mostly sunny

A guide for young people (and slightly older ones...)

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Public Health Institute of Dalmatia County
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For the publisher:
MSc Jasna Nincevic, MD epidemiologist
Zeljko Kljucevic, MD psychiatrist
MSc Edita Maretic, The Home for Children "Maestral", Affiliate Miljenko Dobrila – Kastel Luksic
Marina Bacak, professor, Primary school Stobrec, Stobrec
Nikola Andacic, professor, Primary school Stjepan Ivicevic, Makarska
Ivan Kovacevic, BSc Eng, School of Design, Graphics and Sustain Building – Split

Editor:
Zeljko Kljucevic, MD psychiatrist

Text authors:
Zeljko Kljucevic, MD psychiatrist
Mirela Grbic, prof. defectologist
Toni Maglica, prof. defectologist, social pedagogue
Vedrana Zdero, MA clinical psychologist
Marica Garmaz, prof. of Psychology
Andrea Koceic, prof. of Psychology

Copy Editor:
Anela Mihovilovic, prof. of Croatian Language

Illustrations:
Student's work created during the project Mostly sunny

Translation by:
Iris Brkic, BA English Language and Literature

Graphic design and printing:
Elza Vukicevic, Master of design
Marko Dragun, mechanical engineer
Pupils of the School of Design, Graphics and Sustain Building – Split

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(and slightly older ones...)

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Dom za djecu "Maestral" Split
www. ddmaestral.hr

www.os-stobrec.skole.hr

OS STJEPAN IVICEVIC
Makarska
www.os-sivicevica-ma.skole.hr

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This guide was produced as a part of activities of the project "Mostly sunny" concerning the protection and improvement of the mental health of children and young people with the aim of stimulating emotional development.

The carrier of the project is the Office for Mental Health Protection, Prevention, and out-patient treating of addiction, and the participants are The Home for Children "Maestral", its affiliate Miljenko Dobrila – Kastel Luksic, Primary school Stobrec – Stobrec, Primary school Stjepan Ivicevic – Makarska, School of Design, Graphics and Sustainable Building – Split, and many other participants and associates...

Public Health Institute of Dalmatia County
Department of mental health care and the outpatient treatment
prevencija.ovisnosti1@nzjz-split.hr

Center for Mental Health of Children and Youth
Fra Luje Maruna 2/1 · tel. 021/599-696
www.nzjz-split.hr

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mostly sunny

"Most professionals like to compare us to a bag of hormones which changes its feelings in a second. This is actually mostly true, and the most frequent feeling is confusion."

S.S. 14 years old

Young brains

Centuries ago, and most adults even today, see you adolescents as absent minded, confused individuals of shocking and incomprehensible behavior. Not so long ago, parents and professionals found reasons for that kind of irrational behavior in wild hormones, roughly as young S.S. stated in the citation above.

Today's advanced technologies have provided a whole new view. A young brain is an organ in a stage of development and it does not function like the brain of an adult. The immaturity of certain centers of the brain is one of the reasons for the poorer ability to identify other people's, but also their own feelings, which can result in hasty and inconsiderate behavior. Also, there is a big need or, I would say, "hunger" for excitement. Most people like the feeling of excitement, but they never overestimate it as much as they do in the adolescent period. When you discover which situations or actions induce a feeling of pleasure, you turn to them without thinking, because it is important to experience the pleasure, and the consequences are not vivid or are ignored. The quest for excitement can be risky and dangerous if limits and boundaries are crossed and if it threatens your own or other people's existence. This type of need can also have a bright side.

In new situations we have the chance to meet many new people and make a larger number of acquaintances and friendships. At your age, you have the need to socialize with your peers more than ever in your life. Peers can offer more new and interesting experiences than your family. Peers are necessary for another, more important reason, and that is investing in future contacts. Everyone spends the largest part of their life in the world of a group which is headed and formed by their peers. This is why it is important to meet them, understand them and build a relationship with them which requires certain emotional competencies.

The susceptibility to outside influences which are not always very pleasant in today's modern society, often make you sensitive and insecure. These are circumstances which

People, Pia, 15 years old

you sometimes cannot influence, but you can always chose how to act under them, if you develop good self-control. You are still not able to be completely independent and responsible for your actions, until your brain becomes "a bit older".

As a parent, I struggled between attempts to help my child and the danger of depriving him of a healthy growing-up. I made an effort to protect him from dangers and to induce appropriate reactions, which are always related to the maintaining and improvement of physical, but also emotional development. Sometimes it was not easy, but today on the wall in my study hangs "A Diploma for the best Dad".

Studies have shown a lot more success if you are "stimulated and guided", patiently and safely, giving you enough independence. You young people have the need to learn from your friends, but there comes a time when you realize that your parents can offer you experience and wisdom. I believe that this guide presents the best from both worlds. The knowledge and experience of my colleagues and associates, who in every-day activities come to face with children and young people, and with the creativity and energy of young people which participated in the "Mostly Sunny" project.

I would like to thank everyone who gathered around the project for the protection of children's and young people's mental health, recognizing the importance of working on emotional comprehension and competence.

Željko Kljucevic, MD psychiatrist

Head of the Office for mental health protection, prevention and out-patient treatment of addiction

Auto-portrait, Tina, 14 years old

"Whatever we feel, we have to know
that we can not escape from it.
We have to live with it no matter
how hard it is because this is a normal part of life..."
M.M.14 years old

Welcome to the world of feelings!

In your hand you are holding a guide which was produced as a result of a two-year project in which young people spoke in the name of young people about their feelings and expressed them in various ways. This guide does not contain lessons which you must study for a grade, but it contains interesting information, ideas and guidelines.

Nobody will ask you what you know, but some discoveries could be useful to you!

Your peers participated in various workshops through which they discovered the importance of maintaining and improving mental health, especially through the subject of feelings. They made a short movie, took photographs, drew comics, designed the school newspaper, prepared the school website, held a debate, made masks representing feelings, staged a performance, talked, wrote and much more! 555 primary school pupils, secondary school pupils and students directly participated in the Project, and 1274 more young people helped out. 204 adults from various institutions supported the project as well.

In Makarska they "swam" in the sea of feelings, in Stobreč they walked "in their own garden", in Kaštela they "sailed" through a mostly sunny sky, in Split they "stamped" prints full of emotions, "researched" the world of masks...! girls and boys equally participated in the project, because feelings do not belong only to one gender regardless of all the mutual differences.

Experiences and works acquired and produced in the project found their place in this Guide which is intended for you and those who want to understand you better. You can have a look and comment on our Facebook page "NEovisniĐIR".

Read the guide, watch the attached DVD. You will see that you are not the only person who sometimes feels gloomy and confused. We believe the guide will stimulate you to share your feelings with the "right" person. Then it will be possible to overcome and accept bad moments, understand that life is "MOSTLY SUNNY" after all, and that these bad moments are mostly just temporary.

The Authors

"Our feelings are different every day,
and so we are also different in a way."
M.K. 15 years old

"Our feelings change every day and it is
actually quite difficult to explain what we are going through
on that big carousel of emotions..."
D.S. 14 years old

Oh, those feelings!

You surely notice how sometimes everything is simple, everything fits well and you feel good. Sometimes everything can get mixed up! Different messages you get from the outside world can cause real chaos inside you. Sometimes you do not even know why you feel pleasant or unpleasant, or maybe empty, like in some emotionless state.

Do you understand your feelings? How do you deal with them? What do you think is the purpose of feelings, except to "complicate our lives", as some say. Should they be shared and shown? How many different feelings do you know? Are you one of those people who know only to say that they are feeling good, great or bad, terrible or similar? There are many questions...

Feelings are omnipresent and inevitable. They are part of the beauty and richness of our everyday lives. They have always been the inspiration for works of art, poetry, painting, music, movies and much more. They are so important that, as science states, our existence depends on them.

The sea of my feelings

Feelings hit
Like the crazy sea,
Waves carry me
Everything is sad.

The sea is quiet
It is deserted again
The waves have gone
I feel burdened.

Should I let go,
What should I do,
Should I let my feelings
carry me
Or forget them?

I.B. 14 years old

Love towards the sea, Perina, 13 year old

*"In life, all of us have felt something many times,
but did we ever ask ourselves what are feelings and
how do they affect us."*

M.M. 15 year old

You wondered:

? What are feelings?

Maybe they can best be described as a state of excitement which occurred as a reaction to some inner or outer stimulant. They are expressed through behavior, physical changes and subjective experiences, therefore, they affect attention, awareness, memory and opinions. The more we observe a situation with great awareness, the stronger we will feel!

Every feeling has its purpose, because it prepares us for adjustment. For example; the feeling of boredom has a task to motivate us to move away from the situation which is boring us. The unpleasant feeling of loneliness has the purpose of motivating a person to seek company.

Unpleasant feelings were very important for existence and survival, and in science it has been proved that unpleasant feelings are experienced two times stronger than pleasant ones. We are biologically determined to experience unpleasantness much stronger.

Fear is also an unpleasant feeling. Imagine what it would have been like for our ancestors if they did not feel fear when, for example, they came across a mammoth or saber-toothed tiger. Unpleasant feelings are usually difficult, gloomy, take up a lot of energy and we deal with them with much more difficulty, as opposed to pleasant feelings which are usually easy, give us energy and we deal with them much easier.

The most important thing is to remember that every feeling is very significant for the human being. There are no positive or negative feelings, only pleasant and unpleasant ones, each one is temporary and neither lasts for eternity!

*Happiness,
display and scenic designer, 2. b*

*Now in puberty we often feel abandoned, unprotected,
lonely as if we need a firm hug
from our best friend and as if that hug would solve everything
and give us strength to move on and feel happy again.*

I.V. 15 g. years old

you said:

! I am in puberty!

Adults often fear (whether they admit it or not) there children going into puberty, and as they say "adolescents" can be a real hassle, but science has shown that you are actually the most adaptable beings in the environment! You are ready to examine boundaries, provocations, challenges and risks. Sometimes it is not easy to recognize the limits so the testing of boundaries can turn into something dangerous, the thing adults call risk behavior.

A lot has been written about puberty and juvenility so everyone thinks that they know everything, but it is important to say that each one of you passes and experiences this period in their own way. That is why we have an endless number of variations of puberty and juvenility.

In this period of life you have a lot of work to do: accepting physical and psychological changes, discovering and developing your sexual identity, your personality, distancing yourself more from your parents and reducing your dependance on peers. These are complex tasks which cause difficulties, crises, teetering, wondering and temporary imbalance.

Most people manage to cope with the mysteries of growing-up and the quest for the role of a grown man or woman has a happy end. A greater interest for sexuality rises which at first you are ashamed of until you realize that all your friends share the same interest. It takes time to adapt to all these changes. It is completely normal to be confused and sometimes agitated because of this, as you feel every time you experience something for the first time. In this transitional period, all young people sometimes wish to enter the adult world, or other times, to at least for a short while, be a child again.

Security/Protection, Vana, 17 years old

You asked:

• *Where are feelings located in the body?*

Before, it was thought that all feelings are located in the heart, so even today the "heart" is still a symbol for feelings. It seems that feelings do not have their own special place in our body. They "travel" through the whole body, we can feel them everywhere because changes occur to certain internal organs, changing their function. Heavy breathing occurs as well as thumping of the heart, the digestive system and glands work slower or faster, but muscle tension may also occur.

Along this path adolescents may get stuck, stay on it a bit longer, and because of feelings we can have different physical problems, difficulties and even illnesses.

Oh, we almost forgot about the human brain! What would we do without the brain! Brain parts are involved in experiencing feelings, recognizing them and controlling them.

You say: "I s**t my pants, I threw-up or sweat from worry, I have a headache, my heart is beating, my legs are shaking"!

A person consists of the body, but also the soul.
Every body is moved by the soul.
Everyone holds their feelings and thoughts in the soul.
I.V. 15 years old

Pleasure,
display and scenic designer, 2. b

All of you have heard of expressions such as : "I have a knot in my throat", "Steam is coming out of my ears", "My palms are sweaty", "I was scared stiff", "You're red as tomato", "I have butterflies in my stomach", "Your eyes are sparkling"...

Obvious indications of feelings can be noticed through facial expressions, physical tension, movement and a person's voice. This clearly shows us that external and internal physical changes are an inseparable part of feelings. We feel the connection between the body and mind, and we often hear the expression: "A sound mind in a sound body". Science is still trying to explain the mystery of the relationship between the mind and the body.

Research in very different cultures has shown that there are universal facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, fear and hate. We can recognize happiness on a face because of raised eyebrows and eyes, and the corners of lips. Sadness on a face can be determined by lowered eye-corners, eyebrows and lips. Anger can be seen in squinted, and fear in widened eyes and mouths.

Everything can be seen on the face and the body feels everything! Our body always "sends" us important messages which we should recognize and listen to.

Emotions are screaming inside of us
Happiness, fury, love, anger...
We experience all this within one hour.
We are now at the age when we take to heart
things that someone says to us.
We care about our appearance and we
spend a lot of time thinking about ourselves.
We talk to our friends about our looks,
crushes, school and parents.
It is difficult for all of us to talk about
our feelings with our parents, but that is why
I have friends which have the same problems as me.
T.G. 14 years old

"When I think about my feelings,
I think that they are mostly good,
but it often happens that I have bad feelings."

I.K. 14 years old

You wondered:

Can feelings be good and bad?

Once again, there are no good and bad feelings, only pleasant and unpleasant ones, and both are important and necessary. It is important to recognize unpleasant feelings, to understand what they are telling us and to learn how to deal with them. Feelings can be weak, mild and strong. Some feelings last only for a moment, some last much longer.

Here are some pleasant feelings: happiness, joy, love, hope, trust, a feeling of protection, pride, enthusiasm, patriotism, pleasure, curiosity, being in love, thrill, excitement, and a few unpleasant feelings: fear, anger, fury, shame, sadness, anxiety, jealousy, envy, worry, hate, disappointment.

We deal with pleasant feelings more simply, we share them with others and show them in a much easier way. Everyone knows when we are happy and satisfied. It is not easy to share the feelings of sadness, fear and shame with someone we are close to. Many people wish to hide unpleasant feelings. It is not easy to deal with feelings of fury and anger. These are strong feelings which give us energy and make us take action so it is difficult to withstand them.

"I understand that I am no longer mommy's princess
with a stuffed toy bear.
I am unconsciously noticing that I am going further
down the road called life."

15 years old

Most people tend to act in way so that they experience pleasant, and avoid unpleasant situations in which they could experience unpleasant feelings. All feelings which appear and form during a person's life, are pleasant or unpleasant, they are normal and natural human feelings which you should not be afraid of. As we grow, the number of feelings we can experience also grows. A final list of feelings does not exist.

Together we are better, Tea, 15 years old

*"Sometimes people hide their feelings,
sometimes they pretend that everything is alright,
they smile on the outside, but are crying on the
inside."*

A.DZ. 13 years old

Hiding, suppressing or isolating feelings from others and from yourself can cause a sense of emptiness. Many people try to fill this emptiness with cigarettes, food, alcohol, shopping, sex, computer games or gambling. The quest for excitement fulfills the feelings of closeness and warmth, it takes us through a vicious cycle of risky behavior which can grow into a disorder!

*"When someone makes me angry,
I keep my feelings inside me.
If they constantly make me angry despite my warnings,
I can not refrain myself. Everything simply explodes.
I don't feel good, I attack people, insult them and shout.
In those situations people say have a short fuse.
That is not true because my feelings just
get out of control.
After that I become sad.
I feel like nobody wants to talk to me
and that everyone is angry with me.!*

M.J. 15 years old

Mysteriousness, Tea, 15 years old

*"When I want to feel better photography helps me,
because I express my feelings through photography,
because a photograph is worth a thousand words."*

Z.K. 17 years old

You asked for an answer

Can I feel better?

Yes I can, yes I can. Many young people tell us that physical pain passes quicker than painful feelings, which are not easy to get rid off.

Let us remember the message that painful feelings send us. We should try and understand the message, and then the pain will pass faster.

Very strong feelings can inhibit us from doing certain activities. For example, a lot of anxiety before a test can inhibit you from answering, even if you have studied everything. How many times have you said that you do not care about some things, and that this was not true. In this way you hid your true painful feelings from yourself and others.

Auto-portrait, Tea, 15 years old.

*"Right now I am not feeling very well
because my girlfriend broke up with me a week ago
and I know the sadness will pass,
but I never know when."*

M.C.14 years old

Shower, Petra 14 years old.

It is alright to eat chocolate, cry, sometimes lock yourself in your room, in your own world, when sadness and anger overwhelm you. The good news is that painful feelings can be converted into creativity; movies, painting, photography, writing a diary or blog, poetry, music, dance, acting, sport... There are so many ways in which you can express, share and endure painful feelings!

We are sure you can find, recognize (maybe you already have) something you are good at and that you enjoy, something that helps you. Maybe your environment has recognized this before you, so talk to people you are close with!

"...It is the sea of our feelings, and I think I should learn how to show them in a certain degree and with a purpose, without exaggerating."

M.V. 15 years old

The Sun, Petra, 14 years old

You asked for an answer:

Can feelings be "cured"?

If feelings of sadness, fear, worry, anger or similar, unpleasant feelings, last longer and stay hidden, "buried" inside you, they can become deeper and become a burden.

If we completely give in to sad thoughts which often go round in circles (one sad thought leads to another one) we cannot get out of this viscous cycle, no matter how hard we try, then this is the case of emotional difficulties or simply: a person is suffering.

If this state of suffering lasts longer, we call it depression. It is followed by other feelings such as being tired, passive, hopeless, having a "dark" view of the world, being angry, losing interest in socializing and studying...

Under the influence of anger and rage, common sense is put aside and so these feelings are often "to blame" for aggressive behavior and the damage people cause themselves and others. That is why a lot of research has been done to find the "cure" for easing anger. It has been shown that it is important to know how to calm the anger while we still have control over ourselves – cool down!

Is there a doctor for feelings?

Children and young people, as well as adults, sometimes need professional help in dealing with strong, difficult and long-term feelings. Through conversation, a psychologist, psychiatrist and doctor can help you get a better understanding of those kind of feelings, and teach you new ways of confronting with different types of problems.

Sadness or fear can be less intense when you can talk about them. If you can talk about your feelings, you will find out that you are not alone, together with someone you will find a solution or a way to get out of a problem, even if there is no quick remedy for it, and through conversation you can get the comfort and support that we all need sometimes. "Silence is golden", is a wisdom that is not always applicable. When we cannot transfer our feelings into words, say them out loud, they still will not go away. Instead, maybe suddenly our head or stomach will start to ache more often. They can even be expressed in an unexpected reaction, a type of behavior even you won't recognize.

Remember, the chance to "pour out" everything that is bothering you brings a big sense of relief!

Contempt, Marija, 17 years old

"For me the best feeling is when you hug your love,
the person you love the most,
you feel some kind of warmth
and you wish that moment could last forever"

T.R.14 year old

How are

Feelings and behavior related?

Why is it said that love is blind, and why is being in love compared to madness? They call love "the sweet secret", an amazing feeling. How do you act when you are in love? Do you act like you do not care or do you do miracles? You change the direction you are walking in so you can meet, you lose your appetite, you do not hear others, you write messages, look for ways to get closer, you check if he/she "liked" your pictures on your "profile", wait for messages on your "wall", draw graffiti, all because of love! What a strong connection between feelings and behavior!

It is important to understand how feelings are related to behavior. They have an influence on our mood and behavior in a way that they stimulate us to act or they inhibit us. How do our feelings "behave"? We can shout if we are angry or write a message to a person we miss. We can run away if a situation seems dangerous. Danger can be external, like confronting a bear... Our brain developed some time during the Stone age, it is adapted to life in caves and surviving in nature. Today this same brain has to know how to survive in virtual "reality" of the 21st century and how to exist on "Facebook".

Light, Josko, 23 years old

"When I do not feel well, I shout at other people.
I know I'm not supposed to,
but I do not know how to express my feelings in
any other way."

M.G. 17 years old

"Feelings build our future,
a part of our lives.
They were born with us and they
live with us,
in our soul and heart.
They make us valuable, and partly
because of them
we are people."

M.M. 15 years old

"Various media help me to express myself,
song lyrics often motivate me and
encourage me to think.
Along with drawing, photography, singing, playing,
there is a movie – only inside my head,
like a daydream or a comic."

S.C. 16 years old

Footprints in the sand, Melani, 15 years old

Sometimes inner sources of fear, anxiety, suffering, helplessness and loneliness make us behave irrationally which can endanger us and others (running away from home, intentional self-injury, suicide, theft, aggressive behavior towards our environment...). Then it is important to find a better way for ourselves, which will not harm others. You said that thinking, talking to others, light, nature and the company of your friends; the ones you care about, help you.

Of course, this does not mean that we always have to show every feeling to everyone immediately. When the external world starts turning into a "reality show", a great challenge for young people is to know how to protect their private, internal world, their own peace. Sometimes you need to turn off your mobile phone!

"There is something in that big clear sea that
calms with only one glance at it, that calms me with just one touch.
There is something in that sound which
the sea makes, that calms me when there is no end to my problems.
Silence is sometimes worth a thousand words."

Z.B. 14 years old

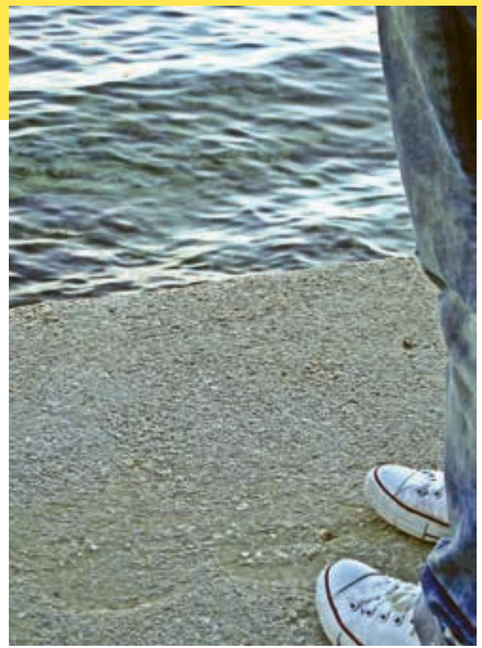
The bench that cries, Melani, 15 years old

The revelation, Matea, 17 years old

"The mind is like a parachute,
it only functions when it is open."

The relationship between feelings and behavior is reciprocal. You have shown that when you succeed at something or help others, when you do something good, when someone is happy because of you, your feelings of pride and pleasure grow. If you always just lay in bed, sit on the couch, sit at the computer and similar, your bad mood or sadness can increase drastically. So think about how you behave and does this behavior make you feel better or worse!

The story about feelings last your whole life, as long as a person's consciousness about himself. It is always useful to learn this matter, this is how we educate ourselves emotionally, we become emotionally competent. Discovering yourself – this is an adventure! What to you gain from this? You adjust better to your nature and the external world, and this arouses a feeling of satisfaction...



Indecision, Matea, 17 years old

Bubbles, Petra, 14 years old

In a whirlpool of feelings

Sometimes I wish I didn't feel anything. Everything seemed so simple before. Nice things and events would make me happy, sad things would make me sad, and injustice would make me angry. When I was happy, I would laugh; when I was sad, I would cry, and when I was angry I would shout and throw my toys.

Now, everything is quite complicated and mixed up. I wake up happy or sad without a reason for feeling this way. Also, sometimes my own reactions surprise me. When I see or experience great happiness, I sometimes cry. When something makes me sad, I become angry, and sometimes the whole world seems funny. I present myself to others as cheerful and always in a good mood, and I leave the expressing of my true feelings for moments of solitude in my room.

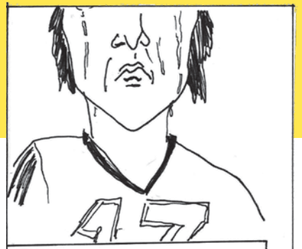
However, it is difficult to constantly suppress feelings so sometimes I react unpredictably and confuse my parents with the intensity of my reactions to simple situations. After that I feel sorry, but it seems to me that nobody can always control their emotions.

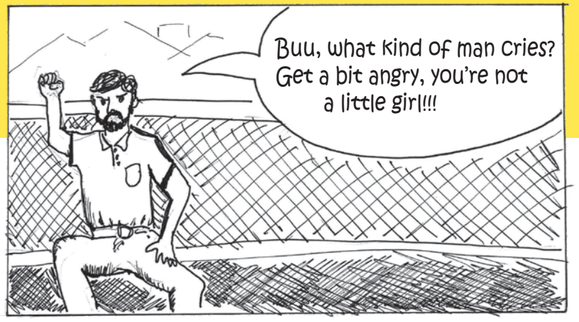
I hope I will reconcile with my emotions soon and learn how to use them to help me in life, not make it harder.

M. M. 14 years old

VICTORY

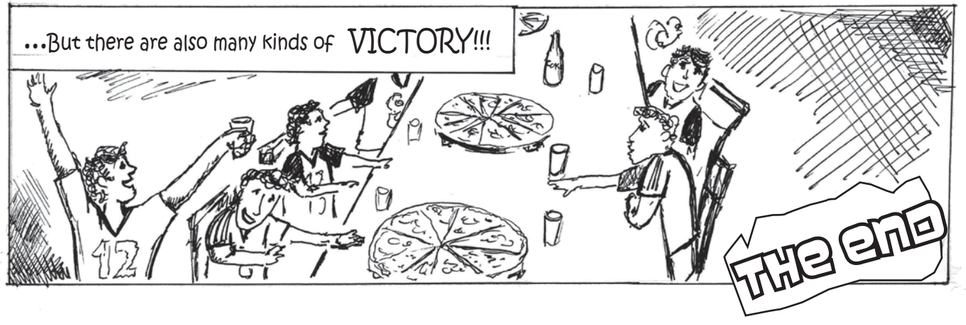
Illustrated and written by: Nikola Bilic


Oh, we lost again.


Buu, what kind of man cries?
Get a bit angry, you're not
a little girl!!!

Ah, these parents, it's as if they don't
know that not all children are the same..
I've been training them for years and I
know all their problems.
Nobody understands their faces
underneath those masks...

There is always a winner...


...But there are also many kinds of VICTORY!!!
THE END

The comic was made by a pupil from grade 8.b from Primary school Stobreč. As an additional stimulation we offer you a small quiz to test how well you understand the language of feelings. Let it be fun as well as an opportunity, maybe you will learn something more about the world of feelings.

Choose one of the provided answers.

Many times in life we find ourselves in situations which are a big challenge, which awake strong feelings, especially the unpleasant ones. The comic illustrates one of those situations – an exciting end of a football match between two student teams. It seems that in that moment everyone feels and reacts differently – pupils, coaches and parents, supporters.

1. 1. **Do you know which feelings are being expressed by players shouting "Idiot!" or are hitting the goal post with all their strength?**

a. Boredom

b. Anger

c. Pride

The correct answer

b. Anger is an unpleasant feeling which we experience at times when things are not happening as we want them to. Expressing anger is a signal for others to change their behavior, so this is how we try to design the world according to our wishes.

2. **Do you know in which way the team player at the goal is expressing his anger when he hits the goal post?**

a. The team player is expressing his anger through his behavior – he hits the goal post with all his strength.

b. The team player is expressing his anger through a physical reaction.

c. The team player is expressing his anger through speaking.

The correct answer

a. Feelings can be expressed through our behavior – by crying, retreat, leaving the field, other activities...

Feelings also have a physical manifestation, so, for example, when we are angry our heart beat speeds up, our face turns red. When we are scared we turn pale, our body shivers or our palms sweat...

3. **When the team player shouts "Idiot" at the one who instead of scoring a goal hits the goal post, how is he expressing his feelings?**

a. This pupil decided to express his anger through his behavior.

b. This pupil decided to show his anger by retreating.

c. This student decided to express his anger by using words, by shouting.

The correct answer

c. One side of our feelings consists of our thoughts, language and speech. The good thing is that we have a chance to clearly and calmly explain to another person how we feel so they can understand us better. Words can easily be misused – they can be used to hurt someone. Unfortunately, with this choice of words the player hurt his team mate!

4. **One of the pupils cried at the end of the game. One of the parents from the bleachers reacted to this with disapproval. What do you think about this?**

a. It is alright to cry when we are hurt, sad and disappointed.

b. Boys and men do not cry.

The correct answer

a. We are different when it comes to emotional reactions – in the range of feelings we experience, the frequency of how much we experience some of them, the way we express them! Crying is only one of the normal ways in which we express our feelings of pain and hurt!

5. **"He has to calm down. It's not the World championship", says one of the parents in the comic when he sees the reaction of a pupil at the match. Do you think this parent's reaction is appropriate?**

a. Yes. This parent just wants the pupils to calm down and concentrate on the match.

b. No. This parent is showing that he has no understanding and is minimizing the importance this deciding match represents for the pupils.

c. Yes and no. This father would like to help the pupils, but he did not choose a good way. Everyone is entitled to their own feelings, no matter what they are. For these pupils this was precisely the World championship.

The correct answer

c. It is not only important what our parents say to us, but also the way they say it. Regulation (self-control) of feelings is something we learn from our birth. Parents are those who represent the most important role-model to their children through their own behavior. In addition to this, with their actions they teach and guide the behavior of their children.

We differ in understanding our own and other people's feelings, as well as in the ability to regulate (control) emotional reactions in difficult and unpleasant situations.

6. **At the end, the pupils from both teams found victory in joyful socializing together. What do you think the parents could have said to the team that lost?**

a. Don't be sad, it doesn't matter that you lost, it's just a game. Better luck next time!

b. I'm really sorry your team lost, you did so well during the whole match. You played good and gave your best. You stuck together the whole time as a team. I'm proud of you. If you continue like this, maybe next time you will win!

c. You have disappointed me! The way you played, you're lucky it didn't end even worse...

! *The correct answer*

b. Even though that with the first comment the parent wants to comfort his child, it is important to recognize that in this way you are making it harder for your child to accept and adequately deal with unpleasant, but completely normal feelings such as sadness. Mentioning luck can also imply that the child's effort is not important.

In the second correct comment, the parent is supporting his child in his efforts, showing him love and representing a good example on how to control and express in words his feelings. Children of these kind of parents learn how to recognize and appropriately express their own and other people's feelings.

The third comment will only contribute to the child's disappointment and create a feeling of guilt. There is no stimulation or setting an example on how to achieve better results, nor a way to deal with failure.

?! *What did young people say about the project...*

"This was an interesting experience because
I saw how other people
experience their environment.
It's really special.
Working on photography can show
many things which cannot be said with words."

P.V. 15 years old

"This was the rare chance I got where I could show emotions at school, and where I was encouraged to do so by adults."

M.T. 15. years old

Loneliness, Margita, 17 years old

?! ...What do the experts say...?

...Finding yourself behind the barriers built for defense against criticism of the world that surrounds us, recognizing yourself and accepting yourself just the way you are. Learning how to be proud of yourself and your diversity, learning to love yourself and being confident in your thoughts and feelings are the tasks of this project. Recognizing the feelings inside you which you before tried to bury so others would accept you, controlling them, opening yourself, expressing those feelings in a socially acceptable way.

Being in love, display and scenic designer, 2. b

"The most wasted day of all is that during which we have not laughed. "

N. I. R. Chamfort

A team of experts is using their competence, knowledge, experience in working with children to help young people in a modern and creative way to recognize, express and control feelings in different ways. The team uses different media with which the children can express their creativity, from writing, painting, to movement, acting, short movies, or any other way which would be acceptable to those participating in the project. Stimulating creativity and diversity is an idea that guided the project... However, expressing yourself and showing emotions is not the only goal of this project, but also to discover and recognize other people's emotions by looking at their work. Thinking about yourself, but also about others. Discovering what motivates them, oppresses or devastates them.

It seems that we are on the way to restore communication between people. First, in this way, and later who knows, maybe peers will once again sit together on the wall in front of school and talk openly and in confidence about their problems and reveal things to each other from the bottom of their hearts, but only intended for specific people to hear... who knows...

Agnes Jelacic, *Bachelor of pedagogy, expert associate – adviser, manager of The County expert council of pedagogues of primary schools in Split-dalmatia county*

Nada Salinovic, *Bachelor of psychology, expert associate – adviser, manager of The County expert council of psychologists of primary schools in Split-dalmatia county*

?! ...What do the experts say...?

"No matter what,
our life can be mostly sunny."

M.B. 14 years old

Due to its fast pace, modern society leaves little time for confronting emotions and for close emotional relationships with others. Often, we can notice the tendency to avoid confronting emotions, quick and easy overcoming of important and difficult feelings, which can cause psychological disorders and pathological behavior, a tendency towards aggressive behavior and compulsive disorders. The base for this kind of behavior develops from early childhood and continues during the adolescent period.

The project "Mostly sunny" represents an interesting idea on how to sensitize adolescents to recognizing and being aware of feelings, how to awake empathy and improve communication in different social relations. Through various workshops, experts of different profiles were included in the project (teachers, pedagogues, defectologists, psychologists and psychiatrists) which from different professional aspects improve the revelation of emotions. Also, painting and poetic forms of art expression allow an easier expression and recognition of emotions. We must mention the movie which was produced by participants of workshops which talks about sadness, loneliness and hope.

This project represents an important attempt to help improve emotional intelligence, improve the picture about ones self and relationships with others, which help in the prevention of different forms of behavior disorders in the adolescent and adult period.

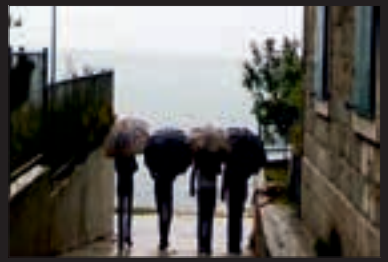
*PhD **Dolores Britvic** M.D. Professor of psychiatry at Split University School of Medicine*

"Maestral"

The Home for Children "Maestral" Split
www. ddmaestral.hr

from project
mostly sunny

The Teaching Institute for Public Health
of Split-dalmatia county
Office for Mental Health Protection, Prevention,
and out-patient treating of addiction
www.**nzjz-split.hr**



So continue walking,
because life is
mostly sunny!