



Helping teachers work with children when they first return to school following major traumatic or life-changing events

Learning from Bear

A unit on our feelings

Levels 1-4

Whakataukī

He waka eke noa

The canoe which we are all in without exception

(For an excellent resource that explores whakataukī within the context of understanding Māori expressions of emotions, [click here](#).)

Questions

- What different feelings do we have, and how do we express these at different times?
- Who or what helps us deal with our feelings?
- What can we do to help ourselves and others understand change and loss?

Learning outcomes

Select from the activities below to understand ākongā knowledge and experience, and then support the following learning outcomes.

Ākongā will:

- use a range of words that can be used to describe their emotions (1A1)
- recognise and describe different feelings in themselves and others; and what (or who) helps them with their feelings (1C2)
- identify people who can support them when they are experiencing different feelings (1D2)
- ask questions about change and loss (1A1)
- describe feelings associated with change and loss (1A1)
- describe how individuals and groups have similar and different feelings when talking about feelings, including change and loss (2C2)
- express their ideas, needs, and feelings relating to change and loss, and listen sensitively to those of other people (2C3)
- take individual and collective action to support our own and others' feelings and wellbeing (1D2)
- identify and define a range of feelings/emotions (3A1)



- identify ways to express feelings about loss and change (3A3)
- describe similarities and differences in the ways that individuals and groups cope with change and loss, including the role of social and cultural factors (3C2)
- support others in their classroom and in the school in times of disappointment, loss, and change (3C2)
- describe and demonstrate a range of interpersonal skills and strategies appropriate for managing change and loss (4C3)
- describe appropriate ways of supporting those affected by change and loss (4C1)
- take individual and collective action to contribute to a safe emotional environment (4D3/4)

Activities

Activity 1: Talking to Bear

The point of this activity is to find out more about your ākongā prior knowledge, experience, and understanding of feelings.

Re-introduce your ākongā to your teddy (or robot or alien). Remind ākongā how they helped your teddy learn more about what it was like inside their bubbles, and now your teddy would like to know more about this word they have heard of - feelings.

Ask ākongā to share their ideas with the teddy by asking the question: What are feelings?

Ask ākongā (either as a whole class or in small groups) to share all of the 'feelings words' they know. These may include:

- koa/happy
- māharahara/anxious
- pukuriri/angry
- ngenge/tired
- manahau/excited
- matakū/scared
- pōuri/sad
- awangawanga/worried
- whakahīhī/proud
- haikai/hungry
- āmāmai/nervous
- whakamā/embarrassed
- oherere/surprised
- hōha/bored
- pōauau/confused
- mokemoke/lonely
- matakana/shy
- hēmanawa/frustrated



- pōkaikaha/stressed
- māia/confident
- whakamāria/calm
- matapōuri/upset

Record and display these as a class vocabulary list to draw on for the rest of the unit. (Click [here](#) for a resource that shows pictures of different feelings in te reo Māori and English.)

This activity can be extended by getting ākongā to draw faces or emojis that best illustrate each of these emotions.

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Activity 2: Expressing our feelings

Pass the feeling game – Version 1

Ākongā sit or stand in a circle. Teacher starts the first round by expressing one feeling to the ākongā to their left (without naming the feeling), who then tries to express the same feeling to the next person, until it goes all the way around the circle. Once it returns to the start, ask the class what feeling they thought was being expressed.

Using the class vocabulary list, provide an ākongā with a card that has the name of a different feeling on it. That ākongā then begins another round of ‘pass the feeling’.

Pass the feeling game – Version 2

Ākongā stand in a circle, either as a whole class or in groups. Each ākongā needs to think of one feeling and how they look and act when they are feeling that way (e.g. anger – clenched fists, scrunched nose, heavy breathing). Encourage ākongā to consider where in their bodies they experience these feelings, what happens to different parts of their bodies, and what happens to their face.

One ākongā begins by calling out another name (or passing them a ball). That ākongā then acts out the feeling they are thinking about. Other ākongā in the group try and work out the name of that feeling. Once the ākongā have correctly identified the feeling, the ākongā chooses a new person to act out their feeling. Repeat until everyone has had a turn.

Discussion:

Once all ākongā have had an opportunity to share their feeling, facilitate a class discussion to answer the following questions:



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- Did everyone choose the same feeling? Why or why not? (Reinforce the idea that we all have different feelings at different times.)
- What are some of the ways our bear can tell if a person is excited/worried/proud/disappointed? (Consider facial expressions and body language.)
- What aspects of our feelings can't our teddy bear see? (For example, butterflies in our puku.)
- Did we express the same feelings in the same ways? (Use examples of ākonga who choose the same feeling, but expressed them in different ways.)
- Why or why not? (Consider the role the culture, gender, age, experience may shape how we express our emotions).

Pass the feeling game – Version 3

- Ākonga stand in a straight line, all facing the same direction.
- Teacher silently provides the ākonga at the back of the line (Ākonga #1) with a feeling.
- The ākonga then taps the shoulder (or says the name) of the person in front of them (Ākonga #2).
- Ākonga #2 turns around to face Ākonga #1.
- Ākonga #1 then uses body and facial expressions (but no sound) to express this feeling to Ākonga #2.
- Ākonga #2 then turns around and mimics the same feeling to Ākonga #3.
- Repeat until the feeling is passed all of the way to the ākonga at the front of the line, who then has to guess the feeling that was being expressed.

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Activity 3: Bear's feelings during lockdown

This activity is based on the experiences of Bear in Carol Mutch's stories:

- [Bear goes into lockdown](#)
- [Bear settles into lockdown](#)

Part A - Think-Pair-Share:

Think about a specific moment that happened during Bear's time in their bubble:

- What was one feeling that Bear had during the lockdown?
- Why did Bear have this feeling – and not another feeling?
- How did Bear express this feeling at the time? (What did Bear do? How did Bear act?)

Pair - recount this moment with your partner:

- What happened? What was the feeling?
- Why did Bear have this feeling – and not another feeling?



- How did Bear express this feeling? (What did Bear do? How did Bear act?)

Share with the class:

- What happened to Bear? What was the feeling that Bear experienced?
- Why did Bear have this feeling – and not a different feeling?
- How did Bear express this feeling? (What did Bear do? How did Bear act?)

Part B - Freeze frame:

Performing to (or with) a partner, ākonga create a scene to show Bear's 'feelings moment'.

Ākonga need to demonstrate:

- What happened before? (e.g. Bear was getting bored at home)
- What happened during? (e.g. Bear helped in the garden by mowing the lawns – and it was fun!)
- What happened after? (e.g. Bear found some other jobs to do in the garden)

Ākonga re-create Bear's 'feelings moment'. As they are performing, teacher says 'freeze' and the ākonga freezes in their position (this is also a good opportunity for the teacher to take a photograph of the freeze frame). Other ākonga (and the teacher) can ask the 'frozen' ākonga questions, such as:

- What happened?
- Why did you think this happened?
- How did Bear feel? What other feelings did Bear have experienced?
- How did Bear express those feelings?
- How did Bear's humans feel?
- How do you know they felt this way?
- Who could help Bear with their different feelings?

Extension activities:

- Ākonga write a short explanation for each of the freeze frame photographs.
- Ākonga create two performances: the first showing what happened, and the next demonstrating what might have happened if Bear expressed their feelings in a different way.

Activity 4: Understanding Bear's feelings of change and loss

(Note: Some of these activities have been adapted from the Ministry of Education's *Curriculum in action* resource – [Change, loss, and grief](#). This activity could also be extended by reading [Dogger, by Shirley Hughes](#) – Click on [this link](#) for relevant activities.)

Part A – What happened to Bear?

As a class, reflect on and discuss Bear's experiences of changes that happened during lockdown:

- What parts of Bear's life changed during lockdown?
- What was different to Bear's normal day-to-day life?
- How did Bear react to some of these changes?
- How did Bear feel?
- How did Bear deal with different feelings during lockdown?
- When Bear leaves lockdown, what do you think might change? In Bear's house? At school? In different communities?

Discuss how during Bear's time during lockdown there may have been things that Bear missed, or lost:

- What did Bear lose? (e.g. energy, school routines, access to playground, friends in the toybox)
- What did Bear's humans lose? (e.g. their Aunty, ability to say goodbye, family holiday)
- How do you think Bear dealt with different feelings during lockdown?
- What else might have Bear missed during lockdown? Friends? School? Whānau?
- What might Bear miss after lockdown finishes?

Part B - Paradise song:

As a class, sing and sign [Paradise](#) (by Waimarie Smith). Use the following questions to support a class discussion:

- 'Can we hear a tui call?'
 - What nature sounds did Bear hear during lockdown?
- 'Chill underneath the pohutukawa tree'
 - What did Bear do to chill or relax? Where?
- 'Life is a breeze...'
- Was life in Bear's bubble 'a breeze'?
- Was it 'a breeze' for everyone in Aotearoa or the world? Why or why not?
- 'My land is part of me till I'm old'
- Was Bear able to stay connected to [papatūānuku](#)?
- 'Time is precious, that's what we forget - oh no ... it's gone'
- What time was precious for Bear during lockdown?
- What do you think Bear would miss about their bubble?

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Activity 5: Aroha's Way - Understanding other people's feelings



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Read Aroha's Way (by Craig Phillips) to the class (or watch the [Aroha's Way](#) video) and use some of the following questions for a class discussion:

- How does Aroha's face and body change in the pictures? Why?
- Why did she feel 'small' and 'meek'?
- When have you felt 'belly tumble with butterfly wings'?
- Why did your puku feel like that?
- Why did the author write 'where she stands by invisible strings'?
- Whose voice whispers 'Aroha's no good'?
- How does she feel when she 'blows away those strings'?
- How does nature change how Aroha feels?
- Who does Aroha share her troubles with? Why?
- Who do you share your troubles with?
- What different feelings does Aroha experience over the whole story?

Also consider additional ways to use this text to help ākongā make meaning, learn new words, think critically, form and express opinions, and connect with their lives. (Note: For a free downloadable poster for Aroha's Way, click on the following link for [belly breathing](#).)

Extension activity – Hot seating:

Choose an ākongā to sit in the 'hot seat' at the front of the class. Once in the seat they take on the role as one of the characters of the story (e.g. Aroha, a friend, pīwakawaka), and the rest of the class (or group) interviews the character, asking the character to recount certain experiences, perspectives and emotions.

Activity 6: How can we help ourselves and each other?

*She'll share her troubles.
She'll talk.
She'll find her way home.*

Part A - Sharing and supporting:

This quote is from the last page of [Aroha's Way](#). Facilitate a class discussion based on the following questions:

- How does it help Aroha to share her feelings?
- How does it help other people?
- Who do you trust to share your feelings with?
- How do people share their feelings in different ways?
- How can we support someone who shares their feelings with us?

Part B - Feelings scenarios:

Create a set of cards that each have a feeling (and picture) from the classes feelings vocabulary list (or use [this resource](#)). Choose one feeling that Aroha may experience (e.g. nervousness) and support ākonga to co-construct a scenario or short story that relates to Aroha's feelings. (Note: you could also create dice with a different feeling word on each side).

Each scenario should consist of:

- A beginning – what was happening before Aroha experienced this feeling? (e.g. Aroha was getting ready to go back to school after the holidays)
- An event – what happened to 'trigger' this feeling? (e.g. as Aroha walked into school, she wasn't sure if her friends would talk to her)
- A response from Aroha – how might Aroha deal with this feeling? (e.g. Aroha takes deep breathes then tells a friend what she is nervous about)
- A response from others – how might someone support Aroha with her feeling? (e.g. a friend asks her to join in the game they are playing).

Part C - Puppet show:

After modelling these types of scenarios, ākonga work in pairs or a small group to create and perform their own puppet show. (Download free pictures of Aroha [here](#) to help create simple 'puppets on a stick.')

Other ways for ākonga to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding include:

- Write and read aloud an entry from 'Aroha's diary'
- Draw a story board or comic strip
- Write a poem or short story

Reflection questions:

- What helped Aroha express her feelings?
- What might prevent Aroha from expressing her feelings?
- What might happen if Aroha did not express her feelings?
- What helped Aroha in these scenarios?
- What can we learn from this:
 - As an individual?
 - Our class?
 - Our school?
 - Our community?
 - In Aotearoa?
 - Globally?