

Eighth Grade, Session 8

Thinking About Vulnerability

Vulnerability:
Name It to Tame It

What's a Meerkat? They are small mammals that are highly social and live in groups of up to 30 called *mobs*. They stand on their hind legs and keep watch at all times for threats so they can protect themselves and their community. **Our brains are a whole lot like Meerkats.**

Ok, so what is it?

Vulnerability is the emotion we experience during times of **uncertainty** when something **feels risky**, or we feel **emotionally exposed**.

So, how does it work?

Something happens to make you feel **unsure or exposed**. For example, an academic struggle, a weird social interaction, an embarrassing moment, trying to figure out how to stand up for yourself, a fight with someone close to you, etc.

So, then here we are, **feeling our feelings** and looking around like a Meerkat.

We might be feeling anxious, scared, embarrassed, nervous, or sad. We might also be feeling excited, curious, engaged, thrilled, or happy.

That's the funny thing about Vulnerability: **it's like a diving board** because it's the jumping-off point for all kinds of emotions, **both hard and fun**.

When we feel **unsure or exposed**, we feel **vulnerable**. Our brains do not like feeling this way; brains like to know things and be certain. So vulnerability can feel weird and uncomfortable.



Vulnerability turns up the volume on **doubt**, which amplifies **anxiety** and creates **stress**.

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