Elementary Youth Activity: Meet the Mood Meter Developing the Skills of Emotional Intelligence using the Mood Meter

Video 5 ▶

Note: This youth activity connects directly to the learning from Video 5, *Developing the Skills of Emotional Intelligence Using the Mood Meter*. For this reason, we suggest that your staff view the video and complete the accompanying staff activities prior to facilitating this activity.
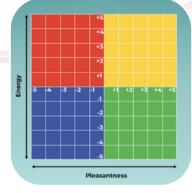
Activity Summary: In this activity, youth will:
- Use the Mood Meter to explore characteristics of emotions.
- Practice checking in using the Mood Meter.

Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Materials
- A Mood Meter, your program's Community Commitment (if you have one), pre-selected read aloud or TV/movie clip that shows characters experiencing emotions in at least one of each quadrant of the Mood Meter.

Facilitator Directions

Please use the Mood Meter (with or without gridlines) that feels most appropriate to the developmental level of the youth in your program.

1. Review your program's Community Commitment, focusing on the feeling words - the way everyone wants to feel when they are together in your program.
Say:
"Here are the feeling words that we have committed to while we are here together. Many more feeling words exist beyond the words we discussed for our Community Commitment. Today we are going to brainstorm a range of feeling words and categorize them. What are some other feeling words that aren't on our Community Commitment?"

*If your program hasn't developed a Community Commitment yet, skip to the next step.

2. Ask: *"What are some other feeling words that we know?"*
Brainstorm as a group, and record feeling words for use in Step 7.

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3. Display the Mood Meter:
Say:
"*Today we are going to learn about a tool, the Mood Meter, that will help us to understand our feelings. When we use the Mood Meter, it helps us be aware of all emotions, and how to understand and manage them.*"

If appropriate, share your own experiences using the Mood Meter and any new learning you've had since using the tool.

Note: Based on the developmental level and math learning objectives for different grades, we recommend that you use the Mood Meter without gridlines for youth in grades K-2 and the Mood Meter with gridlines for youth in grades 3-5.

4. Teach the two lines (axes) of the Mood Meter beginning with pleasantness, X line (axis). The **X or horizontal line (axis)** is used to show how unpleasant or pleasant we feel. It ranges from very unpleasant **(-5)** to somewhat unpleasant **(-3)** to neutral **(0)** to somewhat pleasant **(+3)** to very pleasant **(+5).** Next, provide real-life and relevant examples of the different plots of pleasantness. *Examples: A classmate might have felt <u>very pleasant </u>when his little sister was born and <u>somewhat unpleasant </u>when he received an unsatisfactory grade on an assignment.*

Note: **We recommend that you use the terms "pleasant" and "unpleasant" instead of "positive" and "negative."** This is because pleasant feelings are not always positive.

Example 1: You feel so excited about Winter Break coming that you cannot concentrate in class. Although your excitement is a pleasant emotion, it is negatively impacting your ability to concentrate.

Similarly, unpleasant feelings are not always negative.

Example 2: You feel discouraged after failing a test and that motivates you to study harder for the next one. Although your discouragement is an unpleasant emotion, it has had a positive impact on your motivation.

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5. Next, teach the Y (energy) line (axis) of the Mood Meter. The **Y or vertical line (axis)** is used to show how emotions are experienced in our bodies physiologically. It ranges from very low energy **(-5)** to somewhat low energy **(-3)** to neutral energy **(0)** to somewhat high energy **(+3)** to very high energy **(+5)**. Give some different, concrete examples of low and high energy *(e.g. Low energy may make our bodies feel heavy, our heads droop, or our movements much slower. High energy may create tightness in our necks or shoulders, knots in our stomachs, or a light and lifted feeling in our bodies)*. Ask a volunteer to model how very low energy (exhaustion) looks quite different than very high energy (hyperactivity).

6. Explain how the two lines cross to create four areas of the Mood Meter. Each of the areas represents levels of pleasantness and energy. Each color represents different kinds of emotion.

- The red area is home to emotions that feel unpleasant with higher energy in our bodies, like *angry and scared*.
- The blue area is home for emotions that feel unpleasant with lower energy in our bodies, like *sad and lonely*.
- The green area is home for emotions that feel pleasant with lower energy in our bodies, like relaxed and calm.
- The yellow area is home for emotions that feel pleasant with higher energy in our bodies, like excited and brave.

Divide into small groups, and ask youth to demonstrate facial expressions, postures, and vocal tones for each area. *For example, red emotions like anger may appear as furrowed brows, clenched teeth, a red face, a growling voice, and a threatening posture.*

7. Reference the emotion words brainstormed in Step 2. As a whole group, discuss the level of pleasantness and energy of the words. Then plot them together on the Mood Meter.

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8. Say:
"Can you be an emotion detective? As we watch/listen to [the read aloud or clip you have selected], we're going to look for different emotions that the characters might be feeling."

Read your selected read aloud or view the movie/TV clips. Ask for volunteers to share an emotion they think the character(s) felt in the book/clip(s) and explain why.

Note: Ask students to describe each character's emotion in relation to its location on the Mood Meter and the color of the Mood Meter quadrant where it resides (e.g. in Winnie the Pooh: Rabbit represents **red**, Eeyore **blue**, Winnie the Pooh **green**, and Tigger **yellow**). In most cases, characters show a range of emotions in various quadrants of the Mood Meter, so it will be helpful to discuss a character in a particular scene or situation.

9. Model asking and answering the question, *"How are you feeling?"* starting with the horizontal (pleasantness) axis, -5 to +5, and then the vertical (energy) axis, -5 to +5. Combine the two points and locate yourself in one of the four sections of the Mood Meter. Then allow each youth to check-in by doing the same. If someone has trouble identifying how they feel, y consider being more specific (e.g: How are you feeling about the activity we have planned for today? Or how are you feeling about your week so far?).

10. Debrief: To conclude the activity, ask youth to discuss what they learned about emotions and the Mood Meter. Consider some of the following questions:
- What is the Mood Meter?
- What level of pleasantness and energy is represented by each color on the Mood Meter?
- What feelings live in each color?

Note: Continue to build emotional intelligence skills by systematically incorporating the Mood Meter throughout your program. Additional activities are provided on page 5.

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Mood Meter Extension/Integration Activities

- **Check In:** Give youth a variety of opportunities to check in on the Mood Meter. This can be at the start of your day, during transitions or at the end of your time together. Youth can use personal markers for public displays, or they can be asked to mentally reflect on their plots to keep their responses private.
- **RULER Skills** Remind youth to use the RULER skills when checking in on the Mood Meter by asking the following questions:

R - *Where are you on the Mood Meter?*

U - *What may be causing you to feel this way?*

L - *What word best describes your feeling?*

E - *How are you expressing this feeling? Are you comfortable expressing this feeling?*

R - *How do you want to feel? What strategy will you use to stay or shift?*

- **Collages:** Give youth magazines or ask them to search online for pictures, memes, quotes, or song lyrics that represent each of the Mood Meter quadrants. Youth can create group or individual collages.
- **Feeling Word of the Week:** Select a word each week from a different quadrant of the Mood Meter. Learn the definition of the word, consider real-life scenarios where you might feel this emotion, and connect to music/movies/books that represent it.
- **Four Corners:** Color code four corners in an area, based on the colors of the Mood Meter. Read one of the scenarios listed below or create your own. Ask youth to find the corner that represents how they would feel in that situation.
  - *You hear your favorite song on the radio*
  - *You forgot your homework at home*
  - *You're sitting on a beach watching the sunset*
  - *You see a huge spider on the wall next to you*
  - *You get to sit with your best friends on the bus*