



FOLLOWING ON

This sample lesson uses one particular book to look at one emotion. As Hilary said in the earlier quote, for most of us emotions are mixed and messed up in a lot of other thoughts and feelings so to make sense of them takes a lot of time and learning about your own body and responses. There are many good books we can use to explore different emotions. For older children use excerpts from books they like to read. I have done a similar lesson with teenagers based on Harry Potter books for example. Get yourself a set of books or excerpts and plan a whole term of lessons using this structure and then your children will know more about emotions and hopefully have more emotional literacy to communicate and regulate their own feelings eventually.

people do when they are mad. He destroyed the chicken shed and stamped on all the flowers for example. We write these on green post-it notes.

Next we explore the physical effects of Marvin's anger. The book describes some wonderful visual effects of Marvin growing mad teeth, horns, feet and a mad tail. This is where we try to get the children thinking about internal sensations of feeling mad. I use a body outline and some words to support this. I let them colour in or point to the parts of the body they might feel shivering, hot, shaking, 'bubbling' and racing sensations, for example, when they feel mad or angry. We write these on pink post-its.

Finally, we look at the end of the story and discuss what made Marvin feel better. This explores going quiet, getting help from friends and feeling safe and calm. I like to teach different ways of calming down that includes feeling safe, calming

down the body sensations and cheering up. We discuss which of these Marvin needed first and what helped. We write these on blue post-it notes.

It is at this point you can summarise your visual chart that you have built up with the post-it notes and begin to refer to the post-its the children have with their own experiences on them. You might want to do a recording activity making up a picture of Marvin, drawing a picture from the story or writing some sentences based on the word bank you have created in your post-it notes. This will depend on the age and ability of your pupils and could be done using symbols around a picture of Marvin.

PART 2

Teaching Calm and okay as a baseline emotion. We go back to the story and look at the beginning and ending of the story where Marvin is not mad or angry. We can do the

same activity with the coloured post-it notes to explore what calm and okay are like for Marvin. This is a bit harder as calm and okay are often neutral states and there are not as many visible signs or behaviours that someone is really okay and calm. We must proceed cautiously here as many autistic children mask their feelings and do feel a lot of anxiety all the time. They may not have experienced much calmness in their lives. As we explore calm and okay through Marvin we can see if the children are able to fill in their own post-it notes as before. One tip to note is that they can often feel calm and okay during sensory activities or when involved in a special interest. It is okay if they link calm and okay with being happy.

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USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What happened to make them do those things?
- What feelings might they have inside their bodies?
- What words or colours could we use for that emotion?
- What can they do to help them feel better?
- Who could help them, and how?
- When do you feel like that?
- What happened?
- What feelings inside your body did you have?
- What helped you feel better?