

## EMPATHY

### Activity 1: What if it was me?

Activities to promote adults' personal, social and learn to learn skills

Description of initiatives comprised in this handbook.

Title/name	What if it was me?
<b>LifeComp Skill approached</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-regulation <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility <input type="checkbox"/> Well-being <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empathy <input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Growth mindset <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Managing learning
<b>Duration<sup>1</sup></b>	90 minutes
<b>Type of activity</b>	Mediated conversation circle
<b>Short description</b>	This activity is suggested to be performed in a group and invites people to reflect on other people's challenges and experiences by trying to understand their emotions through the visualisation of a video.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify experiences that lead us to understand why being empathic is important.</li> <li>● Reflect on issues which provoke empathy and cause us to empathise with others.</li> <li>● To discuss situations which provide an opportunity to experience another person's perspective.</li> <li>● To develop empathy in different life contexts.</li> <li>● To deepen our knowledge of the people around us.</li> </ul>
<b>Setting<sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 Facilitator</li> <li>● A room with chairs arranged in a circle, but movable to divide into small groups</li> <li>● Video suggestion: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bl1FOkpfY2Q&amp;t=94s?">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bl1FOkpfY2Q&amp;t=94s?</a></li> <li>● 1 Projector</li> <li>● Speakers</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitators' Tips<sup>3</sup></b>	As an alternative to the video, the facilitator can use storytelling, picture stories or photos. Also, the groups can either work on a

<sup>1</sup> It can be continuously.

<sup>2</sup> Materials and resources needed to implement it, including financial, human resources and spaces. In case is needed a worksheet, please use the following document to prepare it.

<sup>3</sup> What a person needs to know to implement the activity.



	<p>different character, or all groups can work on the same character. The presentation of the character's life story can be oral or written, depending on the group's decision. Throughout the activity it is important to point out relevant aspects of the groups' work, as well as the sharing in the large group.</p> <p>The activity must be adapted to the group, so if it is a group comprised of migrants or/and refugees, it could be shocking to be re-exposed to the trauma that is shown in the video. So, we advise to choose a different video in case the facilitator identifies problematic cases.</p>
<b>Step by step</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The facilitator presents the concept of empathy and its importance (please consult Material for Facilitators worksheet for more information)</li> <li>2. Then, the facilitator presents the selected video.</li> <li>3. The group is divided into smaller groups of 3 to 5 people</li> <li>4. After being given some time to reflect on the story presented in the video, each group will select a character and create/imagine their life story. Each participant should reflect and answer to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the most striking events in that character's life?</li> <li>● If it were me, what would I feel in this situation?</li> <li>● If it were me, what would go through my head?</li> <li>● If it were me, what would bother me the most?</li> <li>● What things could I not solve on my own?</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. All groups are invited to share the life story they constructed about the character from the video</li> </ol>
<b>Debriefing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What happened and how did you feel during the activity?</li> <li>● What surprised you most about the way each group constructed their life story? Why?</li> <li>● To what extent am I inspired by the stories I heard? What struck me most?</li> <li>● Have I found some common ground with my story?</li> <li>● What makes it difficult to understand other people's challenges and problems?</li> <li>● Does recreating the life story of the people around us help us to develop empathy?</li> </ul>
<b>References</b>	<p>The proposed activity is an adaptation of the activities available at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.semanaubuntudaempatia.pt/detalhes/e-se-fosse-comigo%3Fhttps://f0c086ae-1d8a-4c3e-b137-431d2da06686.usrfiles.com/ugd/c7d660_08fb67f0faad447ba7551433b8c5ba6d.pdf">https://www.semanaubuntudaempatia.pt/detalhes/e-se-fosse-comigo%3Fhttps://f0c086ae-1d8a-4c3e-b137-431d2da06686.usrfiles.com/ugd/c7d660_08fb67f0faad447ba7551433b8c5ba6d.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://f0c086ae-1d8a-4c3e-b137-431d2da06686.usrfiles.com/ugd/c7d660_de181aa0c8704ca2a3667d46df99ae95.pdf">https://f0c086ae-1d8a-4c3e-b137-431d2da06686.usrfiles.com/ugd/c7d660_de181aa0c8704ca2a3667d46df99ae95.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://f0c086ae-1d8a-4c3e-b137-431d2da06686.usrfiles.com/ugd/c7d660_25704de92fdc4e8e96301ccaa9d45353.pdf">https://f0c086ae-1d8a-4c3e-b137-431d2da06686.usrfiles.com/ugd/c7d660_25704de92fdc4e8e96301ccaa9d45353.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.semanaubuntudaempatia.pt/detalhes/guarda-chuva">https://www.semanaubuntudaempatia.pt/detalhes/guarda-chuva</a></p> <p>Diwan, S. (2022). Caring, empathy and compassion: calm, clear and kind teachers (self care for teachers). Paris: UNESCO.</p> <p>Gulin, W. (2020). Empathy in Social Relations of the Modern World. <i>21st Century Pedagogy</i>, 1(4), 1-7.</p>



	<p>Rosenberg, M. (2006). <i>Comunicação Não-Violenta: técnicas para aprimorar relacionamentos pessoais e profissionais</i>. São Paulo: Ágora.</p> <p>Sala, A., Punie, Y., Garkov, V. &amp; Cabrera Giraldez, M. (2020). <i>LifeComp: The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence</i>, EUR 30246 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, ISBN 978-92-76-19418-7, doi:10.2760/302967, JRC120911.</p> <p>Silke, C., Davitt, E., Flynn, N., Shaw, A., and Dolan, P. (2021). <i>The Activating Social Empathy School Evaluation 2021</i>. Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway</p>
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# What if it was me?- Material for facilitators

## Worksheet - Empathy

- **Definition**

Empathy is the power of putting ourselves in another person's shoes, taking their perspective and acknowledging their emotions.

- **According to this concept:**

- Human brains are hardwired for empathy and that the ability to understand and help others has been fundamental for the survival of our species.
- The ability to read non-verbal signals such as tone of voice, gestures and facial expressions and the development of active listening are tools for practising and strengthening empathy.
- It is part of the richness of humanity to recognise and accept that people of different cultures may have different values or have different experiences. We should not judge or criticise others but try to understand their emotions and points of view.
- By taking the perspective from another person it is necessary to maintain a separation between one's own and others' emotions and experiences.
- It is possible to empathise with someone, and still disagree with their attitudes or values.
- Educational interventions aimed at increasing the capacity of perspective taking, developing self-knowledge, and providing positive experiences of otherness helps in developing empathy.

- **Why is it important?**

### **To regulate prosocial behaviours while inhibiting aggressive and antisocial behaviour**

Empathy is thought to provide the foundation for broader social attitudes and behaviours and appears to play a key role in societal functioning.

### **To mediate conflict situations/situations of violence**

In a conflict situation, it helps to mediate and communicate in a nonviolent way. When we understand the emotions, feelings and needs of others, we can help to think of other ways that satisfy everyone involved.

### **Enhance effective communication, interaction and collaboration**

The capacity to understand other people's emotions is one of the pillars of social understanding, which is key to effective communication and collaboration. Empathy leads to affective resonance, which is the automatic ability to be emotionally aroused by others' emotions.

### **It is important for mental health and emotional well-being**

The ability to recognise emotions in others is closely intertwined with self-awareness or the ability to identify, label, and describe one's own emotions. Training one's own self-awareness and self-empathy



enhances the ability to understand others and to reduce personal distress when confronted with others' feelings. When we connect with others empathetically, we develop feelings of belonging, connection and trust that can help reduce stress and anxiety.

- **When can it be used in daily life?**

Examples:

- In the professional context, the employer can use empathy to understand the challenges that their employees face and offer personalised solutions that consider the needs and skills of an individual.
- It can help to mediate and find compromises with colleagues, customers, friends, family etc.
- It can give you the possibility to ask for help when you need it. You know that others can feel like you, and you trust that they can also help you.
- It helps us to hear/understand “no” or “I can't” without taking it as a personal rejection.
- It helps to defuse a situation of conflict or imminent violence.
- It helps us to overcome situations of psychological pain when we find someone who can listen to us with empathy.
- Empathy can help educators understand and listen to their learners' needs and challenges and think more effectively about andragogic strategies.

