

LET'S MAKE IT HAPPIER



The Let's Make it Happier Challenge Cards and Guide are brought to you by The Happiness Project.

Length	5 mins over 5 weeks
Age	8 - 14

Students will:

- Engage in the challenge in a playful, collaborative way. Everyone's a winner.
- Work as a class, or at home with your family to complete this collaborative challenge.
- Learn simple tools to improve personal happiness.

Learning goals:

- To have a toolbox of exercises to use to enable us to better understand our own mental health, to become more emotionally literate and to live each day more connected and happier
- For students to be able to recognise the difference in the way they felt before the 25-day challenge vs after. Create a self-survey for before and after.

Preparation:

The cards can be used online or offline. Share them with students in whatever way is best for your classroom. The cards can be printed and cut out by the students to create their own personal pack of cards. Or you can share the cards digitally with students via the website.

What are the cards:

A learning tool designed to help children discover what makes them happy through a fun and playful 5-week challenge. This deck of 25 cards will provide your students with ways to explore happiness individually and as a class group through simple 5-minute daily exercises. Help your student's spread happiness throughout the classroom, school and out into the wider community!

These cards help students explore everyday activities they can incorporate into their lives to help build their happiness. They will gain an understanding of their own happiness and what contributes to it. This challenge will help children understand that happiness is something they can build into their everyday life, through practical and achievable exercises.

The most important part of this activity is the process itself. There are no predetermined expectations or outcomes. These cards are designed to be inclusive for all children, even for those whose ability to move or participate is limited. For children who are very limited in their movement options, encourage them to respond to the activities while sitting or lying down.

Who made them:

These cards have been designed by Clinical Psychologist, Illustrator and happiness expert, Dr Emma Hepburn. Emma says, "there are lots of myths about happiness and what makes us happy, which means we often look for happiness in the wrong places."

How can I use the cards in my classroom?

Happiness is a process. These cards act as a starter for trying out new and fun ways of exploring how we can make ourselves and those around us happier. Some ideas your students might like, others they might find more challenging but try and urge students to give everything a go.

The cards have been designed according to the ingredients sprinkled throughout The Happiness Project and then colour coded.

Connection: Orange

Movement: Green

Gratitude: Blue

Creativity: Pink

Kindness: Yellow

Students can decide which order they would like to complete the challenge. They might like to shuffle the cards and complete the activities at random, or section by section. There is no right or wrong way, if all the activities are completed.

Teacher Tips:

- Create a non-judgemental space for reflection after each 5-minute activity. Give students time to share their experiences and respond with kindness and validation.
- Remind students that emotions are not good or bad, right or wrong; they just are. Whatever we feel is what we should feel, given the circumstances.
- Urge students to take their time, take slow, deep breaths. Doing this activates our parasympathetic nervous system – our ‘rest and digest’ system – which helps us slow down and feel a little calmer.
- Breathing truly is one of the best ways to get your emotions to a more manageable level. This also activates our parasympathetic nervous system, again helping us feel a little calmer and getting those emotions back to a more manageable level.
- Explain to students that these activities are re-regulating skills which will help them to think a little more clearly.
- Explain to students that in order to manage emotions more effectively in the long run, you need to be more aware of your emotions and all their components; and you need to learn to name your emotions accurately.

Overview of each of the activities:

Connections: Orange

Card 1: Staring Contest

Choose a partner and see how long you can stare into each other's eyes.
Take a few minutes to reflect on how this feels.

Card 2: Square Breathing

Imagine your breath is following the shape of a square: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, and hold your breath for 4 more seconds. Repeat this 5 times.

Card 3: Write a Letter to Yourself

Imagine you are 30 years old. Can you write a letter to yourself?
What advice would you give to yourself?

Card 4: Opening Senses

Go outside and find a quiet place and get comfortable, sitting or standing on the ground. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths. Become aware of your environment one sense at a time. What can you hear? Smell? Touch? Start to notice what sensations come up.

Card 5: Laugh!

Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh. It sounds obvious, but it releases feel-good hormones and reduces stress hormones. Think about a time you laughed so hard your stomach hurt. How did it make you feel?

Movement: Green

Card 6: Dance

For 1 whole minute play a song chosen by you and your classmates, dance in anyway that feels right for you for the duration of the song! Take time to reflect on how this felt.

Card 7: Nature Walk

Go outside for 5 minutes and see if you can notice 3 unexpected things. Remember to look up! Share with your class what you noticed and why this surprised you.

Card 8: Mirroring

Get into pairs and label yourselves pair A or B. Take it in turns to mirror each other's movements for 2 minutes each. What do you notice?

Card 9: Stretch

Do a whole group stretch! Nominate someone in the class to lead the stretch. Reach up as high as you can, bend over and try to keep your legs straight, fold yourself into a tiny ball and repeat this 3 times.

Card 10: Go Outside

Go outside into the playground and spend 5 minutes outside. See if you can get your heartrate up. If you are able to, jump on the spot, or run as fast as you can. Can you feel your heart beating?

Gratitude - Blue

Card 11: Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

Find something that makes you happy, something to give to someone else to make them smile and something that's your favorite color.

Card 12: Gratitude

Write 3 things you are grateful for today.

Card 13: Journaling

Reflect on what has gone well for you this week. What has made you feel proud or happy?

Card 14: Three Tiny Things

Write a list of three things: one that brings you joy, one that makes you laugh, one that gives you a sense of achievement

Card 15: Make A Story

As a group, use your imagination to make a story. Going around in a circle, take it in turns to make up one sentence before passing the story on. Where will your story end up?

Creativity - Pink

Card 16: Writing

Send an anonymous kind postcard to someone

Card 17: Gardening

If you can, take some seeds and go outside and do some Guerilla gardening ! This means planting the seeds in any soil you can find. If you don't have any seeds, pick up some soil in your hands and look closely at it. What can you see? How does it feel to have dirty hands?

Card 18: Nature Art

Create an impermanent artwork made from found elements of nature. If you are doing this as a group, create a mini exhibition of your artworks to share afterwards.

Card 19: Listen!

Listen to music whilst making a continuous line drawing. Keep the pen to the paper and don't lift it off until the song has finished. Can you see any creatures in your picture?

Card 20: Drawing Without Looking

Pick something in the room with an interesting outline e.g. a plant or a shoe. You are going to draw this without looking at the page and without lifting your pen. Look closely, and focus your attention on what you see in front of you. No peeking!

Kindness: Yellow

Card 21: Random Act of Kindness

Choose to do something kind for someone e.g. give someone a compliment, leave a positive message in a hidden place for someone else to find.

Card 22: Practise Self Kindness

Write a list of 5 things you enjoy most.

Card 23: Smile!

When you smile, it activates muscles sending waves of signals to our brains releasing endorphins, serotonin and dopamine, also known as the happy hormones. See how many different people you can smile at today.

Card 24: A Nature Clean-Up

Go outside into your playground/local park and collect as much rubbish as you find.

Card 25: Be Kind to the Planet

See if you can eat less meat this week. Turn off the light switches. Recycle as much as possible. Notice how being kind to the planet makes you feel.