

Emotion Scientist or Emotion Judge? Understanding Youth Emotions with RULER

Video 7

Note: Approaching emotions - ours and others' - with curiosity is what we call being an emotion scientist. Being curious about emotions means looking for the emotions behind behaviors or comments. When we act as emotion scientists, rather than emotion judges, we build empathy and improve connections with those around us.

Activity Summary: In this activity, staff will role-play emotion scientists and emotion judges and discuss the impact on their ability to respond to situations in helpful ways.

Time: 20 minutes (including time to watch the video)

Materials

- emotion scientist and emotion judge script (below)

Facilitator Directions

1. Explain that today, we're going to examine what it means to be an emotion scientist versus an emotion judge. Read the examples below to model potential scenarios that demonstrate the thinking of both emotion scientists and emotion judges. You might ask a volunteer to act out the script with you.

Emotion Judge:

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

Staff: "Jacob, stop! Why are you so angry?"

*Youth: *Sits down and scoffs with a big exhale**

Staff: "I need you to go outside and come back in when you're happy and calm!"

Emotion Scientist:

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

Staff: "Hey Jacob, I can tell something is going on? What happened?"

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

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

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2. Divide staff into groups of 3 or 4. Assign each group either emotion scientist or emotion judge. Tell groups to keep their assignment secret, so the other staff can guess after they act out their skit! Give groups 10 minutes to create a short skit, showing how staff can either be an emotion scientist or an emotion judge with youth.

3. Have each group act out their emotion scientist or emotion judge skit for the whole group.

4. After each skit, ask the following questions:

- *"Was the adult in this skit acting as an emotion scientist or emotion judge?"*
- *"How do you know? What behaviors did you see that led to this answer?"*

5. Debrief using the following prompts:

- What happens to our relationship with youth (or peers) when we judge their emotions?
- Do you find yourself approaching your own feelings as an emotion scientist or judge? Give an example.
- What are some questions we can ask ourselves and others as an emotion scientist?