

How Are You Feeling Right Now?

Working with students that have a history of trauma is difficult work. Encourage your students to place a magnet in the space that they think shows how they are feeling. Connect with them and help them talk about what's going on. You can teach them how to work through their emotions.

How Lacey, a first grade teacher, uses the emotion chart and identifying magnets:

“I keep my emotion chart and magnets on my white board. I assign every student a number. The first thing I asked my class to do (now they just do on their own) is to get their magnet and put it on the emotion square that matches how they are feeling on the emotion chart. This lets me know if there are any students I need to meet with first thing in the morning to talk about what's going on so they can have a successful day. I've learned a great deal about my students from these talks and I've avoided some bad days while also affirming to my students that I care about them.

As the day continues, I let the students know that at any time they can go to the board and move their magnet to a different emotion. They do not need to ask permission. They just walk up to the emotion chart and move their magnet whenever necessary. If they ever move their magnet to a yellow or red feeling, I make sure to follow up with that student as soon as I have a chance. Sometimes I do check-ins when my class comes back from an activity outside of the classroom, especially recess. That helps me know where everyone is emotionally and connect with students throughout the day.

My class also knows that if they move their magnet to a yellow feeling they can spend a few minutes in the Chill Zone. In the Chill Zone they can choose any of the calming options that I have taught them about throughout the year. If a student moves their magnet into a red penguin emotion square, I suggest to them that they definitely go to the Chill Zone until they calm down enough to talk through what is causing their emotion. At the end of the day, all my students move their magnet off the emotion chart and onto the whiteboard so the next day they can start fresh.”



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