

**4-H at
HOME**



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LET YOUR HEAD RULE

Learn how to let your head guide your decisions.



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About the Activity

Letting your head, and not your emotions, guide your decisions is an important part of growing up! In this activity, you will learn how to use decision-making skills and identify how emotions affect the decision-making process.



Supplies

These simple materials, along with a few specialty supplies, will get you started.

- 'Feelings' signs (downloadable from this page)
- Tape to post 'Feelings' signs on wall around room
- Dry erase board or notepad and markers
- Paper for drawing - one per participant
- Assorted markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils.

Grades: 6-12

Topic: Health

Time: 45 minutes

Activity Steps

Younger kids often don't know all the necessary facts to make different kinds of decisions. It is also hard to know when a fact is really a fact. Sometimes, we assume something is a fact. Even adults have trouble figuring out the difference. And younger kids are more likely to consider the personal experiences of others and their own emotions when they make decisions, even if those personal experiences are exaggerated and/or their own emotions are not representative.

Younger youth are also more likely to let emotions rule in the spur of the moment, when peers are involved, and in unfamiliar situations. Their brain maturation is also incomplete, which limits their ability to make rational decisions, to understand consequences, and to realize how their emotions might affect their decisions.

Let's get started!

- 1 First, print out the Feelings signs and then post the signs around the room where you are.
- 2 Look at each sign, and think about the feelings and emotions of each of them. Every interaction, everything we do, and every situation we find ourselves in will create some sort of reaction in our minds – and those reactions are our feelings.
- 3 Now, read the statements in the activity sheet. For each, decide how they make you feel, then go stand under the sign that best describes that first feeling or emotion.
- 4 With a piece of paper and markers, identify one of the emotions listed on the feelings signs posted in the room and then think of a time when that feeling affected a decision you made.
- 5 Using the paper and markers, draw (as best you can) the decision you made in that situation, and the consequence of that decision or action. Label the emotion you felt that created your reaction on that piece of paper.

- 6 Repeat this a few times for some different emotional reactions you've had that you can remember.
- 7 If you're comfortable, you can hang your art up where you and others can see it.
- 8 Ask youth "How do you think you can stop yourself in the moment from reacting to something first with your emotions, and instead to think before you react?"
- 9 Listen to their ideas and suggest a few ideas you use and share examples of times you've implemented these strategies.

Ex: Taking a deep breath and counting down from ten before responding or sharing with someone in your circle how you are feeling and taking time to devise an appropriate way to respond with external input.



Test Your Knowledge

Emotions can be complicated, but connecting how we feel to how we act can help us understand how to process our emotions and to make healthy choices.

Based on one of the pieces of memory art you created, describe in 4-6 sentences what happened, how it made you feel, what you did, and how your reaction made you feel. Then describe what you would do differently if the situation happened again to you today.



Reflection Questions

Questions to deepen wonder and understanding.

- What are some feelings or emotions that might get in the way of making a good decision?
- Why shouldn't you use feelings and emotions to make a decision?

Investigate & Explore

Take your new knowledge to the next level.

There is one thing that sometimes gets in the way or influences us when we are trying to make important decisions--our feelings or emotions. Our heads may say “No, it’s NOT a good idea to play with my dog instead of writing my school report, because I’ll flunk social studies.” But our hearts may say, “But the dog is so cute and he’s begging to play!”

We may have all the facts about a decision and we may even have figured out the options

and consequences. But, if we don’t stay calm and really think, feelings can get in the way of our best decisions. Our options may be forgotten as our feelings win out. Feelings can lead us to make some really bad decisions.

It’s especially important for kids and teens to learn how to make rational decisions, because they face a lot of complex social situations and occasional peer pressure to make unhealthy choices – alcohol, recreational drugs, smoking (and, increasingly, vaping). Knowing how to react with your head, not your emotions, can help you make responsible decisions in those and other difficult situations.

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ACTIVITY 3B

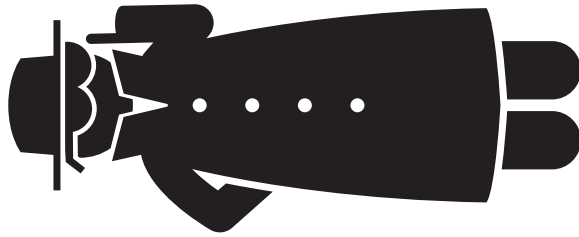
LET YOUR HEAD RULE

Feelings Signs

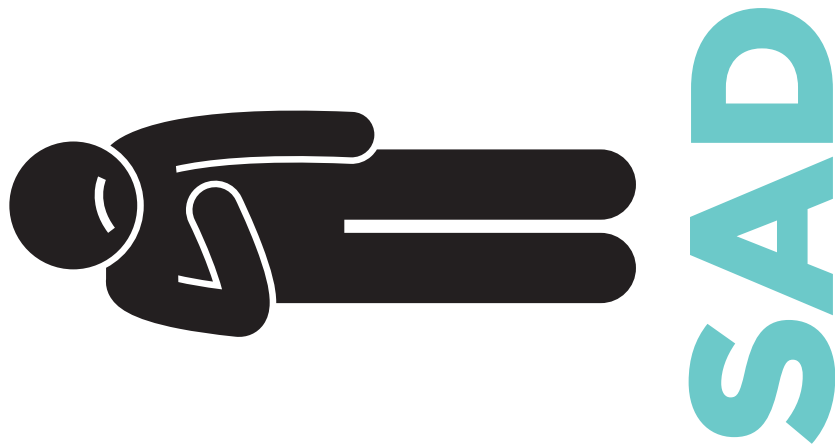


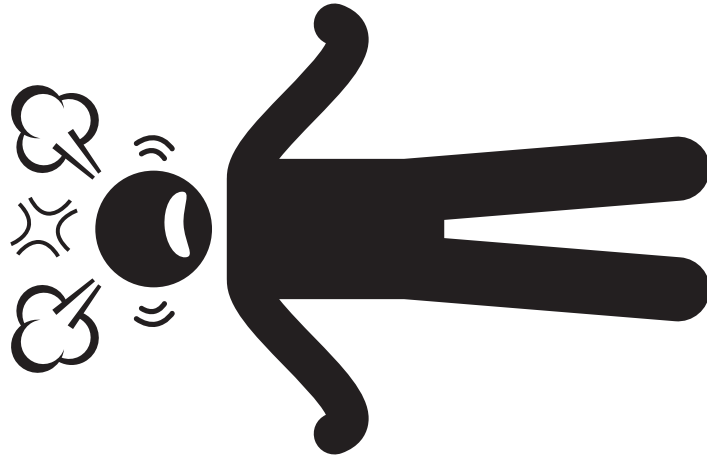
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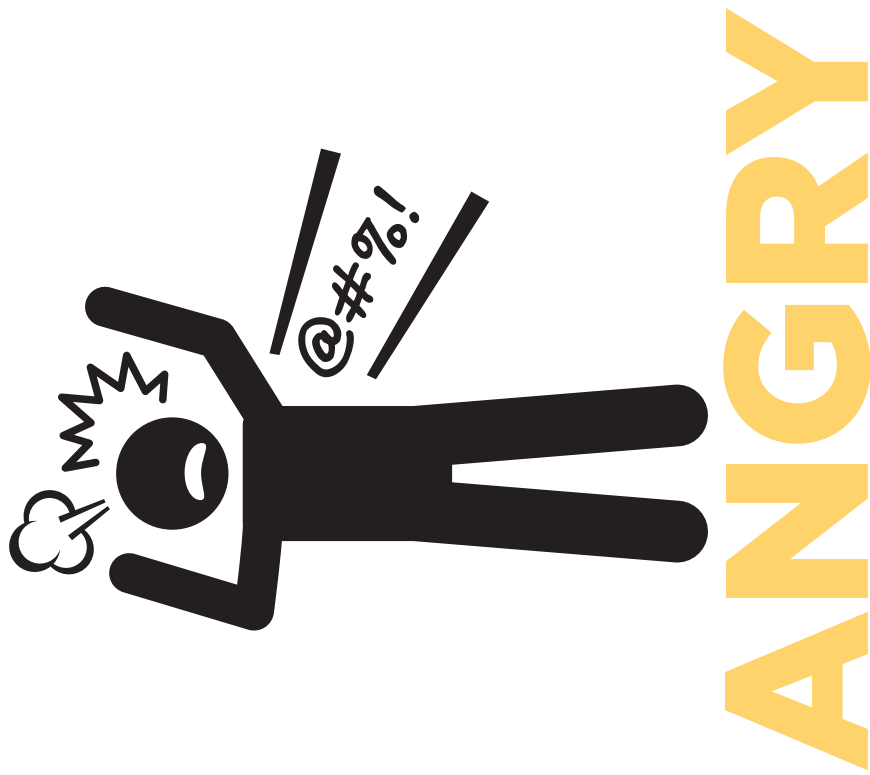


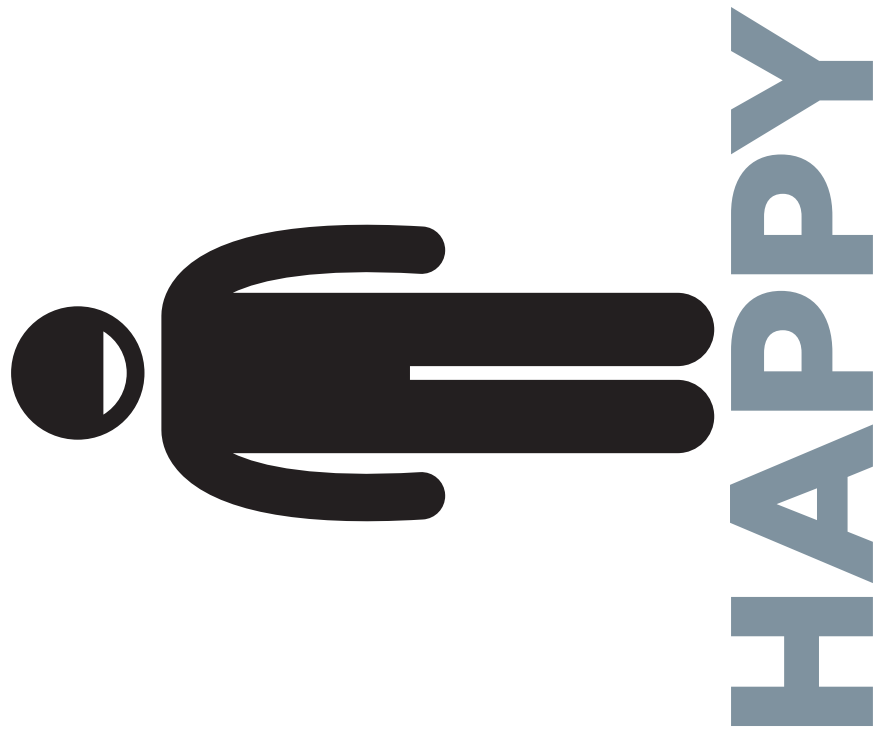
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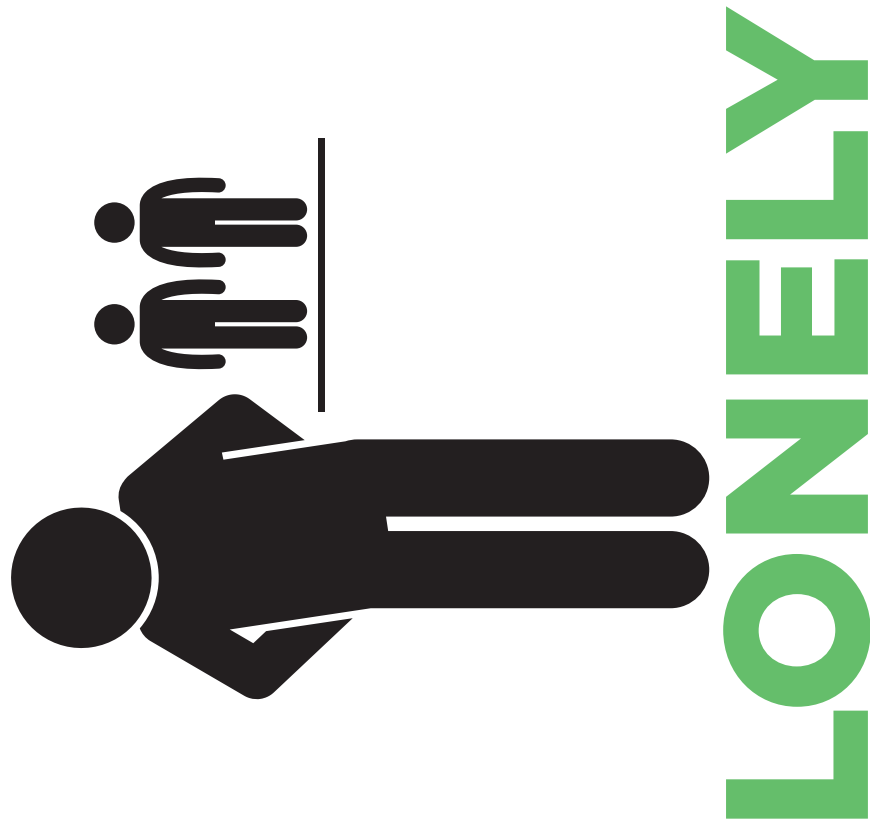
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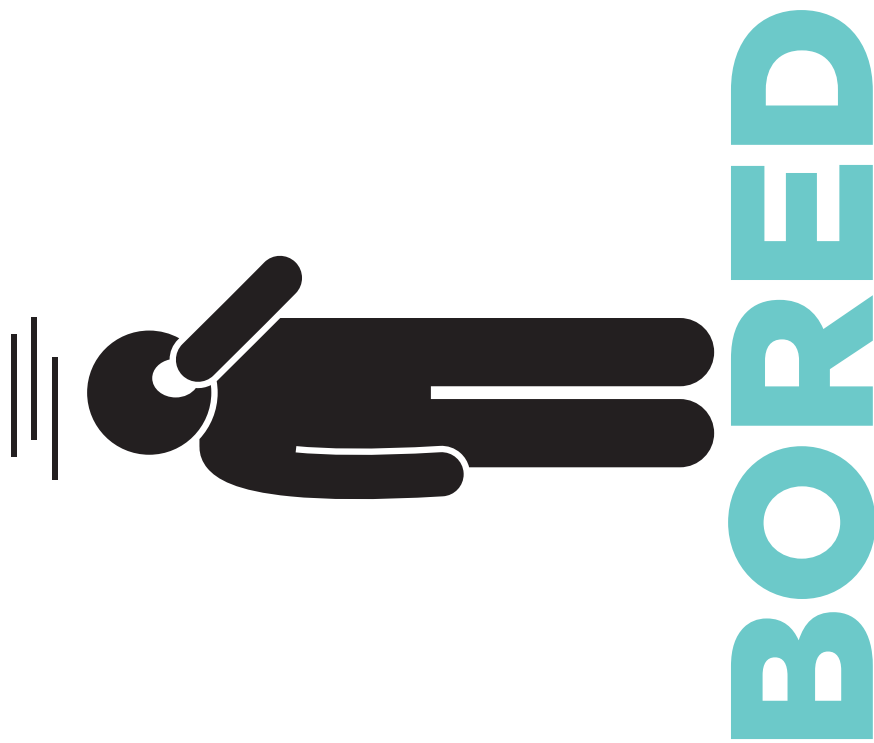


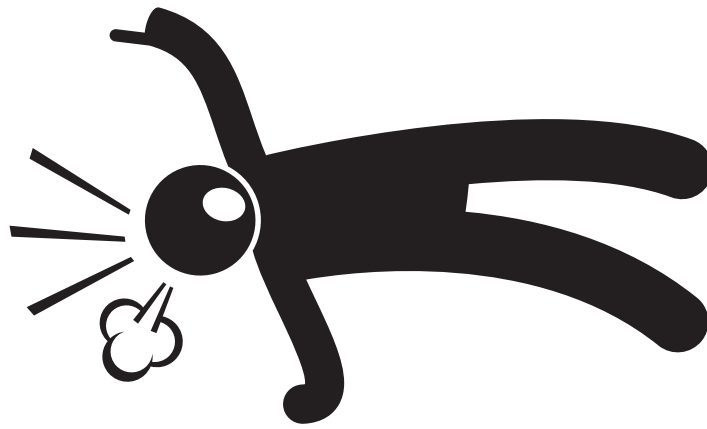




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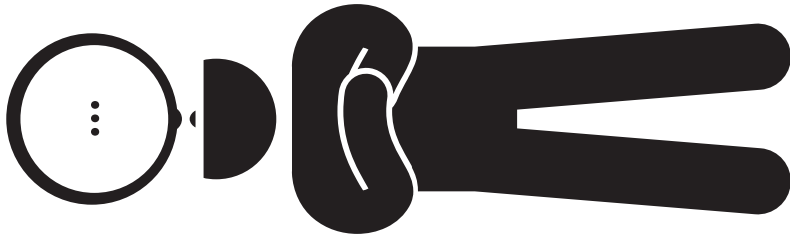




SURPRISED



SHOCKED



OTHER FEELING

