



ACTIVITY: Name That Emotion

Purpose

- Improve Emotional Vocabulary

ESTIMATED TIME

5 minutes

MATERIALS

Required:

- A. None

Optional:

- A. Emotional Bank handout

Background

Have you ever told someone, "I'm so stressed out!" or "I'm so angry!"? Believe it or not, the words we use about our emotions have a direct effect on how we react to that emotion.

Using general terms like the ones listed above limit the choices we have for self-regulation. The ability to name the emotion that you are feeling helps you to experience the emotion and/or better regulate the emotional state you are experiencing. For example, if you had 5 different ways to identify the feeling of anger (irritation, fury, rage, hostility, jealousy) you are likely to have 5 different ways to regulate those emotions.

Activity

Name That Emotion

1. Ask participants to take a moment and think about their current state.
2. Next, ask participants to determine the cause of their current state. Is it physiological (e.g. not enough sleep) or psychological (caused by an emotion)?
3. Now, go around the group and ask participants to identify the emotion they are feeling. Ask participants to be as detailed as possible.
 - Avoid using general statements about your emotional state such as “I feel great”, or “I’m stressed out”. If a participant responds with a generic statement, ask them to dig deeper.
 - If they continue to struggle provide the Emotional Bank handout.
 - If they still struggle, have them make up a name for their emotion. Studies have shown that making up a word for your emotional state is better than not defining it.
4. Ask participants to begin better defining their emotional states for the rest of the day.

Discussion Questions/ Key Points

- Did you find this activity difficult? Why?
- When you use generic words to describe an emotion what do you think the effect is of this practice?
- What strategies do you use when your current state is negatively affected by physiological factors?

Let's Try This!

- Expand your emotional vocabulary. Use accurate words to describe the feelings you are experiencing.

Follow-up

After a month repeat the exercise and determine if people are better at putting words to their emotions.

Hutson, Matthew. *Big ideas: name that emotion. Expanding your emotion vocabulary can help you better interpret and deal with what you are really feeling.* Psychology Today



Emotion Bank

Joyful	Hateful	Resentful	Indifferent	Preoccupied	Caring
Tenderness	Excited	Elated	Hopeful	Happy	Alarmed
Helpless	Interested	Amazed	Absorbed	Anxious	Shamed
Defeated	Cautious	Hurt	Sad	Hopeless	Aggravated
Rageful	Confused	Regretful	Pity	Love	Infatuated
Cheerful	Scornful	Trusting	Pleased	Worried	Shocked
Sympathy	Amused	Delighted	Curious	Sorrow	Embarrassed
Powerless	Delighted	Confused	Guilty	Jealous	Restless
Bored	Disturbed	Lonely	Revulsion	Lust	Concern
Outraged	Grief-stricken	Ambivalent	Confident	Scared	Panicked
Content	Spiteful	Alienated	Anticipating	Uncertain	Humiliated
Adoration	Elated	Calm	Hurt	Envious	Grumpy
Dreading	Shocked	Stunned	Contempt	Aroused	Trust
Rejected	Overwhelmed	Melancholy	Brave	Insecure	Afraid
Hostile	Helpless	Exhausted	Eager	Anguished	Disgraced
Proud	Vengeful	Bitter	Lonely	Annoyed	Awkward
Fondness	Enthusiastic	Relaxed	Weary	Tender	Liking
Distrusting	Exhilarated	Interested	Comfortable	Rejected	Nervous
Disillusioned	Uncomfortable	Depressed	Hesitant	Disappointed	Uncomfortable
Bitter	Isolated	Insecure	Regretful	Humiliated	Exasperated
Satisfied	Optimistic	Insulted	Bored	Compassionate	Attraction
Receptive	Dismayed	Relieved	Safe	Horrorified	Disoriented
Suspicious	Guilty	Intrigued	Fearful	Self-conscious	Neglected
Inferior	Numb	Hopeless	Depressed	Irritated	