

## Elementary Youth Activity: Emotion Scientist or Emotion Judge? Understanding Youth Behavior With RULER

### Video 7

**Note:** This youth activity connects directly to the learning from Video 7, *Understanding Youth Behavior With RULER*. 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:

- Learn the characteristics of an emotion scientist vs. an emotion judge
- Investigate how we can be emotion scientists in examining and responding to our own and others' feelings

#### Materials

- pre-cut and folded scenario cards\* (page 4), chart paper or whiteboard

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

\*See Step 5. You will need one set of cards if you plan to work together as a whole group, and multiple sets of cards if you'd like youth to work in partners or small groups.

### Facilitator Directions

1. Introduce the concept of an emotion scientist:

*"Today we're going to learn about how we can try to be emotion scientists. Like other types of scientists, emotion scientists are curious and want to learn and discover. In the case of emotion scientists, they want to learn more about their emotions and the emotions of others. When emotions come they remember to ask questions, and try to understand their own and others' emotions better. Can you think of someone in your life who acts as an emotion scientist and asks you questions about your feelings? How does that person make you feel? Allow youth to share with a partner."*

2. Introduce the concept of an emotion judge:

*"Although we may try to think and act like emotion scientists, at times we can find ourselves or others acting more like emotion judges. When someone acts like an emotion judge, they don't ask questions. They usually aren't trying to learn more about feelings. Sometimes they make themselves or others feel bad or ashamed for feeling the way they feel. They might react quickly to feelings or tell you that your feelings are wrong. Can you think about a time when you or someone you know were acting like emotion judge? How do you think it feels in the presence of someone acting as an emotion judge? Allow youth to share with a partner."*

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3. Ask youth to be detectives as you act out two scenes, one where you're an emotion scientist and one where you're an emotion judge. Tell them their job is to guess based on what they just learned about the characteristics of each. Act out the following scenarios. To increase engagement, consider asking a youth or a coworker to act out the script with you.

#### Emotion Judge:

*Youth: (Stomps into room with a frown on their face and kicks a desk)*

*Staff: "Ethan, stop! What's wrong with you?"*

*Youth: (Sits down and rolls eyes)*

*Staff: "Go outside and come back in when you're calm!"*

#### Emotion Scientist:

*Youth: (Stomps into room with a scowl on their face and kicks a desk)*

*Staff: "Hey Ethan, I can tell something is upsetting you? What happened?"*

*Youth: "Gia called me a mean name and told the other kids not to play with me. I feel MAD!"*

*Staff: "That's so hard. I would feel mad too if other kids excluded and teased me. Tell me more."*

4. Ask youth to guess which one was an example of an emotion scientist, and which one was an emotion judge. Encourage critical thinking by asking youth to provide specific examples from the scenarios to explain their thinking.

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5. Explain to youth that they will continue practicing differentiating emotion scientists from emotion judges. Using the pre-cut scenario cards, sort each card into two columns:

Emotion judge or emotion scientist. In pairs or groups, read each scenario and decide if the person is an emotion judge or scientist.

6. Debrief using the following discussion questions. Consider recording student responses to display and refer to at a later date.

- *"What questions would an emotion scientist ask?"*
- *"How can we be an emotion scientist for our own emotions?"*
- *"How can we be an emotion scientist for others?"*
- *"What happens to our relationship with our friends or family when we judge their emotions?"*
- *"What happens to our relationships when we are curious about their emotions?"*

Emotion scientist or emotion judge?

Scenario Cards

Cut each row and fold on the bolded line to create a two-sided card

<p>You are feeling sad (blue) and your brother says, "Stop. You're fine." and rolls his eyes.</p>	<p>emotion judge</p>
<p>You feel angry (red) that your teacher called on someone else to answer the question. You take three deep breaths and think about why that made you feel angry.</p>	<p>emotion scientist</p>
<p>You see someone on the bus ripping up papers and yelling, and think, "Why are they overreacting? The test wasn't that bad."</p>	<p>emotion judge</p>
<p>At recess, your friend tells you you get annoyed (red) too often and that you should smile more.</p>	<p>emotion judge</p>
<p>You feel anxious (red) about playing with a new friend, but tell yourself that you should be feeling excited.</p>	<p>emotion judge</p>
<p>Your friend tells you she's feeling lonely (blue). You listen to why she feels lonely and tell her that sometimes you feel lonely too and that's ok.</p>	<p>emotion scientist</p>
<p>You come in late to class after a hard morning at home. You feel disappointed (blue) after your mom told you she can't come to your baseball game today. Your teacher asks "How are you feeling today?"</p>	<p>emotion scientist</p>
<p>You aren't sure how you're feeling after fighting with your sister, so you take a few minutes to check in on the Mood Meter.</p>	<p>emotion scientist</p>