



BUILDING YOUR TEAM

A MEETING ICEBREAKER GUIDE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

EMOJI MOOD CHECK

A Virtual Meeting Icebreaker

Two minutes, one emoji per person, and a facilitator suddenly knows exactly how the room feels.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One Emoji Tells You How the Room Feels

The Emoji Mood Check takes just two minutes and helps teams engage at the start of a Zoom or Teams meeting.

Each participant shares one emoji reflecting their current feelings. The activity requires almost no setup and works for groups of any size — remote teams use the chat window, in-person teams use sticky notes. This paper walks a facilitator through setup, running the check-in, the debrief questions worth asking, and a real example of what the pattern in the room's emojis can reveal.

60–90 sec

per person to choose and share

Any size

group, remote or in-person

2–3

debrief questions recommended per session

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Setup Before Your Meeting



The activity requires almost no preparation — just a method for people to submit their emoji.

- **Sticky notes and markers**, or a shared digital whiteboard.
- **A video platform with an emoji reaction feature** for remote teams.
- **Optional:** a theme prompt written on a slide or flip chart.

Plan on 60 to 90 seconds per person; a group of 10 needs roughly 3 to 5 minutes total. Larger groups can post simultaneously in chat or on shared boards, and no special room setup is needed beyond wall or whiteboard space for in-person versions. Some facilitators sharpen responses with a themed prompt, such as “pick an emoji for how you feel about this project.”

Run the Icebreaker



Five steps take the room from silence to a shared read on how everyone's actually doing.

1 Introduce the prompt

Ask participants to choose one emoji matching their feelings about the meeting topic, week, or project. Keep the prompt specific so people don't default to a generic smiley face.

2 Start a short timer

Give the group 60 to 90 seconds to think and respond, with a visible countdown to keep the pace up and prevent overthinking.

3 Collect every response

Have each person post their emoji in chat, on sticky notes, or on a shared whiteboard. Encourage adding one to three words if the emoji alone feels unclear.

4 Scan the results out loud

Once every emoji is visible, read the room together. Point out patterns — multiple coffee cups, several stormy clouds — and turn a private check-in into a shared moment.

5 Bridge into the meeting

Use the group's overall mood to set the agenda's tone. If the room is tired, acknowledge it and adjust pacing; if energized, tackle the tough agenda items first.

Debrief Questions



The emoji itself is just the icebreaker — the real value comes from the follow-up conversation that connects a choice to a concrete detail. Pick two or three of the following rather than asking all five, to keep the debrief concise.

- What made you choose that specific emoji today?
- Did anyone else's emoji surprise you, and why?
- How does this mood compare to how you felt about last week's meeting?
- What is one thing that would shift your emoji toward something more positive?
- Which part of this project is driving the mood you picked?

Case Example: What the Pattern Revealed



Sometimes the real signal isn't in any one answer — it's in the pattern across weeks.

FROM THE FIELD

One facilitator at a logistics company used this activity with a burned-out operations team. Half the group selected a melting-face emoji for three consecutive weeks.

That pattern gave leadership the data it needed to address the workload problem directly, rather than guessing at the underlying issue.

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Want us to facilitate this activity for your group?

Talk with our team about running the Emoji Mood Check, or another meeting icebreaker, for your group.

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