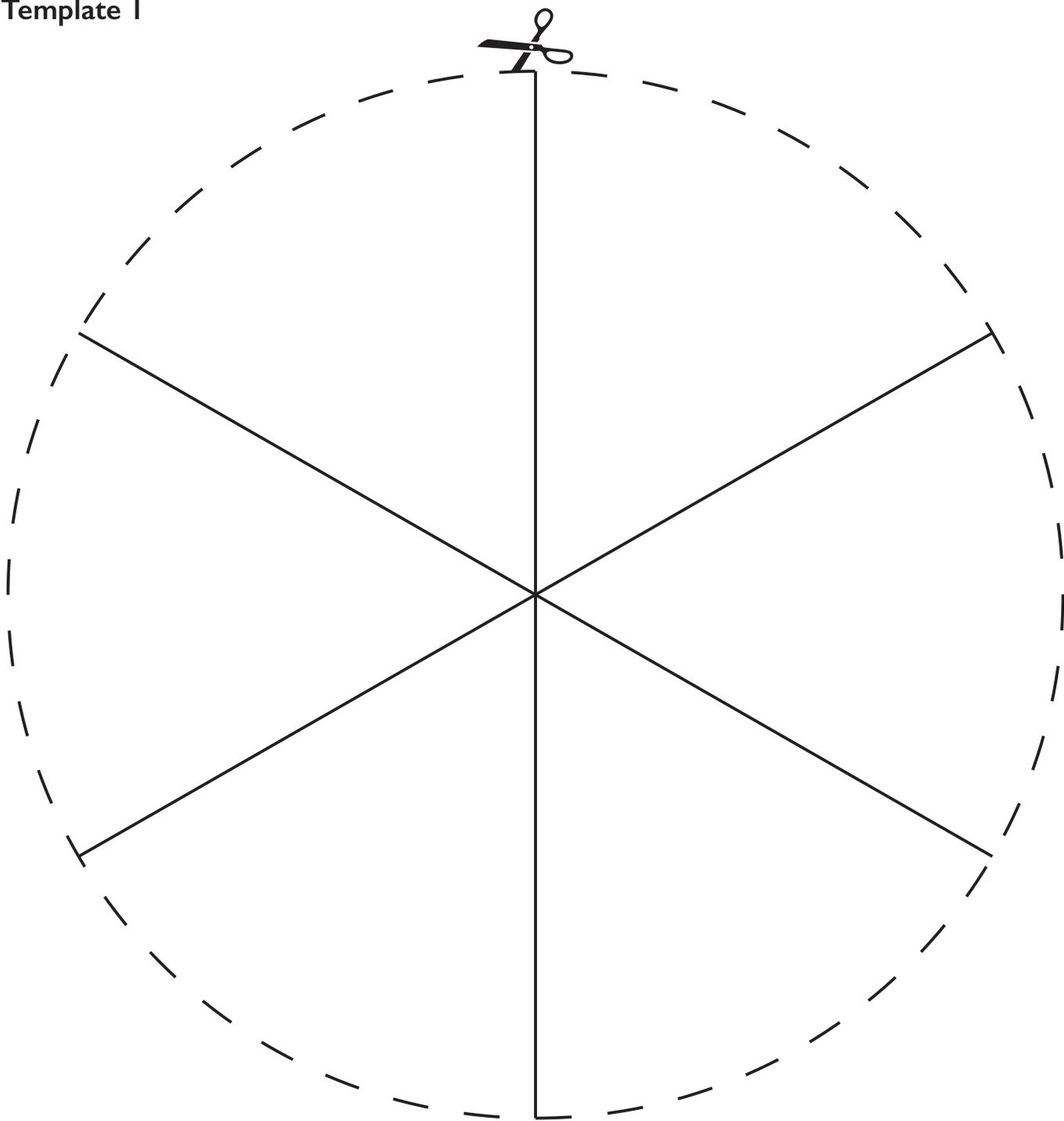
**Younger children:** It may be helpful to suggest options and to act out helpful behaviours with them.



Raaja (above), 13, used this Emotion Wheel at a centre for child refugees in Lebanon.

**“At the centre, I felt relaxed. The most beautiful activity was the ‘wheel of emotions’. I learned how to be happy through making new friends or to express my sadness [with pictures].”**

Template I



# Template 2

