

Defense Mechanisms

11. Moods

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 3-12 (can be adapted for younger children with adult readers)

Group Size: 5 or more

Time: 20 minutes

Introduction: Sometimes, as a defense mechanism, we avoid expressing our emotions to others. This can make us feel like no one truly understands us. This game is a fun way to practice effectively expressing our emotions and feelings to others.

Materials:

- 2 chairs
- Slips of paper (optional)

Activity:

In the front of the class, set up two chairs next to each other and face them towards the class. Have the students sit on the floor, or in chairs facing the front. Choose two students to sit in the chairs and tell them that they are sitting on the “mood bench.” Whisper a different mood or emotion into the ear of each person sitting on the bench, or have them read it off a piece of paper. Each person must act according to the mood they have been given; while the audience tries to guess what mood each person is acting out. The two on the bench can engage in an impromptu dialog, or you can give them a topic to discuss. Allow the two to talk for a while before asking the audience to guess their moods. Those who guess correctly become the next participants to sit on the “mood bench” (or they may select someone else to take a turn).

Ideas for the “mood bench:”

Upset	Excited	Agitated	Assertive	Frustrated	Insecure
Self-assured	In Love	Angry	Nervous	Sad	Hyper

You may want to list and discuss different emotions to make sure students know what they mean and how to act them out. This will also help students guess the correct emotions.

Variation: This can also be played similar to the game “Moods.” You can have a list of emotions, printed on pieces of paper and placed in a bag. Then have random phrases like, “Boy, these pretzels are making me thirsty” listed on other pieces of paper. Fold these papers and place them in another bag. Students take turns picking a piece of paper out of each bag. One paper will be the phrase they have to say. The other will be the emotion they will try to express while saying it. Then the class tries to guess the emotion. You can play this as a group or in teams. If you play in teams, the team tries to guess the emotion of the person from their team and receives a point for guessing correctly.

Processing the Experience:

- Which emotions were easier to guess? Which were harder?
- Was it frustrating when you weren’t being understood?
- How can understanding someone’s emotions help us better understand their behavior?
- How can you determine what emotions other people are feeling?
- Do you want others to know what you are feeling? Why? Why not?
- Why is it important to try to effectively express how you feel to others?