TALKING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental and behavioral health activities worksheet

Emotion identification

Learning to identify feelings is an important step for children to learn how to talk about and cope with their feelings in a positive and healthy way. Children who find healthy ways to express their feelings are more likely to develop positive relationships with others, feel more confident and perform better in school. In this activity, have either an adult draw different feelings on the blank face or have your child draw different feelings on the blank face.

Guiding your child through the activity

"How are you feeling today?"

Bring up times when the child may have experienced frustration, anger or sadness and have them identify how they felt and draw it. For example, how did you feel when *your favorite toy broke?* (Child may choose to draw a sad or mad face depending on how they felt).

While talking about feelings with your child, ask them what was going on in their body that told them they felt that way? For example, if your child was feeling nervous, maybe their stomach hurt, they felt like crying or like they couldn't breathe.

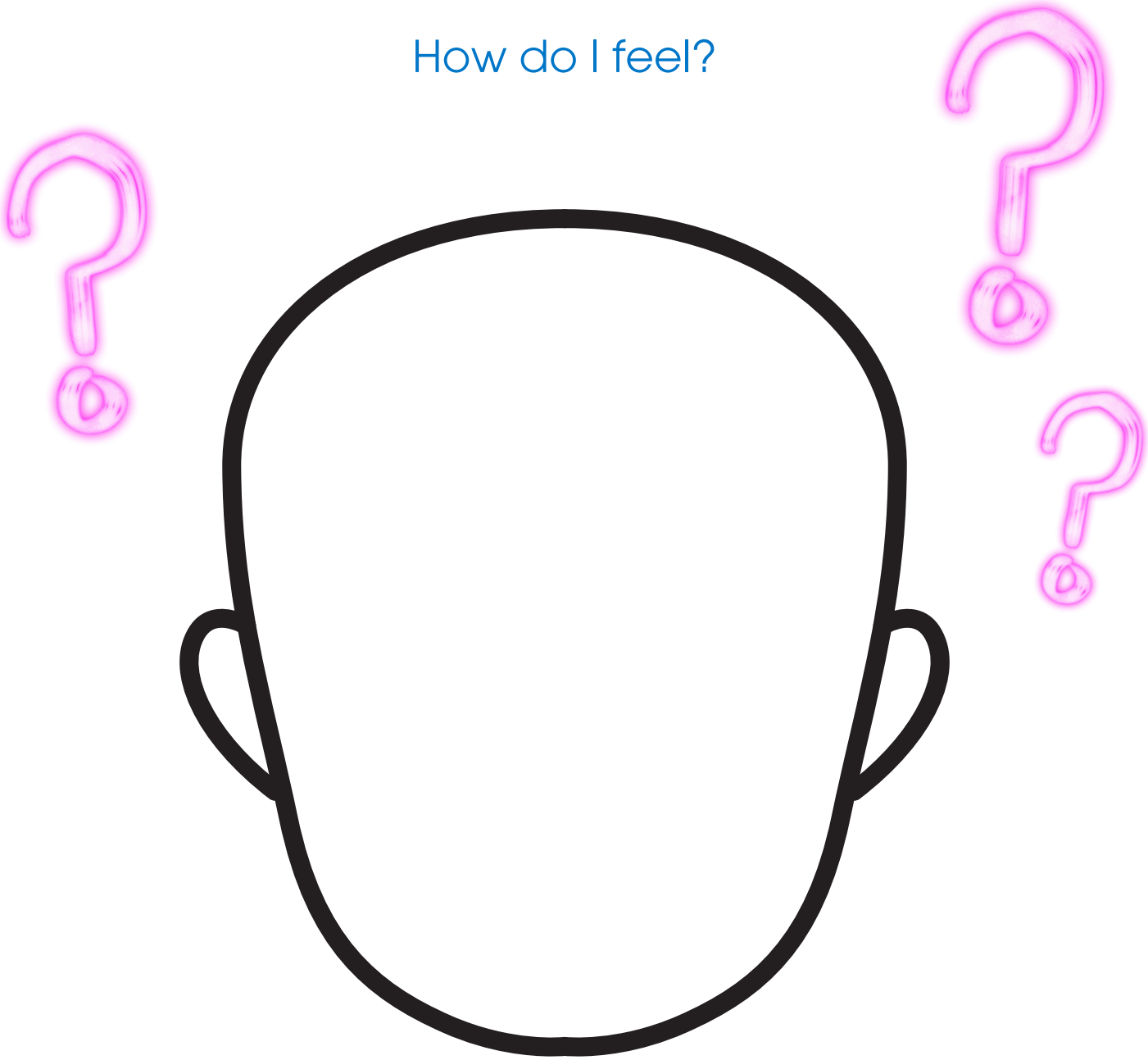
Things to try every day

Use reflection to help your child learn and understand their feelings. Reflecting involves listening to your child and then helping to describe their feeling. For example, "You have tears in your eyes. You seem sad that we can't go to the park today."

Validating (acknowledging how your child feels) is important. This can be hard when children experience negative emotions like sadness or anger as adults often want to "fix it" for the child. It is okay for your child not to be happy all of the time.

Talk about feelings as a part of your daily routine. For example, at dinnertime, have every family member share the "high" and "low" of their day. This can be adapted for young children to be the "best/worst" or "happiest/saddest" part of their day. It is important for the adults to share too!

How do I feel?



Parent reflection

What is something I learned about myself and/or my child after completing this activity?

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