



Content developed by

from Nemours

Learning Goals

- It's normal to feel sad at times.
- You can cope with sadness and help yourself into a happier mood.
- If sad moods feel too deep or happen a lot, tell an adult.

Print Out Before Class

Bring copies for everyone:

- Stapled printouts of the *What Do Kids Feel Sad About?* slideshow (<http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/sadness-slideshow.html>)
- *What to Do When You're Sad* quiz
- *Things to Know* handout
- *Tips From Michael Phelps* handout

Other Materials

- Pens, pencils, or markers for everyone.

Lesson 5: What To Do When You're Sad

TEACHER NOTE

Lesson 1 encouraged kids to talk about feelings. We'll build on this to talk about another difficult emotion — sadness. We'll teach that sad feelings are normal and kids can cope when sad things happen.

Noticing and naming how you feel is the first step in dealing with sadness. It's good to let someone know how you feel and why. And it's good to know how to help yourself feel better. We'll help kids learn to take normal sad feelings in stride, and to ask for help when sadness is deep.

QUICK TIPS

- *By teaching kids to notice sad feelings and encouraging them to cope, we build a foundation for resilience.*
- *When kids interpret sad feelings as rejection or defeat, they become more vulnerable to depression later on.*
- *When kids interpret sad feelings as part of a normal ebb and flow of emotion, they can respond with patience and optimism. This helps kids cope and prevents depression.*
- *When adults respond to kids' emotions with understanding, they nurture the supportive relationships that help kids be resilient.*

START THE DISCUSSION

1. Sad feelings are normal.

Instructor: All italicized text is intended as notes to teachers. All other text may be read out loud to your class.

Everyone feels sad now and then. Raise your hand if you've never, ever felt sad.

Pause for a 'no-show' of hands.





Take It Home!

Kids will take home 4 handouts. Encourage them to show a parent and talk about what they learned. Ask kids to try the 3 steps they learned anytime they feel sad.

Resources

KidsHealth:

- Why Am I So Sad?
- Sadness and Depression
- Talking About Your Feelings

(Lesson 5: [What To Do When You're Sad](#), continued)

Of course, we'd rather feel happy. But we've all felt sad. And each of us will probably feel sad again at some time or another.

It's OK to feel sad. But you don't want sad feelings to go on TOO long.

So it's good to know how to get through sad feelings and how to feel better.

Today, we'll learn more about sad feelings. We'll talk about what it's like when you're sad and what to do.

2. What's it like when you're sad?

Kids might feel sad over something small or something big. Sometimes you feel just a little sad. Other times, you might be very sad. Sometimes you get over sad feelings quickly. Other times, a sad mood lasts longer. It all depends on what's going on and how important something is to you.

Can you think of a time you got over a sad feeling almost right away?

Pause for a show of hands. Let kids answer. If you need to get kids started with examples, here are some:

- Someone ate the last cookie.
- You didn't get the present you wanted for your birthday.
- Your friend couldn't come over.

Can you think of a different time when it took a while to feel better?

Pause for a show of hands. Let kids answer. If you need to get kids started with examples, here are two:

- A pet died.
- You have to move away from your friends.

Sometimes you can get over a sad feeling by yourself. Other times, you need someone's help or comfort to feel better.

Can you think of a time someone helped you when you felt sad?

Pause to let kids answer.



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Can you think of a time you did something for yourself to feel better?

Pause to let kids answer.

When you're sad, you might have other feelings too.

- You might feel hurt, lonely, or left out.
- You might miss someone.
- Maybe something has changed, but you wish it could have stayed the same.
- Maybe something didn't turn out the way you hoped.

When you're sad, you might not be ready to cheer up right away. Sometimes you just need to let the sad feeling be there for a little while.

Be kind to yourself while you feel sad. But not sorry for yourself. Maybe you need comfort from someone else. When you're ready, it will be time to feel better.

When you're sad, it might seem like things won't get better. But they will. You can cope with sad feelings and sad things that happen. You can feel happier again.

3. How can you feel better?

Now, let's talk about what to do when you're sad. There are 3 steps to helping yourself feel better.

1. **Step 1 is Notice and Name.** Notice how you feel and why. Don't ignore the sadness or pretend you don't feel it. Just see what feeling is there inside you.

Then, name the feeling. Think of the words for how you feel and why.

Let's say you realize, "I feel sad and left out because that kid wasn't friendly to me when I wanted to play." You don't have to spend a lot of time on this step. Knowing how you feel and why only needs to take a second.

2. **Step 2 is Accept.** It's OK to feel how you feel. Don't be mad at yourself. There's probably a good reason why you feel this way, so show yourself some understanding. You might think, "When that kid said he didn't want to play, it hurt my feelings. No wonder I feel this way. Who wouldn't?"



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Sometimes you can't change things that happen. You might have to accept the way it is for now. You might not know why the unfriendly kid acted that way. Maybe he was tired, or had to go home, or was upset over something that had nothing to do with you. You can't change how he acted, but there's power in knowing how you feel and why.

Many times, a sad feeling doesn't need any more of your attention than this. After you've done these two steps, you may be ready for Step 3.

3. **Step 3 is Feel Better.** In this step, you do something to put yourself into a happier mood. Not 100% happy, just happier. What can help you get there?

- think about a time you had fun
- play your favorite music
- play a game or sport
- ride a bike
- read
- take a walk, go for a run, or dance
- play with a pet
- make art or music
- be with someone you like
- relax, have fun, and let yourself feel better

But what if you're not ready to feel better yet? Maybe something has you feeling very sad and you just can't shake the sadness. Sometimes that happens.

You might need to do more to take care of your sadness before you're ready to move on and feel better.

Try these things:

- Find a way to let the sadness out. You might need to have a good cry. That's OK. Let someone be with you while you cry it out for a few minutes. After you let the sadness out, you might be ready to feel better.





(Lesson 5: [What To Do When You're Sad](#), continued)

OR, you can:

- Express the sadness in a creative way. Draw about what got you sad. Write a poem or a song. After you express sadness, it can start to melt away.
- Talk about your feelings. Tell someone who cares about you what's wrong and how you feel. They don't have to try to cheer you up or give you advice. They can just listen. Sometimes, that's all it takes for sadness to drift away and make room for other feelings.
- Work out a problem. Sometimes you feel sad over a problem that needs to be taken care of. Ask someone to help you figure out what to do.
- Be active. Run around and play hard. Do jumping jacks, kick a ball around, dance, or do some yoga stretches. Activity makes your body release chemicals that help sadness melt.

After you've done more to take care of your sad feelings, you can help yourself ease into a happier mood.

If you have trouble getting over sadness, tell an adult. Ask them to help you.

4. Let's try it.

Pass out the What to Do When You're Sad quiz.

Pass out something for students to write with.

Let's do a true-and-false quiz to review what we've learned.

Give kids time to complete the quiz. Then review the answers together as a group.

5. What have we learned?

- Sad feelings are normal. Everyone feels sad now and then.
- Sad feelings don't have to last too long. They come and go, like all feelings.
- You can cope with sad things that happen.
- If you're sad, notice and name how you feel and why. Accept how you feel. Sometimes you can't change things, but you can adjust to them.



(Lesson 5: [What To Do When You're Sad](#), continued)

- If you need to, tell someone else how you feel. You can let sadness out by talking, crying, or drawing.
- Help yourself into a happier mood. Do things that make you feel better. Remind yourself, "I can cope with this. Everything will be OK."

6. Take the next step.

Pass out the stapled handout What Do Kids Feel Sad About?

Here is a booklet you can read and look at on your own or with your mom, dad, or other adult. As you look at the pictures, try to find an example of a kid getting over sad feelings quickly. Try to find an example of sad feelings that lasted longer. Notice what helped each kid feel better.

Pass out the Things to Know handout.

Here is a reminder of the things we talked about today. When you get home, teach your parent or another family member what you learned.

Pass out the Tips From Michael Phelps handout.

Michael Phelps thinks that it's good to talk about feelings, especially when you're sad. The last handout has his ideas to help you feel strong and confident.

