# Empathy and Compassion

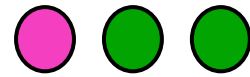Relationships, Module 4

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# AGENDA

1. Brainstorm how you felt when you thought someone did not understand what you were going through.

2. In a group, practice your empathy and compassion skills with the given scenarios.

3. Reflect: Can you think of an example of a time you felt grateful because someone showed you empathy or compassion?
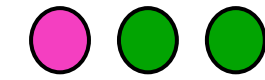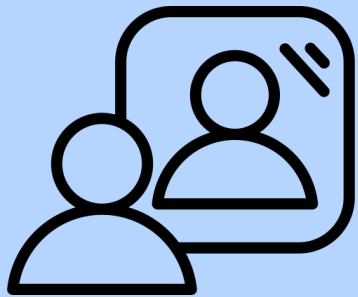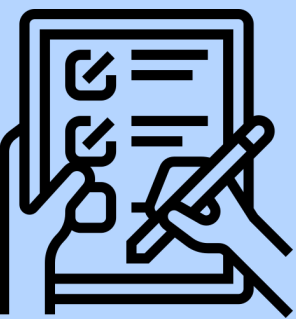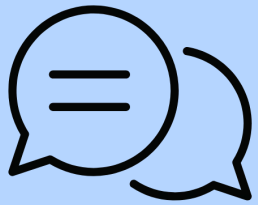
# BRAINSTORM

Think about a time when you felt like someone just didn't understand how you were feeling or what you were going through: What did that feel like for you?
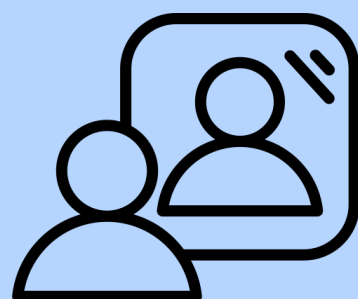
# DISCUSS

How have you felt when you didn't feel that others understood you?

# DIVE IN

We are living in a time where a lot of our communication and interaction does not happen face to face. This can make it difficult for us to understand where someone is coming from or how they might be feeling. It's easy to make snap judgments, make a mean comment, or send a rude text to someone when you're communicating from behind a screen. When we do these things, it can result in lots of unpleasant feelings and can negatively impact our relationships with others.

**Empathy** means the ability to understand or relate to how another person is feeling. When we have empathy, we can then show kindness and act with **compassion**. Compassion can be thought of as the opposite of unkind behavior.

# ACTIVITY

In a group, review scenarios 1 & 2 and practice using your empathy and compassion skills.

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**Worksheet**

Name: _____    Date: _____

**Empathy and Compassion**

Think about a time you felt like someone just didn't understand how you were feeling or what you were going through. What did that feel like for you? How would you have liked them to handle it differently?

**Scenario 1:** Maritza's mother is very sick. Even though she's not your best friend and you can't really relate to what she's going through, you want to show her your support.

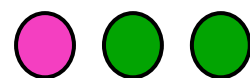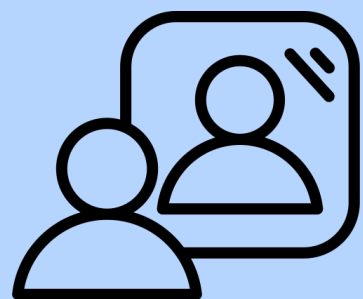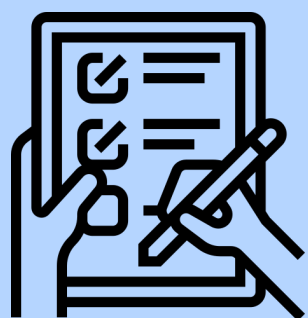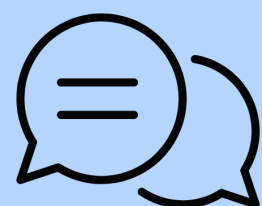➔ **What can you say to show Maritza empathy?**

➔ **What can you do to help Maritza?**

**Scenario 2:** You and your best friend both try out for the basketball team, but you make it and your friend doesn't. You're very excited but also feel bad for your best friend.

➔ **What can you say to show your best friend empathy?**

➔ **What can you do to help your best friend?**

**Reflect:** Think of an example of a time you felt grateful because someone showed you empathy or compassion. Explain the circumstances. What might be the benefit to you when you show empathy and compassion to others - what's in it for you?

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# REFLECT

Can you think of an example of a time you felt grateful because someone showed you empathy or compassion?

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## Home Connection

### Empathy and Compassion

Dear _____,

Today in class, we learned that **empathy** means the ability to understand or relate to how another person is feeling. When we have empathy, we can then show kindness and act with **compassion**.

Please encourage your student to think of someone they could be more empathetic to at home, such as a sibling or neighbor. Challenge them to develop ways to show empathy to the person and how the person reacted as a result of their empathy. For example, helping an elderly neighbor with a task they struggle to do alone. Ask them to share their examples with the class.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Best,

_____

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your own level of empathy. Are you satisfied with your level of empathy and compassion? What steps might you take to improve your empathy and compassion?

# Further Study

- Edutopia: *How to Help High School Students Develop Empathy:* https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-help-high-school-students-develop-empathy
- Kids Health in the Classroom: *Teacher's Guide to Developing Empathy* https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/growing/empathy.pdf
- Learning for Justice: *Showing Empathy* Showing Empathy | Learning for Justice

# Lesson Complete!