

Lesson 4:

The Zones in Me

Overview

In this activity, students decide what zone they would anticipate experiencing for a variety of scenarios. Younger students express what zone they expect to be in by jumping into an area marked on the floor for that zone. Older students discuss what they think and note the zone on a worksheet. Both age groups complete a worksheet to determine what zone they expect to experience for given situations. With this activity, students explore the concept that all of the zones are expected under different circumstances, and it is okay to experience all of them. This activity helps students reflect on how different experiences affect the zone they are in. For example, if students do not get the grade they expected on a test, that may put them in the Yellow Zone. They also begin to consider how internally they may be in a zone, but that externally they may have to manage their behaviors to match the expected demands of the social environment.

Goals for this activity

- Students learn to identify the zones in themselves
- Students learn it is natural and expected to experience all of the zones given different situations/ environments
- Students increase their awareness of how external factors, such as what is happening, who is near them and where they are, impact what zone they experience
- Students reflect on how they may need to match their behaviors while in a zone to the demands of the environment/situation to keep people around them having comfortable thoughts

Materials

- One copy of Zones Scenarios (Reproducible G)
- One copy of Which Zone Would I Be In? (Reproducible H) for each student (worksheet idea contributed by Jill Kuzma; <http://jillkuzma.wordpress.com>)
- A container, such as a hat, bucket, or jar, from which to draw scenarios
- For younger students (pre-school and early elementary):** Hula hoops, spots, or other objects to place on the floor to represent the four zone colors

Preparation

- Cut apart the Zones Scenarios and place them in the container.
- Customize additional scenarios that are specific to the students with whom you are working. Zones Scenarios (Reproducible G) includes empty boxes for this purpose.
- If you are using the activity with younger students, place the objects on the floor to represent the four zone colors. Place them closely together in a square so students can jump between “zones.”
- Review the Social Thinking vocabulary previously introduced:
 - * “Expected” versus “unexpected” behavior
 - * “You can change/affect how I feel”
 - * “Good thoughts” versus “uncomfortable thoughts”
- Write the schedule on the board:
 1. Lead-in
 2. Zones activity (for younger students only)
 3. Which Zone Would I Be In? worksheet
 4. Wrap-up

Lead-in for all ages

1. Elicit the students’ insights into their self-awareness of circumstances when they were in each of the zones by asking:

Tell me about a time this week when you were in the Blue Zone? Green Zone? Yellow Zone? Red Zone?



Note to teacher: This may be very difficult for some students, so it’s not recommended that you push if students aren’t ready to talk about it. Having insight into the students’ zones from parents or teachers is helpful if you are unsure of specific circumstances.

- Review what they will do in the activity and its goals with the students. With younger students, point out the zones on the floor that they will jump to during the activity. Younger students may need more examples, such as, “You were really mad at your friend for not sharing” or “You couldn’t wait your turn to hold the caterpillar because you were SO EXCITED.”

Activities for different age groups

- Draw scenarios from the container and read them to the students.
- After each scenario, have students determine which zone they think they would be in given the situation.

If you’re doing the activity with younger students (preschool through early elementary): This activity can be done individually or in groups of two or more. When working with two or more students, have students take turns. When it is a student’s turn, he or she jumps into the zone that the scenario would place the child in. Record students’ answers on the Which Zone Would I Be In? worksheet.

If you’re doing the activity with older students (upper elementary through high school): Give each student one copy of the worksheet before you begin. An alternative to jumping into a zone, is to have students take turns drawing and reading the scenario aloud to the group. They each express which zone they think they would be in and then facilitate a discussion with the other students to get their insights. Have students record their decisions on the Which Zone Would I Be In? worksheet.

- If you have not already done so, give each student the Which Zone Would I Be In? worksheet to fill out. You can have each student complete the worksheet individually or you can do this activity as a group as part of a discussion about in which circumstances it is anticipated that someone would be in the four different zones. For example, students could discuss how being in the Red Zone is common if you get devastating news, there is an emergency situation or disaster, you get to experience something thrilling, or you get physically injured. This worksheet can also be sent home as homework to complete with parents. Younger students will need assistance with the writing demands and scribing for them would be appropriate.

Wrap-up

After students complete the activity, lead the class in a discussion using the following questions to assess understanding:

Are there times when it is common to be in a zone other than green?

Describe a circumstance when you were in a zone other than green.

Was your behavior in that zone expected or unexpected? How could you tell?



Note to Teacher

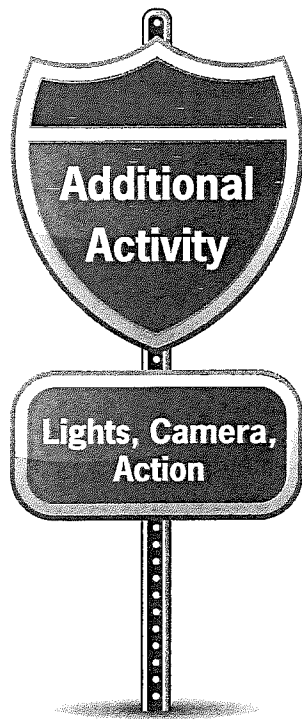
Students may jump into or identify a zone that may be less common for the given circumstance. For example, when you read the scenario “You were told that the plans need to change,” students might jump in the Red Zone. If this happens, you can validate that this situation may make them feel really upset and put them in the Red Zone while reinforcing that there are expected ways to take care of/manage their Red Zone behaviors. Ask students what would be expected/unexpected behavior if in the Red Zone given that scenario (maybe take a break or take a deep breath) and if people will have good or uncomfortable thoughts as a result of their behavior? Assure students that as they continue to learn about the Zones, they will be exploring tools to help them manage their different Zones in ways that are expected. Another example is if their favorite toy breaks, kids may identify being in the Yellow, Red or Blue Zone. Each of those zones is “OK.” However, if they throw the broken toy across the room, this would be unexpected behavior for the situation, causing others to have uncomfortable thoughts. As they learn more about the Zones, they will begin to explore tools to help them manage their zones in safe ways.

It is important to teach that there is no “naughty” zone, but sometimes behaviors in a zone may be unexpected given the environment they are in or who they are with.

It is important to stress that all of the zones are okay and will be experienced given different circumstances that change how we feel. Discuss times when it is common to be in the Blue Zone (on a rainy day), Yellow Zone (startled by the loud fire drill at school), and Red Zone (getting in a car accident). Also highlight that sometimes the behaviors typically seen in a zone are unexpected given the circumstance, leading those around you to have uncomfortable thoughts about you. Emphasize that in the classroom, students (and adults) can experience all of the zones. It is easiest to learn if students can remain calm and focused in the Green Zone but sometimes they may find themselves in the Red, Yellow or Blue Zone. It is okay to be in the other colored zones, but students need to think about the expected behavior for the classroom environment. They will be learning tools down the road to help them control their behaviors while in different zones. Talk to students about how they may not perceive their behavior as being disruptive or unexpected in the Yellow, Red, or Blue Zone, although other people may view it that way.

Ways to generalize learning

- Copy the completed Which Zone Would I Be In? worksheet for each student and share it with others who work closely with the student, including parents.
- While watching TV shows, movies, or reading literature, ask parents to reinforce learning by having students notice a character's zone and determine if it was controlled in a way that was expected or unexpected given the situation.



Additional learning activity for Lesson 4

Lights, Camera, Action

A video camera can be used in a variety of ways to help children learn more about their zones. If students are having difficulty recognizing their zone, talk to them about the value of videotaping a segment of their day, and make sure they are all equally comfortable looking at footage of themselves and their peers together. Review the footage with the students, pausing when they are in the different zones so the students can reflect on how they look and feel in that zone. The footage can also be used to help students learn how *others* respond to *them* when they are in the different zones. This reinforces the idea that the student's zone can change/affect the way others feel. By using color-coded Popsicle sticks, students can work on identifying zones in themselves as well as their peers. You can pose questions similar to those in "Wrap-up" to check for understanding.

Please Note: Make sure you have written permission from your students' guardians to videotape them for educational purposes. Always solicit your students' permission to tape them so you maintain trust and rapport between you and your students. Finally, be sure you capture a LOT of positive footage, not just problematic situations, so your students see themselves managing their zones!