

Affect & Mood Word Bank

MSE quick reference. Mood = the client's report, quoted verbatim. Affect = your observation, described by range, intensity, stability, and congruence. Anchor every descriptor with one concrete observation.

Affect: the four dimensions

Range	
Full (broad)	expression moves naturally across emotions, matched to topic
Restricted	present but narrowed; fewer shifts, milder peaks
Blunted	markedly reduced; little facial movement or inflection
Flat	near-absent; immobile face, monotone regardless of topic
Expansive	exceeds usual social limits; effusive, unrestrained

Restricted, blunted, flat: one severity continuum, not synonyms.

Intensity

Heightened	faster and bigger than content warrants
Normal	strength matches the material
Diminished	present, directed, but consistently weaker than expected

Stability / reactivity

Stable	consistent; shifts gradually with content
Mobile	shifts readily and appropriately with topic
Labile	rapid, exaggerated shifts poorly tied to content
Reactive	brightens to cues even against a low baseline
Nonreactive	no shift to emotional cues in either direction

Congruence / appropriateness

Congruent	observed expression matches reported mood
Incongruent	contradicts the report (a finding, not a verdict)
Appropriate	fits the content under discussion
Inappropriate	clashes with the content

Quality words

Neutral / positive	euthymic, calm, pleasant, bright
Dysphoric	sad, tearful, dysphoric, pained, dejected
Anxious	anxious, tense, worried, apprehensive, fearful
Irritable / angry	irritable, angry, hostile, defensive, guarded
Elevated	euphoric, elated, expansive, exuberant
Other	perplexed, suspicious, apathetic, detached, ashamed

Mood: a word bank

Family	Descriptors	Quotes to capture
Euthymic	euthymic, calm, content, stable, settled	"pretty good," "steady"
Depressive	depressed, dysphoric, low, despondent, hopeless, empty, anhedonic	"empty," "numb," "drained"
Anxious	anxious, apprehensive, fearful, worried, overwhelmed, panicky	"on edge," "wired"
Irritable	irritable, frustrated, angry, resentful, hostile	"fed up," "short-fused"
Elevated	elevated, euphoric, elated, expansive	"amazing," "unstoppable"
Apathetic	apathetic, indifferent, numb, flat	"blah," "nothing really"
Grief / shame	bereaved, grief-stricken, guilty, ashamed, lonely	"hollowed out," "it's my fault"

"Labile" belongs to affect, not mood. Quote reported swings as mood; document observed shifts under affect stability.

Objective-findings stems

- "Client presented as [alert, oriented, casually dressed, adequately groomed]."
- "Client described mood as '[verbatim quote],' rated [n/10]."
- "Affect was [full / restricted / blunted / flat] in range, [normal / heightened / diminished] in intensity, [stable / labile], and [congruent / incongruent] with stated mood."
- "Speech was [normal / pressured / slowed] in rate and [normal / low / loud] in volume, with [normal / monotone] prosody."
- "Psychomotor activity was [unremarkable / notable for leg bouncing, hand-wringing, slowed movement]."
- "Eye contact was [consistent / intermittent / avoidant]."
- "No perceptual disturbance was reported or observed."

Clinical-impression stems

- "Presentation is consistent with [pattern / working formulation], as evidenced by [objective findings]."
- "Symptoms have [persisted / improved / worsened] since [reference point], as evidenced by [report + observation]."
- "Reported mood and observed affect were [congruent / incongruent] throughout; [what the mismatch may warrant exploring]."
- "No indicators of risk to self or others were reported or observed; [safety plan reviewed / not indicated]."
- "Findings this session represent a [change from / continuation of] the presentation documented on [date]."
- "Response to [intervention] suggests [tentative inference]."
- "Continue to monitor [sleep, appetite, panic frequency] against the [date] baseline."

Objective test: observable, specific, free of interpretation. Conclusions belong in the impression, phrased tentatively. Diagnostic scope varies by US state board and Canadian provincial college; the stems model pattern language, not diagnosis.