



The Emotions Wheel - Teacher Guide

To learn more about these activities, please read the [Climate Mental Health Activities Introduction](#)

Please Note: This activity set provides lessons focused on mental health support for teachers and students learning about climate change and natural hazards. Because natural hazards are changing due to changing temperatures and environmental conditions, emotions related to natural hazards may overlap and be similar to those associated with climate change. For background on climate science and teaching about climate change, please refer to the CLEAN teaching climate [pages](#). For more information on this resource set, please see the CLEAN climate mental health [pages](#).

Activity Summary

Emotions wheels have been a visual tool used by psychologists for decades to help people better understand and interpret their own feelings. This Climate Emotions Wheel is based on the research of Panu Pihkala at the University of Helsinki and particularly his 2022 paper *Toward A Taxonomy of Climate Emotions*. It is not intended to be comprehensive or definitive, and it is not to scale; positive emotions are not typically identified in most research as often as other emotions on this scale. Our hope is that looking at this wheel will help you and your students identify emotions about natural hazards and the climate and learn to work with them. This activity is for people of all ages and can be done with family members, in a classroom, with friends, work colleagues, etc.

| Instructional Overview | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Grade Level | Elementary - College |
| Instructional Time | 5-10 min |
| Learning Objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make the connection between diverse emotions and climate topics. To create a safe and supportive space for emotions that arise when processing the impacts of climate change. To provide language and validation for the range of emotions that can arise when discussing climate change. |
| Social-Emotional Learning Focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying one's emotions (CASEL Core Competencies: Self-Awareness) |
| Strategies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Self-care Listen and validate feelings Use social, emotional, and positive coping skills |
| Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing paper and utensils |
| Sources and Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toward a Taxonomy of Climate Emotions Climate Mental Health Network: To learn more check out the Self Care & Taking Action Worksheets, Creative Arts Therapy Guide, Resources Page and Parents Guides. Strategies for managing climate change discourse for classrooms in which teaching climate change may be controversial |



Instructional Process

1. Show the climate emotions wheel to students. Tell students that any emotions that they feel about the climate crisis and/or natural hazards are normal and valid. Students will explore and connect with these emotions using the Climate Emotions Wheel Activity. Give students 1-2min to sit quietly and think about what emotions they have when processing climate change.
2. Hand out the blank Climate Emotions Wheel and tell students to write and draw whatever representation of the climate emotions they most often feel in each segment. Please refer to the complete Climate Emotions Wheel for possible emotions to include.
3. When they are done, have them share with someone about what they created, and why, and discuss ways to address their emotions & practice self-care.



Climate Emotions Wheel © 2024



Notes: Each level of the wheel, moving from the center outward, adds a layer of complexity. For younger students, consider only using the center ring. Include more rings (layers of complexity) depending on students' ages and abilities. Consider printing the wheel as a handout for students to refer to in any applicable classroom activity.

Closure

Once all pairs have had a chance to share, invite each group to highlight any common emotions and/or major differences.



Climate Emotions Wheel



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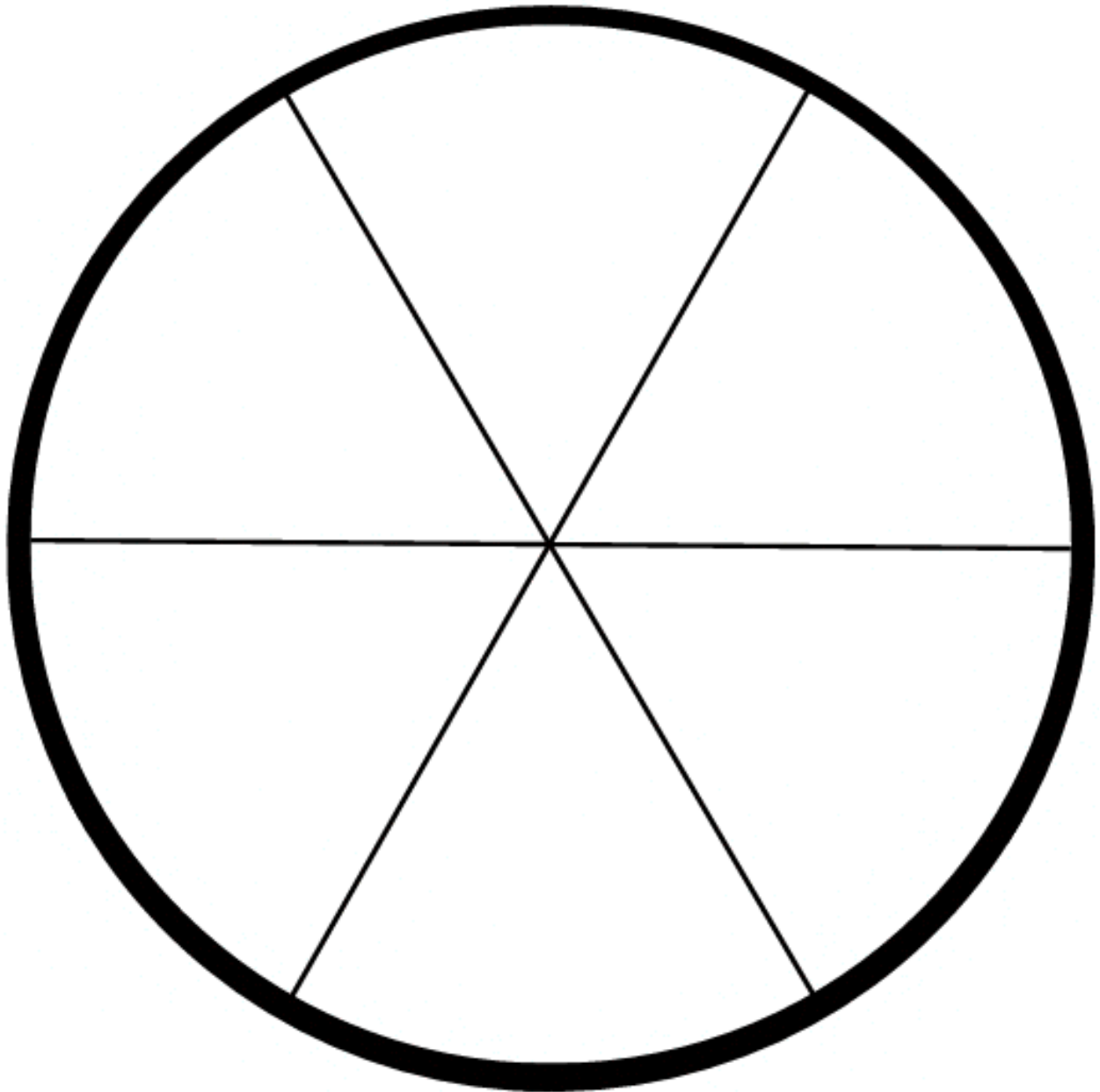
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Framing Environmental Issues and becoming a climate leader for mental empowerment

Climate Emotions Wheel Activity Sheet



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