

SUNNY OR CLOUDY?

Naming happy situations and difficult situations

Target competency	Manage one's emotions and stress effectively
Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise critical judgment • Construct their identity
General objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify happy situations • Identify difficult situations



INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS AND THE PROGRAM

If this is the first year your students are participating in the program, introduce the characters and the program using the materials provided for this purpose on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students/Basic workshops/Introduction to the program and the characters.

THE ADVENTURES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

At this year's OFF-TRAIL camp, the counsellors tell the group they'll be doing a rabaska¹ canoe activity on the river! Leo is in a very good mood, because he had a great weekend at the beach. Charlie is happy to be back at camp because she had a very bad weekend.

Before the activity begins, the counsellors explain all the important safety rules to be followed on the water. "The river is rough today, so we'll have to be careful!" Since the students don't all know each other yet, they are asked to share something about their weekend, so they can get to know each other better.

Leo offers to go first. He talks about his wonderful weekend at the beach with his parents, his younger brother and his favourite cousin. He's happy to tell the others about the trip, which his parents planned for his birthday. The other members of the canoe crew tell him excitedly how lucky he was! One boy asks him if there were waves, and Leo is proud to tell him that there were big waves and it was his first time swimming in the ocean.

Then it's Charlie's turn. But she can't think of anything good to say about her weekend. Her dog got hit by a car and died. She decides to tell this story to the canoe crew. She explains that she's sad and has been crying a lot. She's happy to be back with her group for the rabaska activity, which will take her mind off things. The other crew members comfort her, and suddenly she feels a little better.

DID YOU KNOW?

Students can sometimes find it difficult to communicate what they are experiencing, especially in negative situations. It can also be difficult for them to associate their emotions with the situation that gave rise to them.

Encouraging students to talk about pleasant and unpleasant situations is important for them. This is how they'll learn to differentiate between them, and understand that it's easier to talk about pleasant situations than those which stir up unpleasant emotions.

Talking about situations enables students to put their experiences into words and identify the emotions they arouse and the impact they have on them. They can realize that the emotions they experience are legitimate, and that it's perfectly normal to experience positive and negative situations, sometimes even on the same day.

When a student has difficulty communicating what he or she is experiencing, remember that it can be helpful to ask open-ended questions (not requiring yes/no answers) and to situate the student in time (e.g., What did you play during recess this morning?). To help students confide in you, you can take some quality time to play with them or do a special activity.

(Naître et grandir, 2016b)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before starting the workshop, print out the *Suns and Clouds* handout (below) and cut out enough suns to give to half the students and enough clouds to give to the other half. Place them all face down in a box.
2. Explain that, like Leo and Charlie, you're going to ask them to share a moment they experienced with their classmates, as a way of getting to know each other better.
3. Give an example of a happy moment (sunny moment) and a more difficult moment (cloudy moment) in your day. Students will see that there are happy moments and more difficult moments every day, and that they don't necessarily have to be big situations. You can give other examples of happy moments (e.g., doing an activity you really enjoy, receiving a compliment from a friend, spending time with an adult you love, etc.) and more difficult moments (e.g., arguing with a friend, getting hurt, not being able to take part in an activity you love, missing a family member, etc.).
4. Divide the class into groups of four. Have each student draw a sun or a cloud, making sure that in each team, two students have a sun and two students have a cloud. Students with sunny faces will share a happy moment they experienced, and students with cloudy faces will share a more difficult moment. Students take turns telling their story, and the other students in the sub-group are invited to react to the story. When students have finished discussing, you can ask them to swap their sun for a cloud or their cloud for a sun. Once more, students with a sun will share a happy moment, and those with a cloud a more difficult one. *Caution: For some students, cloudy moments may trigger conversations about sensitive events. It's a good idea to listen with compassion to what they have to say, and refer them to the appropriate resource people in your school if necessary. It may be preferable for two adults to lead this part of the workshop so as to adequately support the students.*
5. Give feedback to the class, using the following questions as a guide:
 - Did you feel comfortable telling your story?
 - Is it easier to tell others about a happy moment or a difficult moment?
 - How did you feel when your classmate told you a happy story? And a difficult story?
 - Why is it important to talk about good times and bad times?
6. Complement the answers with the information given in the *Did you know?* section.



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CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Before the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, share the happy and difficult moments of your week with a friend or family member.



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ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To encourage the reinvestment of what has been learned, you can take five minutes each day or week to allow students who wish to do so to recount a pleasant (sunny moment) or unpleasant (cloudy moment) situation they have experienced. You can build this time into the routine so that it becomes predictable for them (for example, during the morning chat). This activity can also be done with a drawing or written in a logbook.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Gravel, É. (2013). *How Do You Doodle?: Drawing My Feelings and Emotions*. American Psychological Association.



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HANDOUT TO PRINT
Suns and clouds

