



ACTIVITY: 'GHOST'

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Large groups/whole of class
SPACE: Room for whole class to move around
RESOURCES: Wall clock with a second hand

The aim is for students to identify and monitor their reactions (thoughts, feelings, bodily symptoms and conscious actions) to a somewhat tense situation where their Sense of Control might be reduced.

The result should be engaging discussion about the importance of emotion regulation to a strong Sense of Control.

1. Select two or three 'ghosts' from the class.
2. The rest of the students scatter about the room and choose a spot to stand in. Once they're settled, have these non-ghosts close their eyes firmly shut.
3. Ghosts then wander around the room as silently as possible. Their aim is to eliminate non-ghosts by silently approaching and standing immediately behind them, remaining undetected for 10 seconds (you, the teacher, have to be the adjudicator!).
4. If ghosts succeed in standing undetected, they can gently tap the non-ghost on the shoulder. That person then must silently leave the game and sit down.
5. If a non-ghost suspects a ghost is behind them, he/she can ask, 'Is there a ghost behind me?'. If they are correct, the ghost must whisper 'Yes' softly in their ear, and the non-ghost is then recruited to become a ghost, too. However, if someone asking whether a ghost is behind him/her is wrong (i.e. there is no ghost behind them) they must silently retire from the game and sit down.
6. Continue as long as you see fit, ideally until all non-ghosts are eliminated.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What thoughts, feelings and physical symptoms did you (ghosts and non-ghosts) experience during the exercise (e.g. racing heart, excitement, anxiety, giggling)?
- Did these reactions seem voluntary or involuntary? Why do you think that was?
- What strategies did successful players (i.e. ghosts that eliminated many non-ghosts, and non-ghosts who lasted longest) employ? Did these involve using thinking skills and self-talk to manage impulsive emotional reactions? If so, what were they?
- Brainstorm and list some potentially stress-inducing, real-life situations – both positive and challenging – and likely impulsive reactions to them. Then list whether those reactions are helpful/constructive or not. If not, what alternative responses might serve better? What **thoughts** might lend to more positive outcomes?
- Discuss how we often need to regulate our emotions and take time to think clearly about situations before we react.
- Consider re-doing the activity with this new knowledge – and new thinking strategies – in hand.