



Situational Detectives

Description

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Students play an acting game to identify emotions manifested in others.

Supplies

- Ball
- Music

How to Play

1. Students stand in a circle.
2. When the music is playing, students pass the ball around the circle.
3. When the music stops, the student who is holding the ball is that round's actor/actress. The rest of the group are the detectives (guessers).
4. Quietly whisper into the actor/actress's ear one of the scenarios on the next page for them to begin acting it out.
5. The rest of the group tries to step into their shoes and guess how the actor may be feeling.
6. If a student has a guess, they raise their hand and the actor/actress passes them the ball. If they guess correctly the music starts and the ball continues to be passed around the circle. If they guess incorrectly, they must bounce the ball to another student who is raising their hand ready to guess.
7. This continues for 3 guesses and if no one guesses the emotion correctly, the situation and emotion are revealed.
8. If the correct emotion is guessed, ask the students how they were able to step into that student's shoes and see if they can identify the situation.
9. You can start the music again and continue this game until time runs out, trying to ensure that everyone gets a chance to act.

10. Example situations:

- Got an A on a test
- Determined to get all of your homework complete
- Someone stepped on your foot
- Walked into a surprise party
- Missed the bus home
- Having a sleepover with your friends
- A dog is chasing you in the neighborhood
- Just got sick at school

Activity Prompts for Reflection

- What is an emotion that someone else in the group might have felt during this activity? How could you tell?
- What helped you be able to find out what situation and emotion the other students were acting out?
- What emotion did you think I was feeling during this game? How could you tell?
- What were the different tones of voice that we heard being used during this game?

Other Ways to Play

- Rather than just giving the students the situation, give them more details about what to possibly say and how their facial expressions and body language might need to look.
- Give the student an emotion word with the situation to make it simpler.
- Instead of giving them a situation to act out give them an emotion to act out. This way they can critically think about a time when they would feel that emotion and act it out.

Additional Notes

- Use the [SEL Activity Prompts](#) to tie other SEL competencies to this activity.
- If you have a large group, you can split them into smaller groups. Each group needs a balloon and you can challenge them to see which group can stay in control and keep the balloon in the air the longest.
- Support your group by making sure you are fair and consistent for the group. If any student gets up or the balloon touches the ground, the group must start over.

Category

1. Activities
2. Social Awareness

Sel-competency

1. Social Awareness

Allotted-time

1. 15-20 minutes

Themes

1. Acting and Music
2. Ball Games