

Keeping our cool

HEALTH

Core Value:

Non-Violence

Aim:	To learn how to recognise and deal with feelings, especially anger; to detect or sense early signs of impending conflict; to learn how to resolve disputes and problems in a peaceful way.
Related Values:	Self-control, self-discipline, tolerance, consideration, good manners, co-operation, self-respect, courtesy and compassion



Forum

Are we happy at school? Do we express our needs and feelings in a calm, gentle and friendly way? Can we say “no” if that is how we feel? Do we take responsibility for our own decisions and actions? Who are the people who encourage us to do our best?

Besides speaking quietly and nicely, how else can we do our bit to maintain peace and harmony at school; at home; in the wider community? What does considerate behaviour mean? Is it keeping the noise level down? Taking dirty dishes to the sink? Keeping our room clean and tidy? Is it generally - being helpful?

How do business people and politicians settle potential disagreements? Is it by talking to each other around a table, each clearly explaining their side of the issue? How do **we** clearly put over our points of view? Is it by speaking calmly, thoughtfully, quietly, gently whilst being in control of our feelings?

What happens if we get angry and start to shout? Do we lose control, lose the thread of the argument and say things we later regret? Do we stop to ask ourselves, is it productive, rewarding and will it improve things for the future? Do we feel good about the situation? How can we bring out

the best side in everyone? Can we diffuse the situation and keep control of our feelings?

If we want peace in the world, where should we start? When a conflict begins, should people’s feelings matter most? Should it be brought to an end as soon as possible? Do people benefit from an argument? When we read a newspaper, do we pick out stories about conflict or pick out headlines that interest us?



Do we normally have inner harmony? Can we keep agreements? Are we caring people? Is a ‘put down’ an unkind remark? Perhaps we can filter all remarks, whether positive or negative, rather like using a sieve, tossing out those we do not want to accept. This would at least give us time to think before we act. If we have a sense of our own worth, other people’s comments may not hurt us.





What do you think and feel about 'Keeping our cool'?

Do we sometimes lose our better judgement? For example, get angry, lose control and say things we really would rather not say or can we prevent ourselves from doing so? Do we get hijacked by our emotions, which can spin out of control? Do we feel that life is not fair and offers us no choice? Does that make us angry, depressed, feeling helpless and 'reactive'?

What kinds of situations make us feel angry? How do we react when we feel angry? What changes take place in our bodies? (*Our faces become red and hot and we tense up.*) How do we feel afterwards? Does anger achieve anything? Should we control anger? Why? How might this be done? Anger is an emotion and is as real as any other emotion. It should not be bottled up. If it is suppressed it can cause us all sorts of problems. How do we deal with it? Should we tell others how we feel, as soon as we can? Should we find a safe way to express our anger, like thumping a cushion or talking to a wise person? Why should we not express anger in a way that might harm ourselves or others? If we practise hard enough, we shall learn how to manage our emotions. If someone demands something from our lunchbox, what options do we have? Do we fight back and say "no"? Tell a teacher or mentor/helper? Give in and give away part of our lunch? Bully someone else? Talk to a wise person later?

How should we deal with family arguments? Is the use of violence necessary when dealing with violence? For example, what should we do if we are attacked? Should very young people be allowed to watch violence on TV? How can we help to prevent violence taking place in our school? Could it be through showing thoughtfulness and consideration for others and demonstrating kindness, helpfulness, courtesy, tolerance and compassion? Is it showing others that we

are unwilling to cause harm either to other people or to nature?

Could we deal with a confrontation that would lead to an argument? Could we diffuse the situation and keep control of our feelings? Can we learn to recognise signs of panic, decide what the problem is, focus on the main issue, step back and determine the best way of resolving the problem? This is vital for sustaining good relationships. Does it help if we ask a kind question such as, "Have I got it right; is this what you mean?"

Do we believe that we best solve problems by taking time to talk things over with other people, by being patient, flexible, unprejudiced and open? Does it help to welcome other people's ideas and contributions?

Do we have inner harmony? Some people are considered to be 'reactive'. Reactive people are easily offended, explosive and blame others. They get angry and complain a lot. They whine and wait for things to happen.

'Proactive' people on the other hand, always look on the positive side of life and do not allow 'upsets' to ruin their day. They say things such as, "I'll do it." "Let's look at our choices." "There must be a solution." Proactive people bounce back under stress. They are not easily offended; they think before they act and focus on the stuff they can do something about rather than worry about the things they cannot do.

What steps can we take towards resolving disputes? Could they be:

1. Communicate?
2. Negotiate?
3. Compromise and consolidate?
4. Celebrate?

What do you think?

Learning Unit

There are five techniques within each Learning Unit:

Quotation

Silent Reflection

Focus

Song

Activities

Quotation

“To be angry with the right person to the right extent and at the right moment and with the right object and in the right way - that is not easy” by *Aristotle*.

Silent Reflection

Play some soft, gentle soothing music in the background.

Imagine yourself resolving a dispute - quietly and gently, explaining softly why it upsets you. See clearly in your mind, how to settle the problem so that it does not happen again....see yourself resolving the dispute....being in full control.

Focus

Read and then discuss “**My feelings**” and “**A story**”.

Song

“I can talk to you” by Ross Page. See Song Sheet at the end of this Learning Unit.

The song is also available on the CD *I'm a Citizen* published by the Human Values Foundation.

Focus

Read and then discuss.

My feelings

When we get strong feelings, can we stand back and find out where they are coming from? We could try asking ourselves whereabouts in the body are they coming from? It is perfectly natural to experience feelings. Everyone has them – animals and little creatures too! When we lose someone, we go through pain, sometimes we feel hurt and angry.



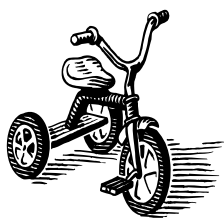
If you have a particular feeling right now, give it a name.

We must watch out for the 'blame game' (blaming other people). It might not be a case of whom to blame but why we react as we do. Or perhaps there is justification for feeling the way we do!

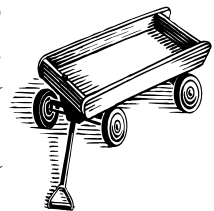
Once we have named the feeling and sensed where it has come from, perhaps it no longer feels important and we can let it go. It is perfectly normal to feel angry or sad sometimes because all feelings are necessary for personal growth. There is a problem only if we get stuck in them and hold onto them, blaming ourselves and others.

Negative feelings will not harm us if we express them appropriately and let them go. It is not a good idea to bottle them up. Buddha, a spiritual leader, once compared the feeling of anger to that of holding on to a hot cinder with the intent of throwing it at someone else. So perhaps it is best to deal with our negative feelings as they arise and not store them up. We need to let go of resentments and regrets and move on.

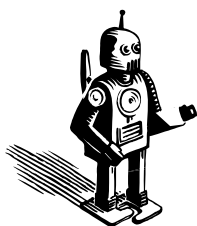
A story - Anon



One day, a father arrived home from a heavy day's work to discover that for the fourth time that week, his children's toys were all over the driveway and he could not get his car into the carport. He lost his temper and began shouting loudly at the children. The children quickly scurried to clear a pathway before running to give him a hug.



In scooping them up into his arms, he had not noticed the man who now stood at his elbow looking rather whimsical and sad. The stranger said, "I wish I could shout at my kids again. I'd give anything to have those times back again. Mine have grown up now. One's gone to university and one is serving overseas and we rarely see each other. I miss them terribly but I guess you had a reason to shout!"



Before the children's father could say anything, the man was gone. No more would he scold the kids for playing and leaving their toys around. He did not want to miss a moment of the joy and laughter they brought into his life. What did it matter if there were a few toys in the driveway, the passageway, the garden....



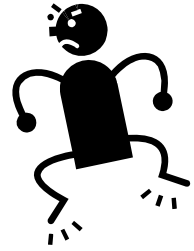


Activities

(a) When we lose our cool

If we lose our cool and feel like screaming, the best thing to do would be –

- Take 3 deep breaths.
- Drink a glass of water to dilute the acid building up in the stomach.
- Give the feeling a name and tell someone how you feel.
- Go for a long walk.
- Pummel a cushion with clenched fists.
- Take time to reflect.



Which one of the above ideas do you think would work for you?

(b) How many times!

Work in pairs, then share with other groups.



I get annoyed easily.....


I find it difficult to control myself.....

I manage myself well.....

I say, "I can't help it.".....

I say, "(S)He made me do it.".....

I say, "Now look what you've made me do.".....

 I let others know what I want or need....

I keep my feelings to myself.....

I express my feelings even if they are not positive ones.....

I avoid looking foolish to my friends.....

I am sensitive and know when to be quiet.....

Rarely Sometimes Usually Often

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(c) My experience

Do the following deeds make people feel angry?

Tick the appropriate circles.	Yes	No	Perhaps
Rejection.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being left out.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfairness.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Name-calling and talking about others...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



When did you last feel angry? _____

How does the memory make you feel now? _____

Can you name 3 other things that could cause anger?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

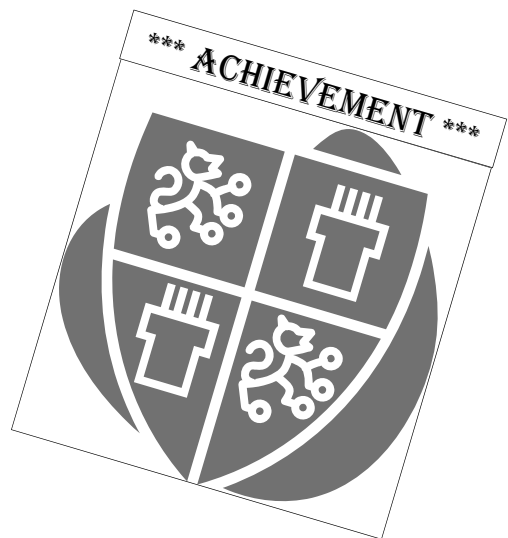


(d) The big debate

Work in small groups.

*** CLASS 3C ***
RULES OF BEHAVIOUR
 WE ALL AGREE TO ABIDE BY
 THESE RULES...

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____



Discuss whether or not we should reward good behaviour, hard work, positive attitudes and efforts. Should we have rewards, classroom rules and achievement shields?

Encourage a 'whole school' debate and invite all staff and pupils to enter into the debate. Invite local business people to give short talks on what incentives they offer so as to encourage 'Values in the workforce'.

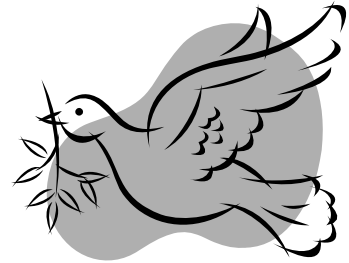
First, find out what incentives are already in place in your school.

(e) The interview

In pairs or on your own, interview other people and ask them if they ever 'lose their cool' and if so, what causes them to do so.



(f) Letting go

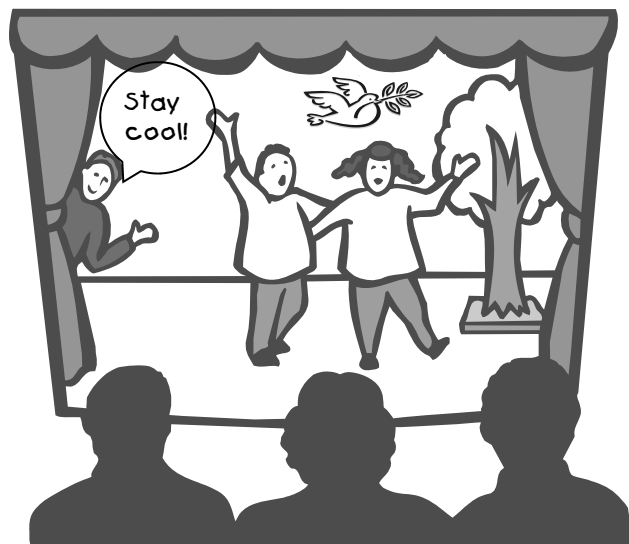


Write a poem or compose a song/dance about keeping the peace or keeping calm and letting go of anger.

(g) Talk show or role play

Work in small groups

Plan a talk, show or drama around the theme of 'Keeping our cool'.

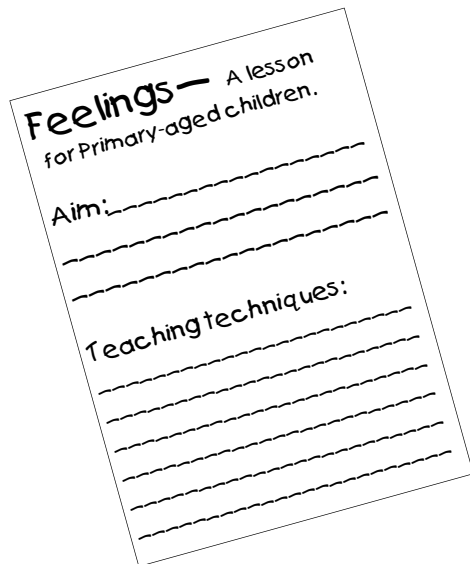


(h) Collage

Make a collage, mural, photograph or a 5-minute video/DVD depicting 'Overcoming Anger'.



(i) Lesson plan



Work in small groups, then share.

Prepare a lesson plan for Primary-aged children about 'Feelings'.



Write the aim of the lesson and include a variety of teaching techniques to demonstrate that we all have feelings but somehow we have to gradually learn to manage them.

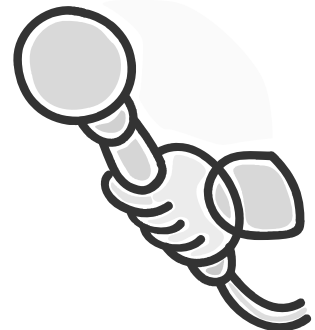
(A story could be one of the teaching techniques.)

(j) A rap concert



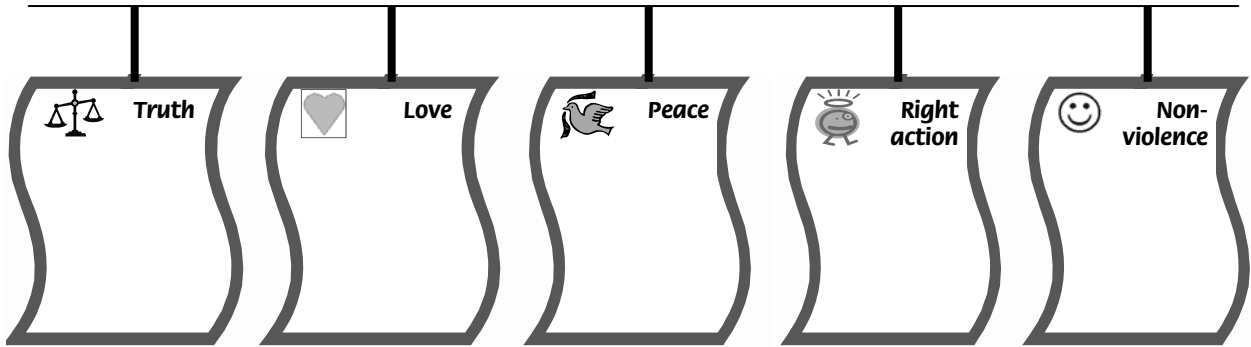
Arrange a rap contest for rap songs related to non-violence and peace.

Publicise the event and its winners in the local newspapers and the newsletters of local groups.



(k) Design shop

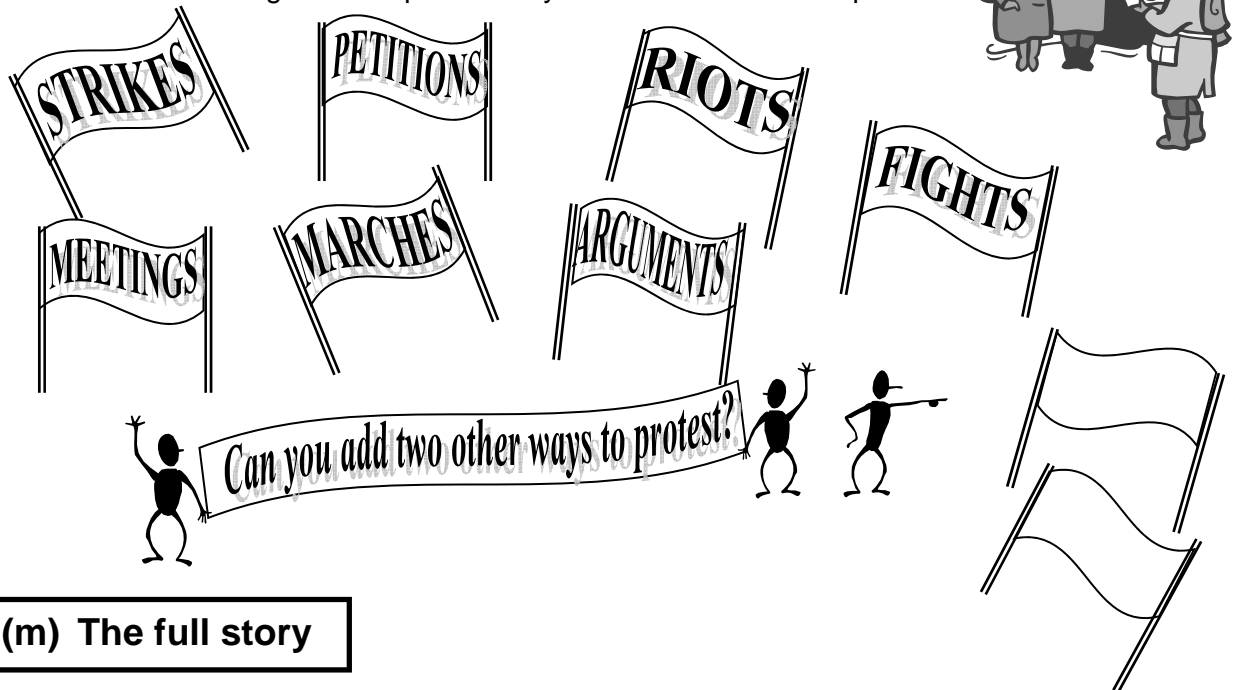
Design and print notepaper depicting themes of non-violence or peace. Or create slogans/quotations about managing conflict.



(l) Riots!

Work in pairs then share.

Which of the following forms of protest do you consider to be acceptable?



(m) The full story

Are we getting the full story? How does the media report conflicts? Can journalists really be neutral in their reports or is it just a myth? Former BBC war correspondent Martin Bell, called on the BBC to abandon neutrality in reporting war and genocide at a World News Conference in 1996 saying, "I do not believe we should stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, aggressor and victim."

Others believe strongly that objectivity is the key to the reporter's ability to inform the public.

What do YOU think? Discuss in small groups.

(n) Snap groups

Whole group quickly divides into groups of about 4. (Stand for this exercise.)

One member from each group selects a card from the stack of cards, which are printed below and can be placed on a 'speakers table'.

Each group decides how they would deal with the issue on their card (scribe needed).

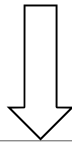
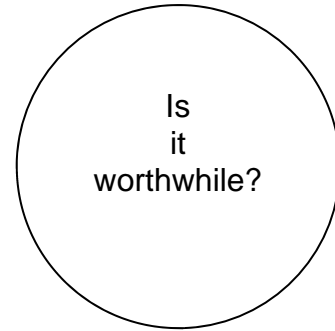
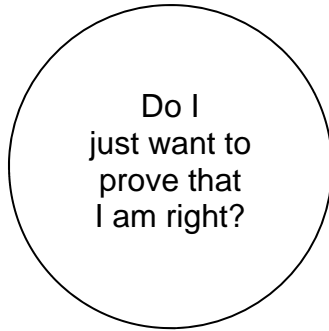
After about 3 minutes, the speaker calls out, "Please replace the cards on the table and form new groups of 4 people and will one person select another card for his or her new group?"

Repeat this exercise several times or as often as time will allow, ensuring that groups have time to share their contributions with the main group at the end of the session.

<p>1. Someone has angered you by calling you names.</p>	<p>2. A friend is withdrawn and resentful.</p>	<p>3. Someone is jealous of your success.</p>	<p>4. A fight is about to break out.</p>	<p>5. Someone hides your lunch box and you waste time looking for it.</p>
<p>6. You were not chosen for the school team, even though you are better than some who were chosen.</p>	<p>7. Someone has been telling lies about you and you feel hurt.</p>	<p>8. You like your friend but he/she always interrupts when you are talking.</p>	<p>9. Your friend always expects you to lend him/her your things.</p>	<p>10. Someone else always makes the decisions and never asks you what you would like to do.</p>
<p>11. Some of your friends say hurtful things to each other and want you to do the same.</p>	<p>12. You got out of bed the wrong side, missed the bus and you are now late for school and you feel angry about it.</p>	<p>13. Your friendship group left you out of their game at break-time.</p>	<p>14. You have homework to do and your friends tease you for being a teacher's pet.</p>	<p>15. Your parents/carers have grounded you for something you have not done.</p>

(o) My emotions

When I am engaged in a disagreement, I can ask myself the following:



Write down your answer?



How can I best approach the problem? _____

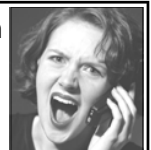
Can you add some questions of your own to this list?

(p) Reactive or Proactive?

Having read a little about how 'Reactive' and 'Proactive' people respond to situations when things do not go well for them, do you think they allow upsets to ruin their day?

Write down 3 statements that 'Reactive' people might say during the day, when things go wrong for them.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

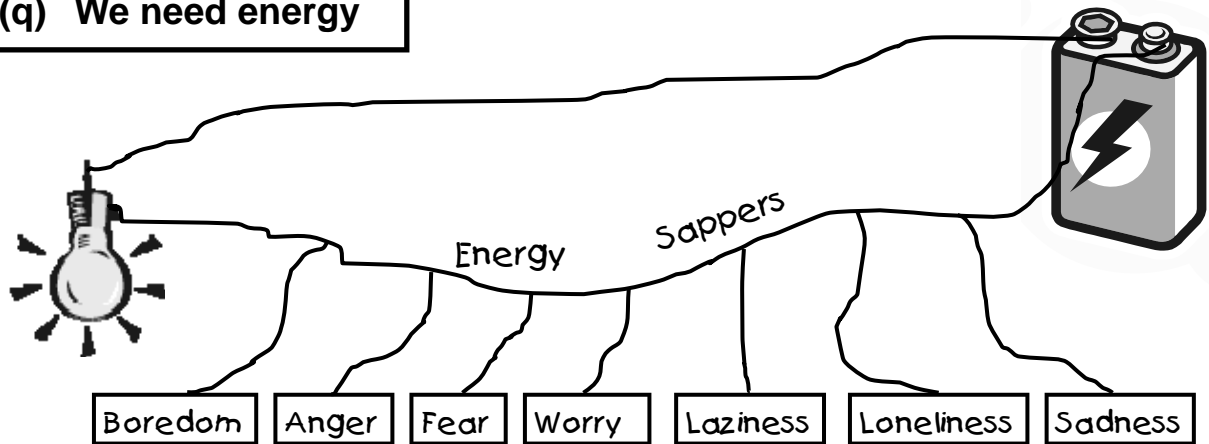


Write down 3 statements that 'Proactive' people might say.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)



(q) We need energy



We all need energy but some of our negative feelings can cause our energy to leak out just like losing it through a sieve!

In the lighting circuit above, look at the energy sappers, which are preventing the bulb from shining at its brightest.

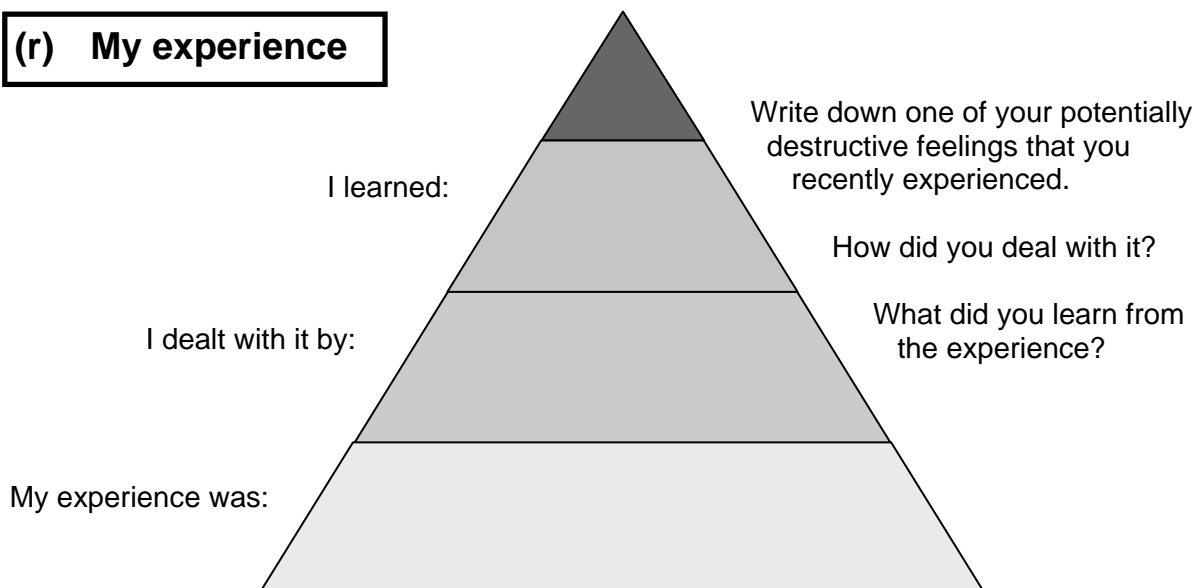
Can you identify other energy sappers to include in the circuit?

Are you experiencing any of these feelings right now?
If your answer is 'yes', you may wish to circle those that you are feeling at the moment.

If you have circled any of the above feelings, what steps do you think you can take to help yourself? I can _____

(Try talking through your feelings with a friend or wise person.)

(r) My experience



(s) Next time

Next time I feel angry I will -

Tick the box if you think you can achieve this.



• recognise the feeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
• work out why I feel angry	<input type="checkbox"/>
• thump a pillow or find a similar release	<input type="checkbox"/>
• talk through my feelings with a friend or wise person	<input type="checkbox"/>
• if something needs to be said, I will say it.	<input type="checkbox"/>

(t) Role play (2)

The Peacemaker

You are Secretary General of the United Nations, which aims to keep the peace amongst all nations. Conflict has developed because a member country insists on developing nuclear power and will not open its doors for inspection. It argues that the aim is purely for making nuclear power and not for developing weapons.



United Nations logo

Set up and run a meeting for representation from all sides to be made.

Allow everyone a certain amount of time to talk, including representatives of bordering countries.

Do not allow others to interrupt. Everyone must listen. Briefly summarise the problem. Ask each country representative how they see it being resolved.

After approximately 15-20 minutes, try to come to some agreement. You cannot take sides but everyone is hoping you will fulfil your role as peacemaker!

(u) Headline news

The On-Line Global News

Circle or highlight in one colour, the headlines below that are advocating the use of force and in another colour, those which are promoting a diplomatic solution?

West set for air strikes.

Europe urges world-wide restraint.

War is still an option.



Peace deal for Europe - talk (round table).

Peace or war, the choice is...

New peace deal on offer after talks.

(v) Being considerate

A considerate person thinks, feels and acts in ways which are helpful to other people.

A tolerant person is willing to accept in other people, things or opinions upon which they differ.

Work on your own then show your table to another person who knows you well. Do they agree?

Tick the appropriate boxes.

Always Usually Not yet

	Always	Usually	Not yet
I listen when others are talking.			
I take turns when playing games.			
I talk gently even when annoyed.			
I am kind to others and helpful.			
I keep my room clean and tidy.			
I keep the TV, music/other noise levels down.			
I take care of my things.			
I am polite, considerate and respectful.			
I am tolerant.			
I say 'Well done' to people when they do a good job.			
I look on the bright side of life.			
I can put myself in someone else's shoes.			

(w) Conflict

What kinds of things could provoke anger and conflict?

Give each of the following a rating of 1-5 in the box provided.

For example, if you think one of the most likely causes is pettiness, give that one a rating of 5.

- A lack of communication about what is going on and what needs to be done.
- People not listening.
- Being unfairly blamed and given no chance to explain or defend oneself.
- Unfair criticisms and accusations.
- Expecting too much from others.
- Lack of praise and feeling under-valued.
- Preferential treatment.
- Pettiness.
- Intolerance.
- Ignorance.
- Uncooperativeness.
- Refusing to take responsibility.
- Prejudice.
- Making assumptions.
- Self interest and desire for power.
- Lack of empathy and compassion.
- Threat to culture and power.



