

**Learning intentions****I am learning:**

- ✓ to understand the need to manage what feelings I express and how I express them
- ✓ to develop the skill of managing my feelings.

Is it always a good idea to express our feelings in any situation? No! Sometimes it is important to control our feelings in order to make sure we don't do harm to others and ourselves. For example, if you are upset about your football team losing a crucial game – showing this emotion through violence to others is the wrong thing to do.

In topic six you thought about how a toddler expresses their feelings differently from you. This is because a toddler has not yet begun to learn the important life skill of managing and controlling their feelings. This is the age where they should begin to be taught how to manage their feelings and then, throughout their life, they will continue to learn how to develop this skill. It is not an easy skill to learn and develop, but there are some techniques that can help.

**Situation**

You are really excited because you and your friend are going to a party tonight to celebrate another friend's birthday. Everybody has been talking about it, and you can't wait. Your friend has arranged with his mum to pick you up at 7:30p.m. and take you both there. At 6:30p.m. your friend phones you and says that he isn't going any more, that he won't be picking you up and that he will see you at school tomorrow – then he hangs up.

**Activity 1** How are our feelings different?

- a) Individually:  
Read through the situation on the left, then answer the following questions:
  - What thoughts and feelings would you have in this situation?
  - How would you express and let those feelings out?
  - What would be the results of what you say and do in response to those feelings?
- b) In groups:  
Share your answers and identify the differences and the similarities between you by discussing the following questions:
  - Did you all have the same thoughts and feelings in the situation? Why or why not?
  - Did you all express your feelings the same way?
  - Whose way of expressing emotions do you think had the best results or consequences?
  - Are the different ways we express our feelings as good as each other?

**CHANGING OUR FEELINGS**

Lets use a picture to model a technique that can be used to change our feelings or how we express them.

Can you picture yourself as a car with four wheels? Each of the four wheels represents different parts of your responses to the situation. They include:

- 1 Your body responses:** the reactions in your body; cold, hot, red face, trembling, sick, calm, restless etc.
- 2 Your feelings:** the emotion that wells up inside in response to the situation.
- 3 Your thoughts:** what you think about what has happened, its causes and who is responsible.
- 4 Your actions:** what you do in response to your thoughts and feelings.

In most cars you can only steer the front two wheels, and when you do you can move the car in different directions. You can't usually steer the back two wheels directly, but when you steer the front two wheels, the back two will always follow in line.



If you focus on your body responses, or on your feelings and try to change them, you will almost always fail. However, if you change the way you think about a situation, as well as change what you are doing in a situation, your feelings and body responses will follow and change in a different direction (sometimes sooner, sometimes later!). You can change your feelings, by changing your thinking about a situation, or by changing your behaviour when in a situation.

**Activity 2**  
Let's see if this works...

Individually:  
Consider again the situation of your friend letting you down about the party.

- a) What could you do that would:
  - change your thinking about what your friend has said and done in a more positive way?
  - change how you behave after what your friend has said and done in a more positive way?
- b) How would these changes affect your feelings and body responses for the better?

**Activity 3**  
Personal journal

Think about times in your life when you are afraid, lonely, jealous, or powerless. What sort of things could you do to change your thinking and acting that would affect those feelings?