

Emotions Matter, Understanding, Labeling, and Expressing Emotion

This lesson was adapted from the Yale RULER curriculum

Essential Questions

- What is emotion?
- How does the ability to articulate emotions impact your daily life and the lives of those around you?
- What is the mood meter?

What is your
definition of
emotion?



The Definition of an Emotion

Emotions are ingrained in who we are as human beings. They influence our personal and professional lives throughout each day, guiding our thoughts and our interactions with others.

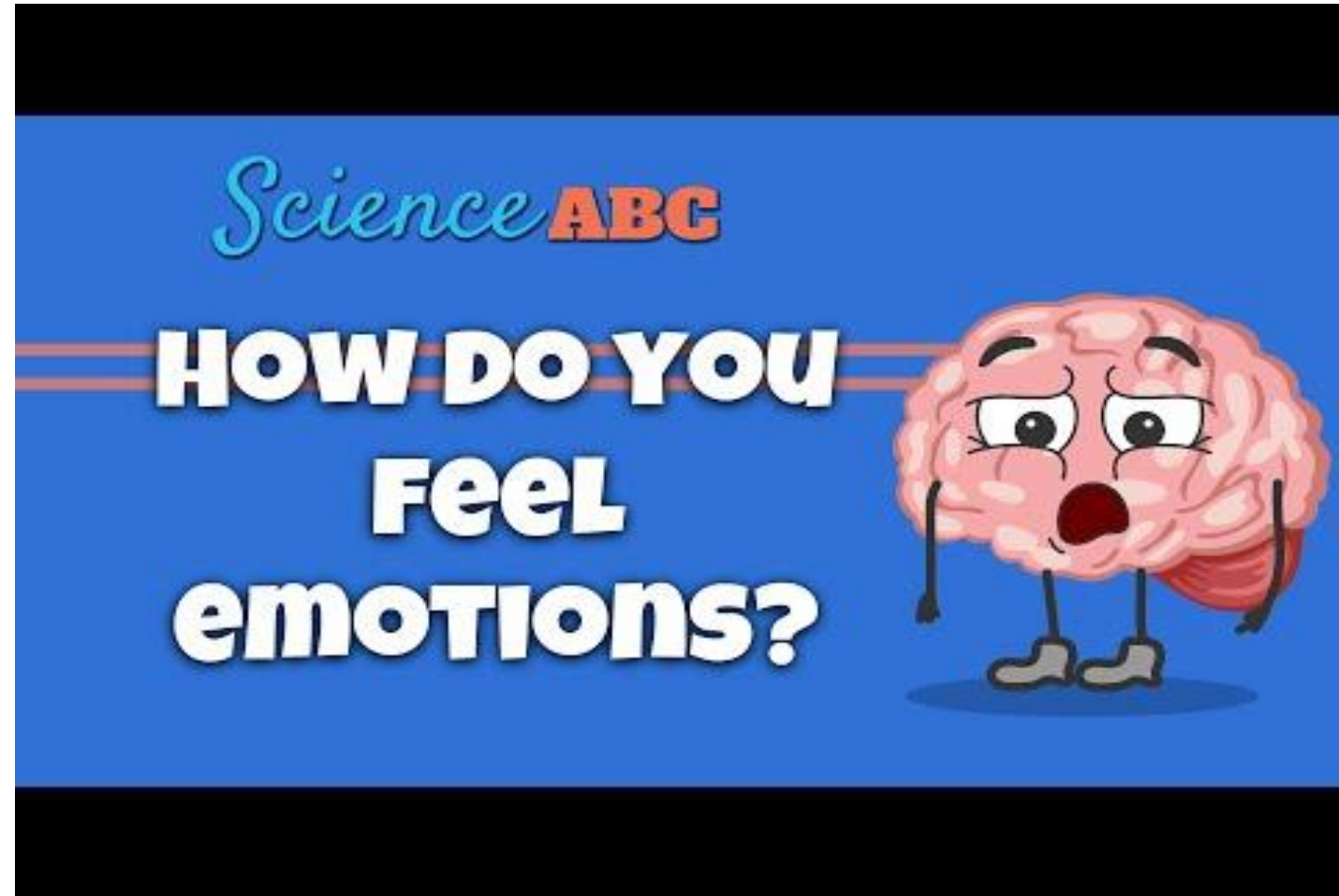
Emotions are immediate responses to stimuli.

Emotions inform our behavior.

Emotions are adaptive.



Emotions originate in the brain:



**What does
the
amygdala
do?**



Experiencing Emotions

For any emotion, we might experience:

- Thoughts
- Verbal Reactions
- Physical sensations
- Facial Expressions
- Behavioral Changes

Let's examine how we might be impacted by one particular emotion: **excitement!**



Scenario:

Who is your favorite (currently living) famous person?

They're coming to your high school to speak and YOU get to personally meet them, introduce them to the student and faculty for their speech, and hang out with them until it's time to attend the big football game that night!

What are you thinking?

What are you saying? (*keep it school appropriate!*)

What are you feeling physically?

What is your face doing?

Are any other aspects of your behavior changing?



Essential Questions

- ~~What is emotion?~~
- How does the ability to articulate emotions impact your daily life and the lives of those around you?
- What is the mood meter?

Group Activity: The Impact of Emotions

Now, let's explore the role of emotions in more detail. **Divide into four groups, with each group focusing on one of the below questions:**

- **Group 1:** How do our emotions impact our attention, memory, and learning? For instance, how does feeling frustrated, angry, or sad affect our ability to pay attention or remember? What about when we are calm or happy?
- **Group 2:** How do our emotions affect the way we make decisions? For instance, do we agree or argue more when we're feeling happy or irritated? Do we think more before making a decision when we are feeling excited or when we are feeling nervous?
- **Group 3:** How do our emotions affect our relationships? For instance, do we get along better with people when we're feeling certain emotions versus others? What types of people do you enjoy being around—those who express a lot of unpleasant emotions or more pleasant ones?
- **Group 4:** How do our emotions affect our health and well-being? When we're feeling proud or satisfied, how is our health impacted? What about when we're feeling resentful or stressed? You also may consider how our health and well-being may impact our emotions.

Within your group, spend five minutes thinking about and discussing your question. List at least three responses to each question. Then, share your findings with the class.



Sum It Up!

- Emotions drive attention, memory, and learning.
- Emotions drive decision making.
- Emotions impact relationships – including when we experience conflicts with those around us.
- Emotions influence health.

How does this matter:

- Here at school?
- In your personal life?
- For your future (employment, post graduate life, etc)?



Essential Questions

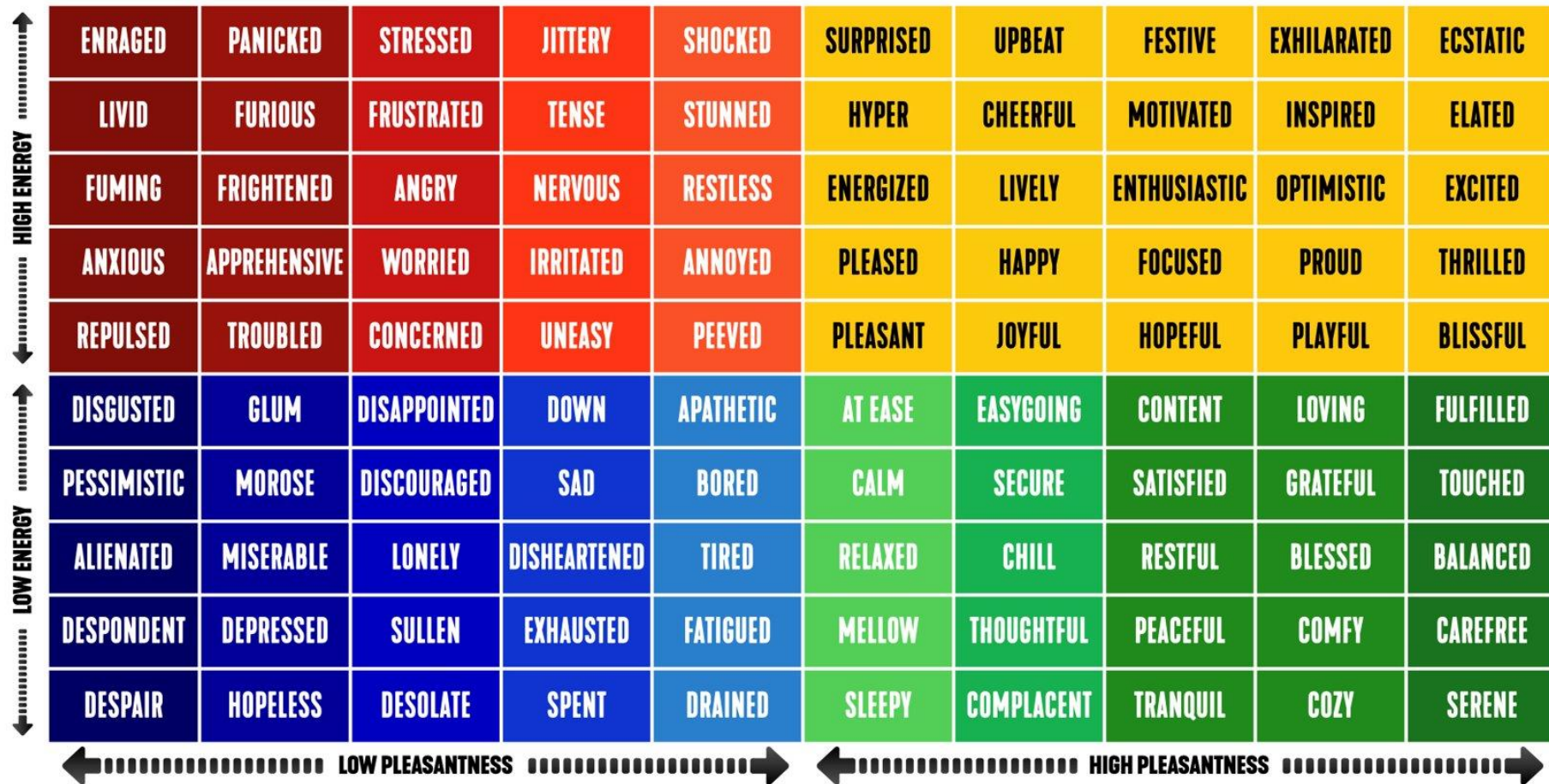
- ~~What is emotion?~~
- ~~How does the ability to articulate emotions impact your daily life and the lives of those around you?~~
- What is the mood meter?

Essential Questions

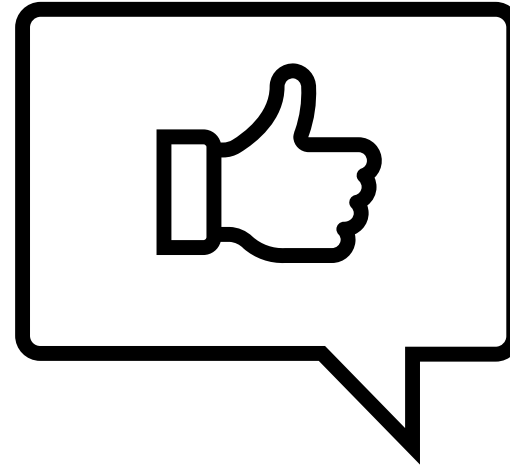
- What is an emotion?
- What kinds of consequences can come with emotions?
- What are commonly misused feeling words?
- How can we improve our emotional vocabulary?
- What are individual, societal, and cultural influences on the expression of emotions?

Where are you at on the Mood Meter today?

Mood Meter: *How are you feeling?*



Reflection



Biggest **takeaway** from the lesson?

How can the concept of the mood meter be useful **at school**?

How can this be useful in daily life **outside of school**?

How can the concept of the mood meter be **modified**?

In other words, how do you/could you check in with yourself and others regarding feelings and emotions?



What is an Emotion?

With a partner or group, brainstorm the components of the word “**emotion**.”

Consider how emotions start, where they come from, how long they last, and what happens as a result.

Then, review the definition on the next slide.



AN EMOTION

**IS A MOSTLY AUTOMATIC, RELATIVELY
SHORT-LIVED RESPONSE TO AN
INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL STIMULUS THAT
CAUSES SHIFTS IN PHYSIOLOGY, BEHAVIOR,
COGNITIVE STATE, AND BODY LANGUAGE.**



Breaking down the definition

- **Automatic** - *can't help but get angry*
- **Short-lived** - *don't stay ecstatic for too long*
- **Internal stimulus** - *a thought or memory*
- **External stimulus** - *a rude comment*
- **Shifts in physiology** - *stomach tightens*
- **Shifts in behavior** - *running away or yelling*
- **Shifts in cognitive state** - *getting distracted*
- **Shifts in body language** - *smiling*



Other Feeling Words

The words “**feelings**” and “**moods**” are often used interchangeably when discussing emotions.



Feelings are more complex than emotions, reflecting our private experiences with emotions.



Moods are longer, less intense, and have less clear causes.



Remember

Emotions manifest themselves:

- **cognitively** (*in our thoughts*),
- **physiologically** (*in our bodies*),
- and **behaviorally** (*in what we say and do*).

We can take control of our emotions by practicing **self-awareness**.



Understanding Emotion

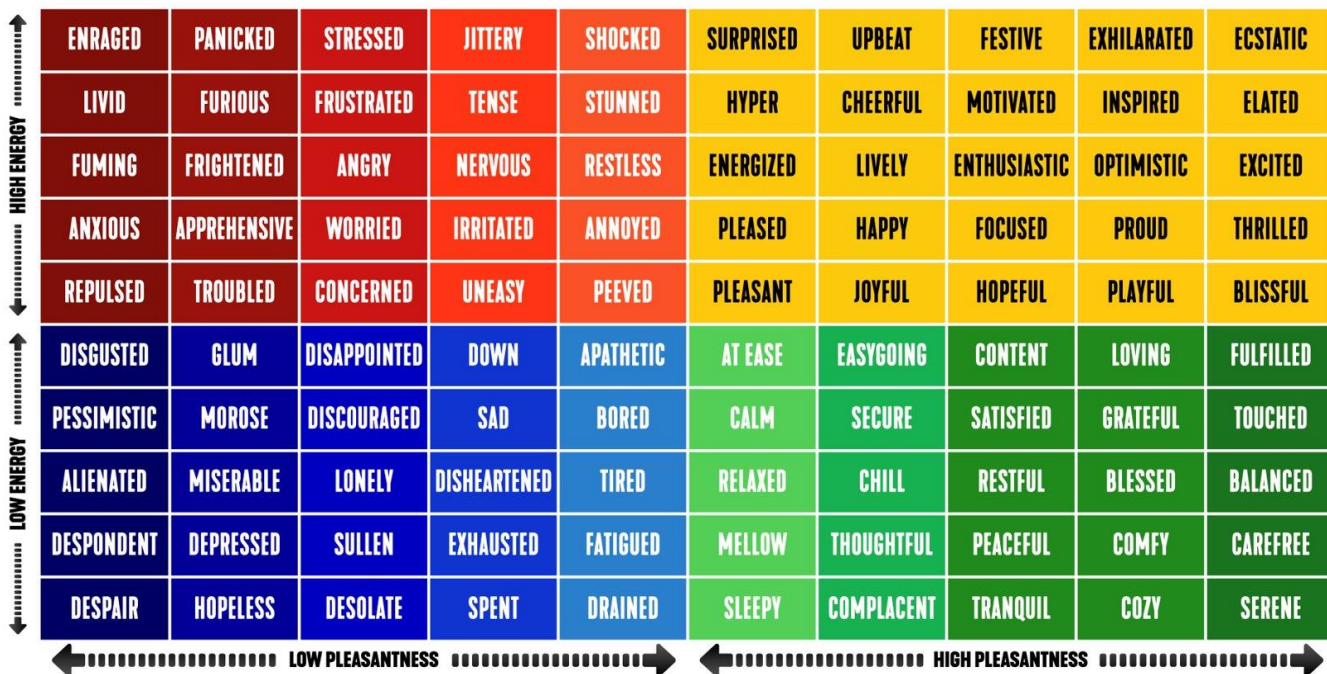
Knowing the causes and consequences of emotions, including the influence of emotions on:

- Thinking
- Learning
- Decisions
- Behavior



Classroom Discussion

Mood Meter: *How are you feeling?*



What are consequences of the **RED** quadrant?

What are consequences of the **YELLOW** quadrant?

What are the consequences of the **BLUE** quadrant?

What are the consequences of the **GREEN** quadrant?

MOOD METER

How are you feeling?



Brain Break

Jack



Egg Egg
HAM

Get it
Get it
Get it
Get it

TOWN

once



Commonly mixed-up emotion words

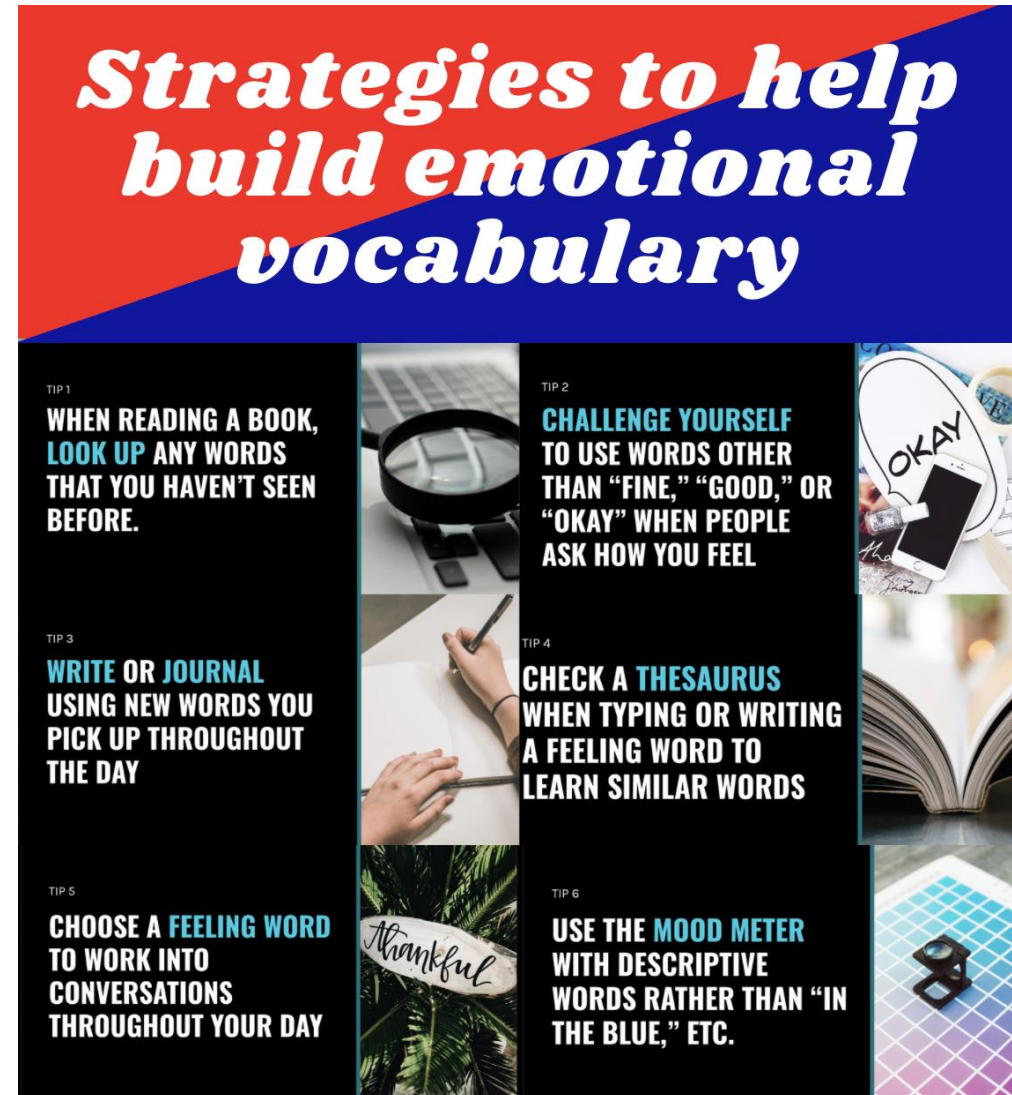
Some emotion words commonly get mixed up, which can change how we respond to situations.

Watch the video about commonly mixed-up emotion words and share out some things you learned about them after.



Building Emotional Vocabulary

- **Labeling** emotions is the skill of having and using a sophisticated vocabulary to describe the full range of emotions.
- There are approximately 2,000 emotion words in the English language.
- Nonetheless, people often have difficulty describing their emotions to others.
- Most people use words like “good,” “fine,” or “upset” – when a whole intricate vocabulary exists to define their emotional experiences.
- Consider the strategies in the picture.



Expressing Emotions

- Expressing emotions means knowing how and when to express both positive and negative emotions with different people and in different situations.
- We all have different comfort levels with expressing emotions.

Expressing Emotions

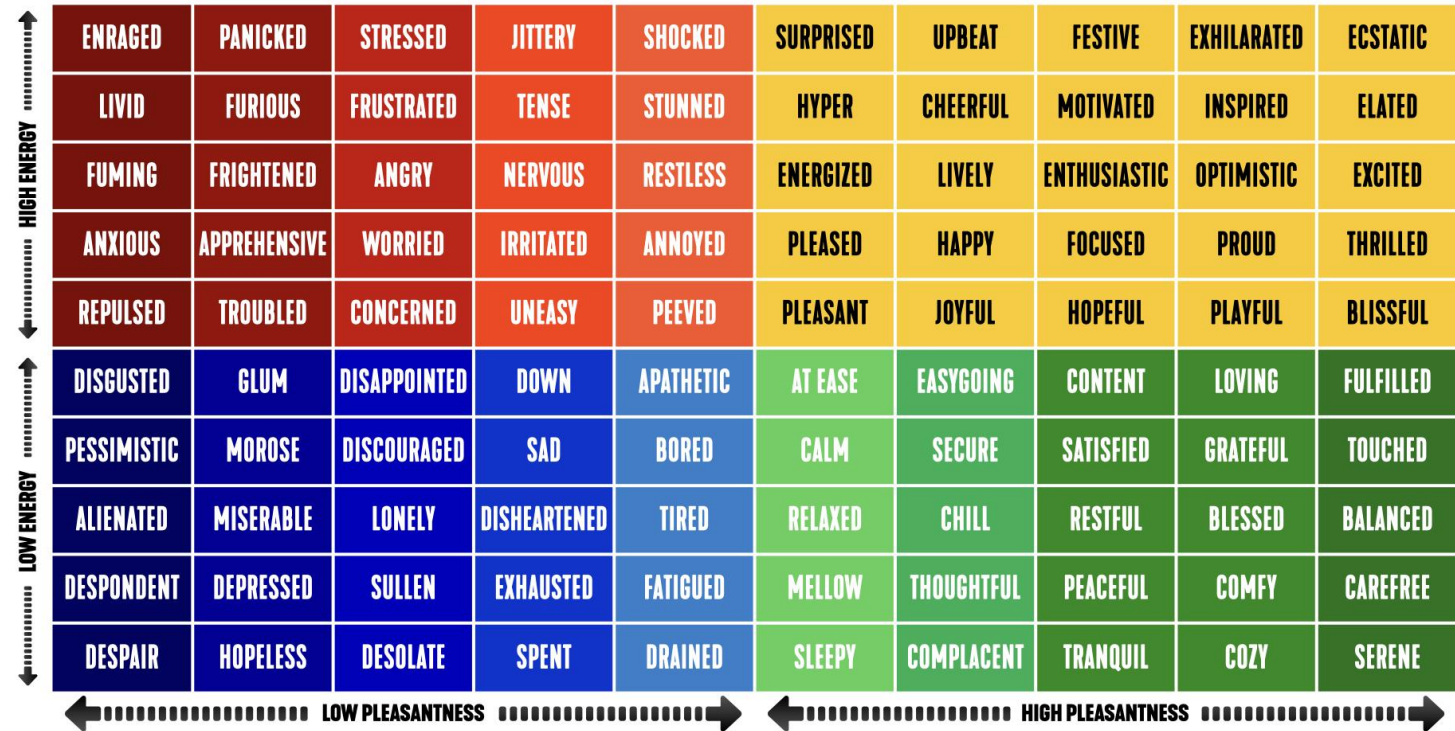
When we feel uncomfortable with expressing our true emotions, we may hide them - which prevents our outward expressions from reflecting how we feel inside.



Recognizing Emotion

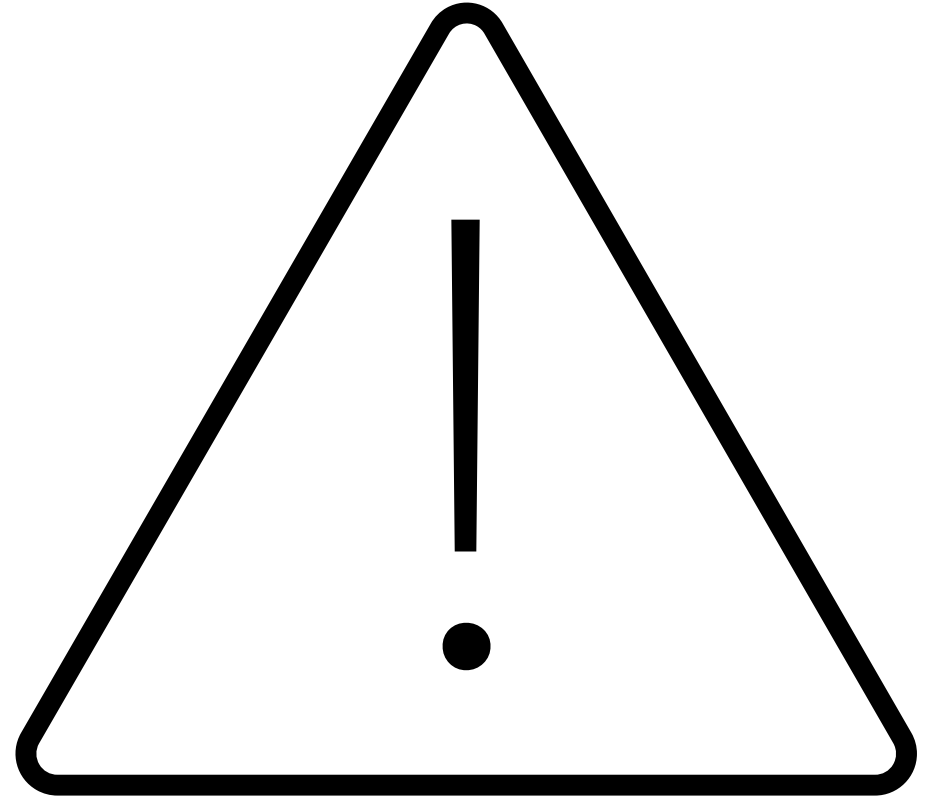
- Plotting our feelings takes practice and patience.
- Recognizing emotion in others does, too!

Mood Meter: *How are you feeling?*



Recognizing Emotion

- People interpret the same expressions differently
- We are not always sure how others are reading us
- How well we know a person may influence how we read them
- Context matters – be curious, ask questions, and dig deeper!



Neither “good” nor “bad”

Emotions give us **information**.

Some emotions feel more pleasant, but **ALL emotions are valid**.

It is easier to pay attention and learn when we are experiencing pleasant emotions and a medium amount of energy.



Display Rules

dictate **how** emotions should be expressed, as well as **when** and **where** their expression is appropriate.

To adhere to these rules, people may **mask** (or hide) their feelings, or attempt to express certain emotions that they may not actually feel.

A photograph of two young women embracing outdoors. The woman on the left is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She has light brown hair and is wearing a white t-shirt. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a grey t-shirt. They are surrounded by autumn leaves, which are visible in the background and scattered around them. The overall mood is warm and affectionate.

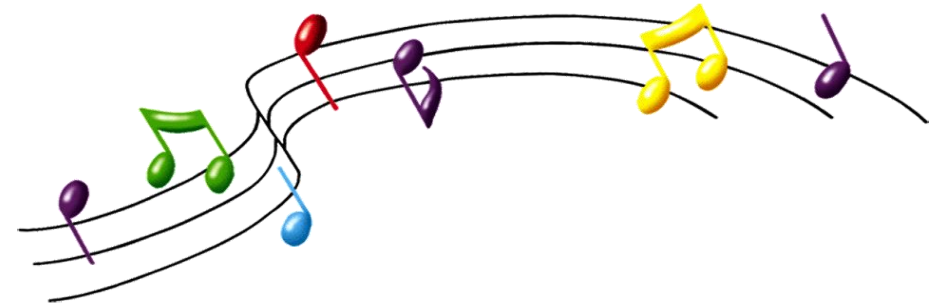
Remember

Because of these **cultural nuances**, research shows that people are better at recognizing emotions expressed by someone of their own culture than by someone of a different cultural group.

(Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003)

Class Activity: Create a Playlist

- Let's take a moment to think about the stories that are told through the music we listen to each day.
 - You may notice that music impacts how you are feeling. Sometimes, we play upbeat music to energize ourselves, or sad music when we are feeling sad.
- What are some songs you'd want to listen to when you're:
 - In the Yellow?
 - In the Red?
 - In the Green?
 - In the Blue?
- While still in your groups from the last activity, create a short playlist for each quadrant.



MOOD METER

How are you feeling?



Wrapping it up!

- **Emotion:** a mostly automatic, relatively short-lived response to an internal or external stimulus that causes shifts in physiology, behavior, cognitive state, and body language
- Knowing the **causes** and **consequences** of emotions can help us understand how it influences our thinking, learning, decision making, and behavior.
- Increasing our **emotional vocabulary** helps us better understand what we need.
- **Display Rules** dictate how emotions should be expressed, as well as when and where their expression is appropriate.
- Our cultures play a role in what display rules we abide by.

