

Navigating Hot Button Moments

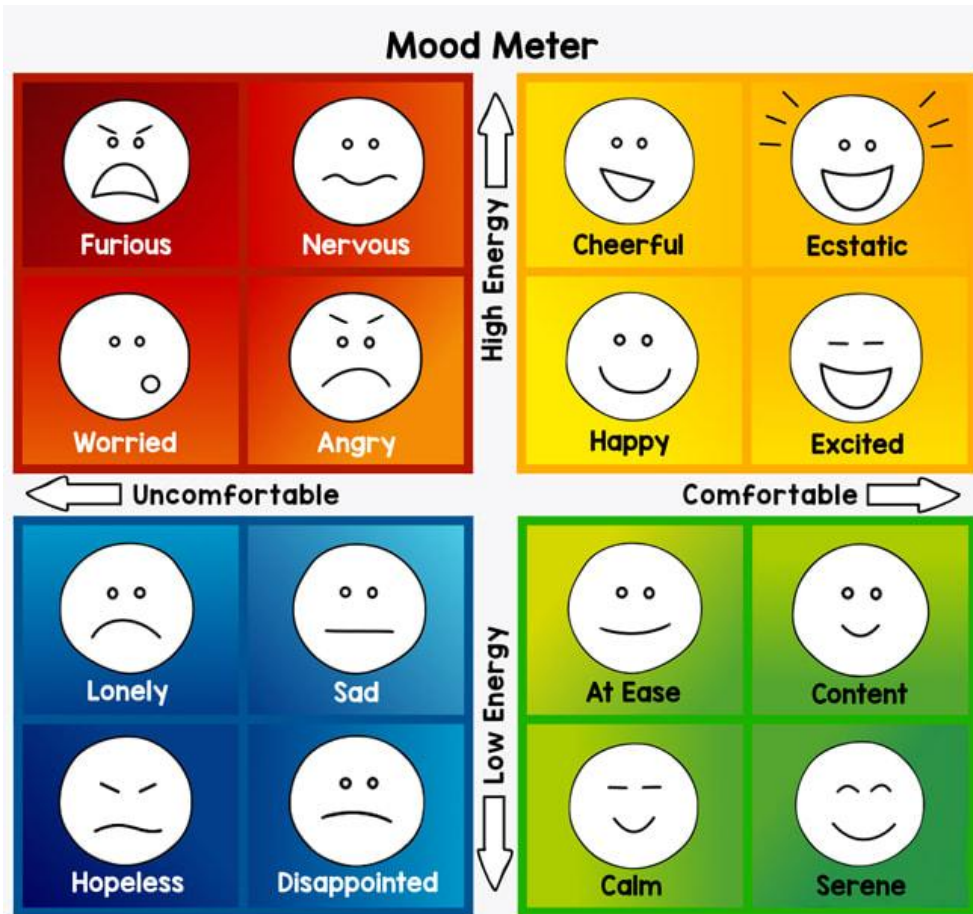


January 16, 2025



Harvard Division of
Continuing Education

Temperature Check with Mood Meter



Zoom Poll

The [Report of Harvard University's Open Inquiry & Constructive Dialogue Working Group](#) revealed that half of the surveyed faculty members and instructors do not feel comfortable leading classroom discussions on controversial topics.

How do you feel about facilitating difficult conversations in your class?

Select color of the quadrant that you identify with.

Connecting



Zoom Breakout Rooms

In groups of 3, respond to the below questions:
(6 min total, ie. 2 min per person)

- 1) Who are you? What course will you be teaching?
- 2) What difficult conversations do you anticipate?



Agenda

1. Teaching Tips

- a. Tip 1: **Community Agreements** (Before)
- b. Tip 2: **LARA Framework** (During)
- c. Tip 3: **Hot Button Moments** (During)
- d. Tip 4: **Acknowledging Current Events & Emotions** (During & After)

1. Campus Resources

1. Takeaways



Community Agreements

Before

Co-create community agreements with the whole class
(tools: Google docs, Canvas course home page)

For your students: How do we want to create a community in our class? What can it look like?

Modeling for instructors: What is one community agreement we can create for our workshop today?

Question

Has anyone used community agreements in your course? If so, can you share how they worked in your class? What did you learn?



LARA FRAMEWORK

During

Listen Actively

Try to understand what the person is saying

Affirm what you appreciate about what the person shared

Affirming feelings:

What I hear you saying is...

Shared values:

I appreciate what you said about...

Respond to the concerns or questions raised

Sharing your feelings towards an action or behavior (ie. challenge the idea not the person):
When you say that women are inferior, I feel angry because you are discriminating against women / rather than labeling a person and saying, You are sexist.

Ask questions or add information

How did you reach that conclusion?

Hot Button Moments

During

Hot buttons can be topics, narratives, behaviors, actions, or words that may trigger a strong emotional response any can disrupt they way that you engage with others such as facilitating a conversation in your course (Stanford SPARQtools).

Psychology Today defines it as “strong reactions to re-experiencing an old emotional wound” and “arise from past self-doubt, worry, insecurity, fear of failure or rejection, feeling out of control, or the need to be perfect” (Psychology Today).

Google document activity

What do you do when a hot button moment arises?

Add your teaching strategies in our shared [Google document](#).

Role play activity

In groups of 3:

1. 1 person shares a hot button moment (observer, reporter)
2. 1 person acts as the instructor
3. 1 person acts as the student



Acknowledging Current Events & Emotions

During & After

Acknowledging and giving space during class to discuss

I understand that _____ may be on your mind and that you may be feeling different emotions. I want us as a class to respect each others feelings and views. I invite us to share one word how you are feeling in our Zoom chat and for us to have an open discussion for the first 10 minutes of our class. I appreciate you all being here for our class and sharing how you are feeling. We will now move on to our course curriculum.

Acknowledging and not giving space during class to discuss

I am having a lot of emotions right now, I am sure you are too. I want to acknowledge them. I also want to acknowledge that this class is not the place to discuss them, so we are going to talk about our regularly scheduled material. I know that we will all be talking about this outside of class and I want to remind you to...[description of how to approach]

Addressing at the beginning of the next class

I recognize that last class people were upset when we discussed _____. I want us to keep in mind that certain topics may bring up different feelings for each of us and that people may also have opposing views and disagree with each other. It's important that we respect each others feelings and views even if they are different than our own and that we don't do or say anything discriminatory towards someone.

Following up via email / meeting during office hours

I acknowledge and encourage the space for debate in class. But the course is, ultimately, about _____ and my goal is to make sure class time is dedicated to discussing, crafting, and debating that. This means sometimes I'll need to make some tough decisions on what to push further on/pursue in a class discussion. If a certain topic/issue isn't given space to be debated in class, it doesn't mean it's not important. Let me know how I can help and if you would like to set up a time to meet during my office hours.

Provide an anonymous feedback survey ie. Critical Incident Questionnaire from Stephen Brookfield): <https://forms.gle/Jrwo5JgVRr1GgD8e9>



Campus Resources

1. DCE's Office of Students Affairs - Health & Well-Being Resources

<https://osa.dce.harvard.edu/mental-health-well-being>

1. Reporting a Student of Concern (*non-emergencies*) to OSA

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qsTECUs8CEn7g_M2zcdZMJwMLGAmD2uv/view?usp=sharing

1. DCE Crimson Folder on Supporting Students in Crisis

<https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/websites.harvard.edu/dist/9/130/files/2023/10/DCE-Crimson-Folder-FINAL-3.pdf>

1. Harvard-Wide Resources in Times of Crisis

<https://www.harvard.edu/support-resources>



Takeaways

1. What is one strategy that you heard today that you would like to be more intentional about in your practice?
2. What is further learning that you are interested in?



IDW -

Instructor Week
Workshops

[Sign up here](#)

Teaching with Harvard Library Resources

Thurs, Jan 16 from 12pm – 1pm

Revamp Your Assignments with Transparent Teaching: A Collaborative Workshop

Thurs, Jan 18 from 7pm – 8pm

IDW: Your Pivotal Role as a TA

Fri, Jan 17 from 12pm – 1pm



Thank you!

Email: FacultyDevelopment@extension.harvard.edu

Share your anonymous workshop feedback:

<https://forms.gle/VNmuMewy52YnwZZc9>

