


**Middle/High School Youth Activity:
Developing a Community Commitment
Creating a Positive Program Climate through RULER**

Video 4 

Note: This youth activity connects directly to the learning from the staff activity, *Developing a Staff Community Commitment*, and is an iteration of that activity. For this reason, we suggest that your staff view the video titled [Creating a Positive Program Climate through RULER](#) and complete the accompanying staff activities prior to facilitating this activity with youth.

Activity Summary: In this activity, youth will:

- Work together to create a Community Commitment
- Identify how they want to feel in your program
- Brainstorm actionable behaviors to experience these feelings individually and collectively

Time: 1 hour - this can be completed over multiple days

Materials

- Index cards or sticky notes, poster board, markers, materials for the Community Commitment

Facilitator Directions

1. Introduce a Community Commitment by explaining:

"A Community Commitment is a promise that we make to ourselves and each other so we can feel the way we want to feel when we're together in (insert your program name here)."


2. Ask:

"Why do we make promises? How do we benefit from keeping our promises to each other?"
Call on a few youth to share.

3. Say:

*"Our Community Commitment is important because it is a promise we make about how we will work together to feel how we want to feel more often. We're going to start by thinking about how we want to **feel** when we're together."*

**Middle/High School Youth Activity:
Developing a Community Commitment
Creating a Positive Program Climate through RULER**

Video 4 

4. Display the following chart. Define the emotion word connected. Ask youth to brainstorm what feeling connected means to them - what it might look like, sound like and feel like. The goal is to get more specific, and get youth to start thinking about what a feeling word means to them in their day-to-day lives.

Connected

<p>Definition (looks like , sounds like, feels like)</p>
<p><i>Feeling close to someone or part of a community</i></p>


5. Ask: "How do you want to feel in this community?"

Give each youth three index cards or sticky notes and ask them to write one feeling word on each card or sticky. Collect them.

6. Sort the cards by grouping feeling words that are repeated. Pair feeling words that are similar and discuss which word better represents how everyone wants to feel (for example, *valued* and *respected* are similar, and the group can decide which one better represents how they'd like to feel). As a group, review the words and select the 3 to 5 most repeated words that represent how they want to feel. Ensure that this is a collaborative decision and that all individuals feel heard and represented.

7. Divide youth into groups, so that each group has one of the feeling words. Prompt each group to define the emotion word before brainstorming what the feeling word looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Essentially, youth are exploring the feeling word in context of the real world. Now ask youth to complete the chart (see page 3) using their word. When completed, allow each group to share out. Groups can add to each other's chart as they share.

**Middle/High School Youth Activity:
Developing a Community Commitment
Creating a Positive Program Climate through RULER**

Video 4 

(Youth Feeling Word)

<p>Definition (looks like , sounds like, feels like)</p>

8. Ask:

*"How do we help each other and ourselves experience these feelings? In other words, what will the group **do** each day to ensure that everyone experiences each feeling? The actions should be specific and observable."*

These might look like:

Appreciated: Acknowledging when someone contributes to a project and thanking them for their hard work.

Connected: Checking in on each other when we get together.

Present: Put our phones in our backpacks when we're working together.


9. Work together to create the Community Commitment. Include your 3 to 5 feeling words and the behaviors that will help youth experience these feelings more. This can be a large poster, or a digital display. Allow youth to be creative and do what works for them! Remember, it's the content - the feeling words and actions - that is most meaningful.

10. Debrief using the following questions:

- How can we keep our Community Commitment alive?
- How can we acknowledge our effort and others' efforts to live our Community Commitment?
- How did it feel to create our Community Commitment?

Note: Sustain your Community Commitment by integrating it throughout your program, and finding systemic ways to integrate and reference your commitments. See ideas below for how to keep your Community Commitment alive and integrate it into your program.

**Middle/High School Youth Activity:
Developing a Community Commitment
Creating a Positive Program Climate through RULER**

Video 4 

Ideas to Keep Your Community Commitment Alive

- **Daily Focus:** Identify one behavior to highlight. Ask youth to pay special attention to it and to acknowledge, thank, or celebrate others when they engage in the behavior through the day.
- **Community Commitment Reflection:** Review your commitments to the community. Ask youth to consider an area of challenge for themselves and how they can work toward developing the skills they need to live up to that area. Ask youth to also recognize an area of strength for themselves, and how they can continue to uphold the Community Commitment in this way. Consider suggesting that youth add new behaviors to the Community Commitment if you see a pattern of challenging areas for youth as a whole.
- **Feeling Word of the Week:** Begin your program meeting with a reflection on a single feeling word on your Community Commitments. For example, ask youth to get into pairs. Then, ask them to think about a recent time they have felt one of the words on the Community Commitment, including when the event took place, where they were, who was present, and what happened. Invite partners to share when they experience that feeling in your community.