



## Middle School Youth Activity: Meet the Mood Meter Developing the Skills of Emotional Intelligence using the Mood Meter

### Video 5

3. Display the Mood Meter and say:

*"Today we are going to learn about a tool, the Mood Meter, that will help us to understand our feelings and how they give us information. When we use the Mood Meter, it can help us better understand all different types of emotions. If appropriate, share your own experiences using the Mood Meter and any new learning you've had since using the tool."*

4. Teach the two axes of the Mood Meter beginning with the X-axis (pleasantness). The X or horizontal 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. Use numbers to describe where feelings are plotted.

Examples: A classmate might have felt very pleasant (+5) when his little sister was born and somewhat unpleasant (-3) 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-axis (energy) of the Mood Meter. The Y or vertical 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 axes create four quadrants into which feelings can be categorized. Describe each of the four quadrants in terms of their pleasantness and energy, beginning with the red and ending in the yellow. Divide into small groups and ask youth to demonstrate facial expressions, postures, and vocal tones for each quadrant (*for example, red emotions like anger may appear as furrowed brows, clenched teeth, a red face, a growling voice, and a threatening posture*).

7. Ask youth to take out their list of emotion words from the beginning of the activity, and work with a partner to plot those words on the Mood Meter.

8. Next, prompt groups to brainstorm one or more of the following, considering the pleasantness and energy of each quadrant:

- Songs or musical genres for each quadrant
- Scenes from popular TV shows or movies for each quadrant
- Weekend activities you might choose when feeling in different quadrants

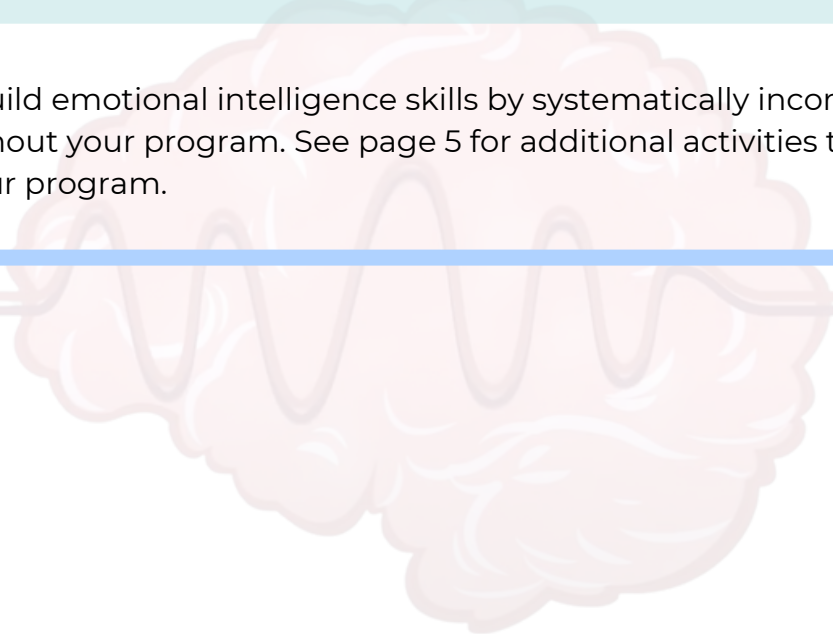
Allow groups to share with the larger group.

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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, 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?).

**Note:** Continue to build emotional intelligence skills by systematically incorporating the Mood Meter throughout your program. See page 5 for additional activities to integrate the Mood Meter into your program.



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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*