Session 4: Managing feelings

Unit DM: Part A – Developing myself Session 4	Managing feelings

Links to assessment criteria at Levels 1 and 2	DM 1.1
Oracy opportunities	Whole-group exploratory talk
Session keywords	Delayed gratification

By the end of this session we will be able to...
• develop some strategies for managing feelings

Activities	
1	The Marshmallow (or vegetarian/halal alternative) – recreate the experiment. Give each learner a treat. Tell them they can have a second treat but only if they don't touch the first treat for two minutes. Start a timer. Reward all learners who didn't touch their first treat. Discuss how they felt during the two minutes. Explain that being able to delay gratification, wait for something good, is a key part of being successful. Waiting involves managing a whole range of feelings.
2	How do we manage our feelings? Recreate another psychology experiment to explore how changing our behaviour can change our feelings. Ask half the group to hold a pen in their teeth and the other half to hold a pen in their lips. Then show them a funny cartoon – just a minute or two. Then ask each learner to rate how funny the cartoon was by holding up 0-10 fingers. You should find that the learners with the pen in their teeth found it funnier because their face muscles were in a similar position to smiling. The ones with the pen in their lips had their faces as if they were frowning. Just changing how we hold our faces, changes how we feel. Another activity with the same point: In pairs, students arm wrestle. The loser then spends one minute in a superman pose. Then do a rematch. It should be harder for the stronger learner to win this time. What else can we do to change how we feel?
3	End the session with a bit of group relaxation. Here are some suggestions: • Try some yoga. • Play some calm music, close your eyes and focus on breathing • Guided meditation, for example: youtube.com/watch?v=6PxLbENKDrg&t=14s • Put on some feel-good music and dance Discuss how this activity made you feel. You could refer to your alphabet from last session and/or add some more words to it.

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Resources
• Marshmallows (or alternative treats) • A funny cartoon • Some relaxation music, dance music or a guided meditation – select something that will suit your group or that will expose them to something new

Notes
1 There are lots of hilarious videos on Youtube of children trying not to eat marshmallows. There's also a short TED talk where Joachim de Posada explains the finding that the ability to delay gratification is a key ingredient of success in all walks of life. You could watch some such videos (they are seriously compelling), pause, and practise naming the emotions that are written on the children's faces. **2** I was taught the pen and arm wrestle activities when I was training to walk across hot charcoal as a charity fundraiser. Apparently the pen thing comes from psychologist Fritz Stack in 1988. theguardian.com/science/2018/oct/17/smiling-does-make-you-happier-under-carefully-controlled-conditions