

# Now and Beyond

## Give me 5! Lesson Plan

by Alice Moore for Now and Beyond

### Objectives:

- To understand that feelings are a normal human response
- To explore regulating strategies for uncomfortable feelings

### Target Age:

4-11 year olds

### Lesson structure:

- Firstly, have fun with the song! In line with Zoltan Dienes' theory of playful exploration, allow them to bop along and explore the song for themselves, before any teacher directed input.
- Once they have listened to the song once through, play it again and pause after each verse. Invite them to be curious about the meaning behind the lyrics and encourage them to share their ideas.
- As you work your way through the song - you could come up with actions to go with the lyrics!

### The song:

#### Lyrics

Feelings come and feelings go  
The same for everyone you know  
When these feelings start to grow  
You should know  
You're not alone

#### Teaching Input - The Lyrics Explained

Feelings are transient - so even when we are experiencing difficult emotions, it is empowering to know that it is not permanent.

Normalise that we all have big feelings - adults and children - so we are not alone.

When we have big feelings - what can help us? (Take their ideas).

NB: remind them that if they are experiencing uncomfortable feelings for a prolonged period of time, they need to reach out to a trusted adult.

#### CHORUS

Give me five  
Things you can see

Invite them to playfully name five things they can see around them in this moment.

When big feelings take over, we lose control of our prefrontal cortex - the part of our brain that helps us to make rational choices and concentrate.

We can re-engage our prefrontal cortex by grounding ourselves in the present moment, using our senses.

Extension: You can further this exploration by inviting them to notice four things they can hear and three things they can feel.

---

#### **CHORUS**

**Give me five  
Squeeze and release**

For this exercise, simply get them to squeeze their hands into a tight fist, hold the tension for a moment before shaking it all loose!

Our body naturally tenses when we experience difficult emotions - from an evolutionary perspective, this helped us to keep safe, as it prepared us for a fight or flight response.

Muscle relaxation exercises can help to counteract this - as it helps identify the difference between being tense and relaxed.

Extension: You can experiment with different body parts - can they scrunch up their facial muscles and then release? They could try progressive muscle relaxation - taking each muscle group in turn and tensing, then releasing.

---

#### **CHORUS**

**Give me five  
Fingers that breathe**

For this breathing technique, the children use their fingers to breathe in as they go up their fingers and breathe out as they come back down.

Invite them to slow down their out-breath. Breathing out for longer than they breathe in activates the parasympathetic nervous system - which is their rest and digest mode.

Extension: can they pause at the top of their finger and think of something they are grateful for?

---

**Your brain's designed  
to keep you safe  
But your brain can  
bring up feelings that  
feel out of place  
It looks out for danger  
wherever you go,  
Like a question from  
a teacher that makes you  
go WHOAAAA**

Our brain is always trying to keep us safe - but in our modern world, our stress response can be activated in situations that do not pose any real danger.

Share with your class a time you can remember from school when you felt like this - maybe you found it hard when you had to speak in-front of the class or perhaps you remember a particular incident that caused you to have a fear response.

---

**Your breath gives  
information to your brain  
Breathe fast your brain  
shouts "run"  
Breathe slow, we rest  
again  
This is how our brains  
stay in control  
Your breath is always  
with you, wherever you go.**

Our breath is powerful. It sends a direct signal to our brain - when we are in distress, our breathing speeds up, sending a message to our brain that we are not safe. This is a necessary response if we are in imminent danger, as it prepares our body for action. However, it can also happen at times that are not so helpful - such as when you are about to speak in front of a room full of people. Our breath is always with us as a guide - so we can choose to be mindful of our breath and slow it down, to send a message to our brain that we are safe.

---

**Big feelings make you want  
to freeze, fight or run**

**And although they're  
important, it's not  
always fun**

**No matter the feeling,  
these tips are tested  
and tried**

**So take a pause,  
take a breath**

**And give me five!**

Explore what 'freeze, fight and run' means - brainstorm some examples/act them out. These responses were helpful to early humans, who were having to react to dangers in their environment, i.e. running from a sabre tooth tiger! These same responses still happen today and at times we need them - for example, if we stepped out into the path of an oncoming bus. Yet often in our modern world they are triggered by events that do not pose us true danger.

If we practice these techniques regularly, we can build a new pathway in our brain, so that when we next experience uncomfortable feelings, we can calm down our nervous system, enabling us to respond rather than react.

## Summary:

The main purpose of the song is for them to play around with the regulating strategies. Invite them to tell you which one they enjoyed the most. As the song says - these techniques are tested and tried - but in order for them to be embedded, they need to be practiced regularly. Moving forward, choose your favourite technique as a class and hook it on to an existing habit within the school day. For example, after the register, try finger breathing.

Extension: Play 'boogie stop' - pause the song at various intervals - in the style of musical statues - when the music stops, they have to freeze frame a feeling using their facial expressions and body language!

## About Alice:

Alice is a passionate educator and Senior Mental Health Lead. She has completed training with Thrive, Trauma Informed Schools, ELSA, Draw and Talk, Mental Health First Aid and Mindfulness in School Project. She is also a consultant, trainer and speaker and has worked with external organisations including Universal films, EdTech conference BETT, Penguin Books, youth mental health charity Beyond and literacy charity Booktrust.

To get in touch with Alice, please e-mail [hello@alicekatharine.co.uk](mailto:hello@alicekatharine.co.uk)