



# REBUILDING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

## Push Catch

**HELPS WITH:** Rebuilding Emotional Wellbeing  
**Total implementation time, with discussion:** 20 minutes

Push Catch is a high-energy warm-up activity that allows students to practice recognizing how they and others are feeling. Research and our experience show that rebuilding from traumatic experiences requires that we strengthen our skills to identify and manage our emotions, especially in situations where we feel anxious. This activity “puts the pressure on” and solicits a range of responses, giving many opportunities for emotional awareness, as well as management of some more challenging emotions.

**Materials Needed:** Soft ball to toss, such as a beach ball

### How to Play:

- Gather everyone in a circle.
- Explain that this activity will provide an opportunity for students to practice identifying emotions, as well as managing their own feelings when they may be on edge. Ask students to be prepared to share at the end of the activity what it feels like to be in the spotlight and then ask how it feels to make a mistake while in the spotlight.
- Transition to explaining and demonstrating the activity. Explain that you’ll instruct someone to either “Push” or “Catch” immediately before you toss them the ball.
- The goal is for the student to quickly perform the opposite of what is instructed. If you say “Push,” they should catch the ball. If you say “Catch,” they should just bop the ball back towards you in a pushing motion.
- If a student makes a mistake, they are out. Make it obvious they are out but still be in a place where they can observe their peers, such as sitting down if everyone playing is standing.
  - Students can take themselves out of the game at any point during the activity if they no longer wish to play. This is key to give a sense of choice and control, and a way to help them manage their own emotions if the pressure is too intense.
- The last person standing is declared the winner!



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### Questions for Discussion

- At the end of the game, or between rounds and/or during rounds, consider pausing to have students reflect on the emotions that are coming up for them. Some questions might include:
  - How did you feel during different points of the game?
  - By show of hands, who else felt that way?
  - How can those emotions show up in the way we act and react?
  - What are some strategies you could use to manage these emotions that would be appropriate in this current situation?