

## Middle/High School Youth Activity: Being an Emotion Scientist 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:

- Identify the characteristics of an emotion scientist
- Consider how to approach intense emotions as an emotion scientist instead of an emotion judge.

#### Materials

- A whiteboard or poster board to record ideas

**Time:** 20 minutes

### 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. They give themselves and others permission to feel by validating emotions. 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. Prompt youth to think about a time when they felt intense emotions. (This could be the same experience shared in, *Building Our Emotion Management Toolbox*).

Ask: "How did you stay curious and non-judgmental about your intense emotions in this situation?" Record ideas.

4. Ask youth to brainstorm the characteristics of an emotion scientist using the graphic organizer on page 3. Consider asking the following questions to help youth get started:


- "What does an emotion scientist say to themselves or to others?"
- "What kinds of questions might they ask?"
- "How do they make people feel?"
- "How do they demonstrate empathy and validate feelings?"

Regroup and share ideas. Ask youth to consider how they can be emotion scientists for others when they experience intense emotions.

5. Say:

"We have an opportunity to show empathy and understand the perspectives of others when they experience intense emotions. Sometimes with these intense emotions, we react quickly and in a way that we are not proud of. When that happens, it is not too late to follow up with the person and ask them how they are feeling. Checking in is a way that we can turn towards others and show we care especially when we did not act as an emotion scientist in the moment. Can you think of a time or situation where someone around you experienced intense emotions and you did not respond as an emotion scientist? How would you respond differently next time?"

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6. Debrief using the following discussion questions:

- *"How does it feel to be an emotion scientist for ourselves and others?"*
- *"What strategies can you use or share with others when you or someone else is experiencing intense emotions?"*
- *"What happens to our relationship with our friends or family when we judge their emotions?"*

**Characteristics of an Emotion Scientist**

