



Erasmus+

Empowering adult educators to support resilience of refugees

Erasmus+ cooperation partnership
2022-2-NL01-KA210-ADU-000095469



RESILIENCE
— FOR REFUGEES —

Module 2 + Learning Empathy

How to understand the
emotions of others and develop
skills and competences to
support people in need





Content of this module

- This module is designed to provide adult educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to support Ukrainian and other refugees by learning empathy.
- Participants will learn about the concept of empathy and how to use it more effectively in contact.
- They will explore various strategies and techniques to stay in contact with themselves while supporting the others.
- The module will cover topics such as types of empathy, how to develop empathetic listening, and what are the risk factors in dealing with negative feelings of others.





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self-empathy

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What is Empathy?

Empathy is understanding a person from his or her frame of reference rather than one's own, or vicariously experiencing that person's feelings, perceptions, and thoughts. Empathy does not, of itself, entail motivation to be of assistance, although it may turn into sympathy or personal distress, which may result in action.

American Psychological Association





Why is empathy important?

- Empathy is the glue that holds our interactions together. When we understand what someone else is going through, we can respond in a way that makes sense and feels authentic.
- Empathy provides an emotional bridge that promotes pro-social behaviour.
- This capacity enables us to perceive the emotions of others, resonate with them emotionally and cognitively, to take in the perspective of others, and to distinguish between our own and others' emotions.





Benefits of empathy



- **Empathy encourages openness.**

When you know someone understands you, you're more likely to share your true feelings. This openness can make relationships better.

- **Empathy can make you and the other person feel better**

When you're there for someone during tough times, you help carry the load, making it lighter for both of you.

- **Empathy helps to strengthen emotional intelligence**

Empathy helps us understand and appreciate others for who they are. It encourages acceptance, open-mindedness and patience, helps us forgive and let go.

- **Empathy encourages connection**

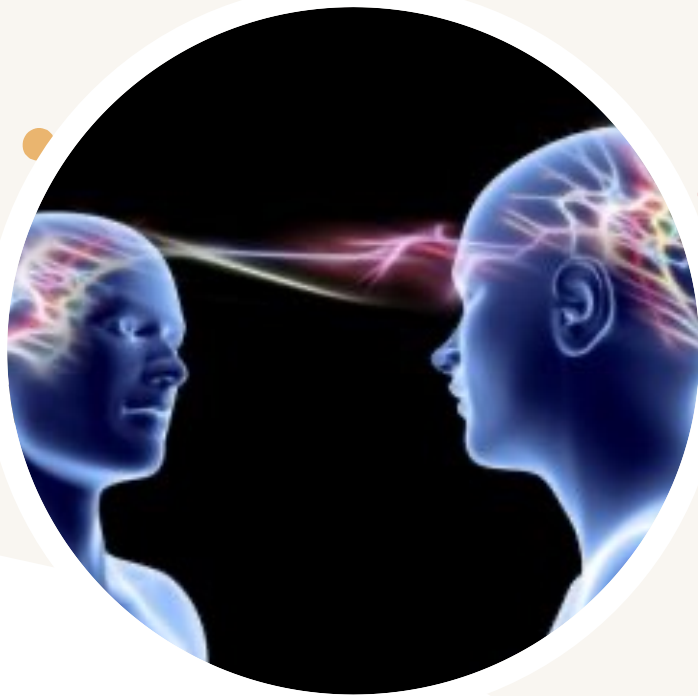
Being empathetic is like having a sixth sense. You're more aware of what's going on around you, making you a better friend, family member, and co-worker.

Do you have empathy?

Empathy is not necessarily a universal response to the suffering of others.
Here are some competences of empathic people:

- You are good at really listening to what others have to say.
- People often tell you about their problems.
- You are good at picking up on how other people are feeling.
- You often think about how other people feel.
- Other people come to you for advice.
- You often feel overwhelmed by tragic events.
- You try to help others who are suffering.
- You are good at telling when people aren't being honest.
- You sometimes feel drained or overwhelmed in social situations.
- You care deeply about other people.
- You find it difficult to set boundaries in your relationships.





Hardwired Capacity

- Functional magnetic resonance imaging demonstrates the existence of a neural mechanism that allows empathic individuals to exhibit unconscious mimicry of the postures, mannerisms, and facial expressions of others .
- People unconsciously mimic the actions and facial expressions of others through brain mechanisms that mirror the actions of others by stimulating the same motor and sensory areas in the observers' brains as the person they are observing.

Types of empathy



Cognitive

Understanding another person's mental state and what they might be thinking



Affective

Understanding another person's emotions and responding appropriately



Somatic

Physically experiencing what another person is feeling



Somatic empathy



- The expression: “I feel your pain” is much more than just a figure of speech. Neuroimaging studies demonstrate that we actually do feel the pain of others, but only in an attenuated form.
- Attenuation makes it possible to empathize but not become overwhelmed with another’s personal distress. Our own distress would likely render us less helpful.
- Indeed, there is a balance between empathy leading to helping or distancing behaviors due to personal distress.





Affective empathy

- Empathy helps connect people to others.
- Because of the evolutionary development of this brain-based capacity, affective empathy, or emotional sharing, most easily occurs among members of the same “tribe”.
- Individuals tend to have the most empathy for others who look or act like them, for others who have suffered in a similar way, or for those who share a common goal.

Cognitive empathy

- Cognitive empathy involves being able to understand another person's mental state and what they might be thinking in response to the situation.
- This is related to what psychologists refer to as the theory of mind or thinking about what other people are thinking.
- Cognitive empathy must play a role when a lack of emotional empathy exists because of racial, ethnic, religious, or physical differences, conscious and unconscious biases.



What is empathic listening?



- Empathy allows us to form bonds with other people. Through empathy, we help our friends go through hard times and celebrate their successes.
- Empathy is an ability to understand and experience someone else's feelings and to adopt someone else's viewpoint.
- The empathic listening begins with the intent to immerse ourselves fully in the other person and what they are experiencing.
- Empathic listening supports the speaker, creates intimacy by identifying feelings, and allows the speaker to find solutions.





• Empathy is about finding echoes of
another person in yourself



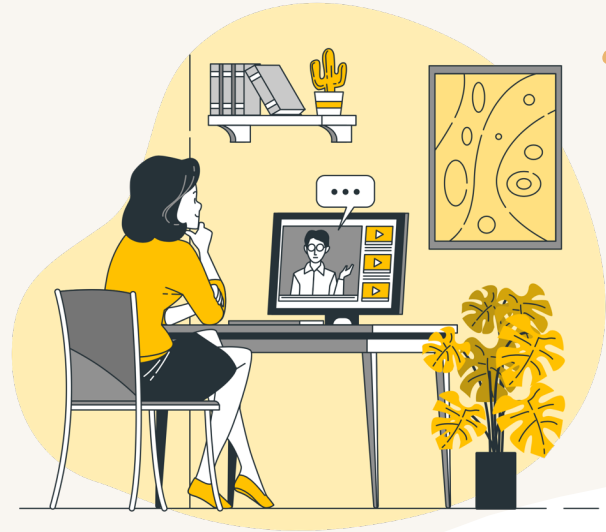
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Helpfull concepts



Perspective Taking

- Perspective taking is the capacity to see a person's situation from his or her point of view.
- Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their perspective, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position.
- Valuing the other person increase perspective taking and also increased empathic concern which, in turn, increased helping.
- Valuing a person in need is an important, and largely overlooked, predictor of feeling empathy for that person.



☁ Compassion, empathy and sympathy ☀



- Empathy is when you truly understand and feel someone else's emotions. It's like stepping into their shoes.
- Sympathy, on the other hand, is more about feeling sorry for someone without necessarily feeling their emotions the same way they do.
- Compassion is a tender response to the perception of another's suffering. Compassion cannot exist without empathy, as they are part of the same perception and response continuum that moves human beings from observation to action.



“Love and compassion
are necessities not
luxuries. Without
them humanity
cannot survive.”

Dalai Lama

Self-empathy .

- It is necessary to ensure that social workers have the necessary resources to remain empathic toward others.
- Human beings have natural tendency to understand the experience of others, leading to helping behaviors.
- However, when emotionally overloaded, overwhelmed, exploited, or burned out, the capacity for empathy declines as a result of the degree of emotional labor expended.
- It is critical that social workers and caregivers exercise self-care to maintain healthy levels of empathy.

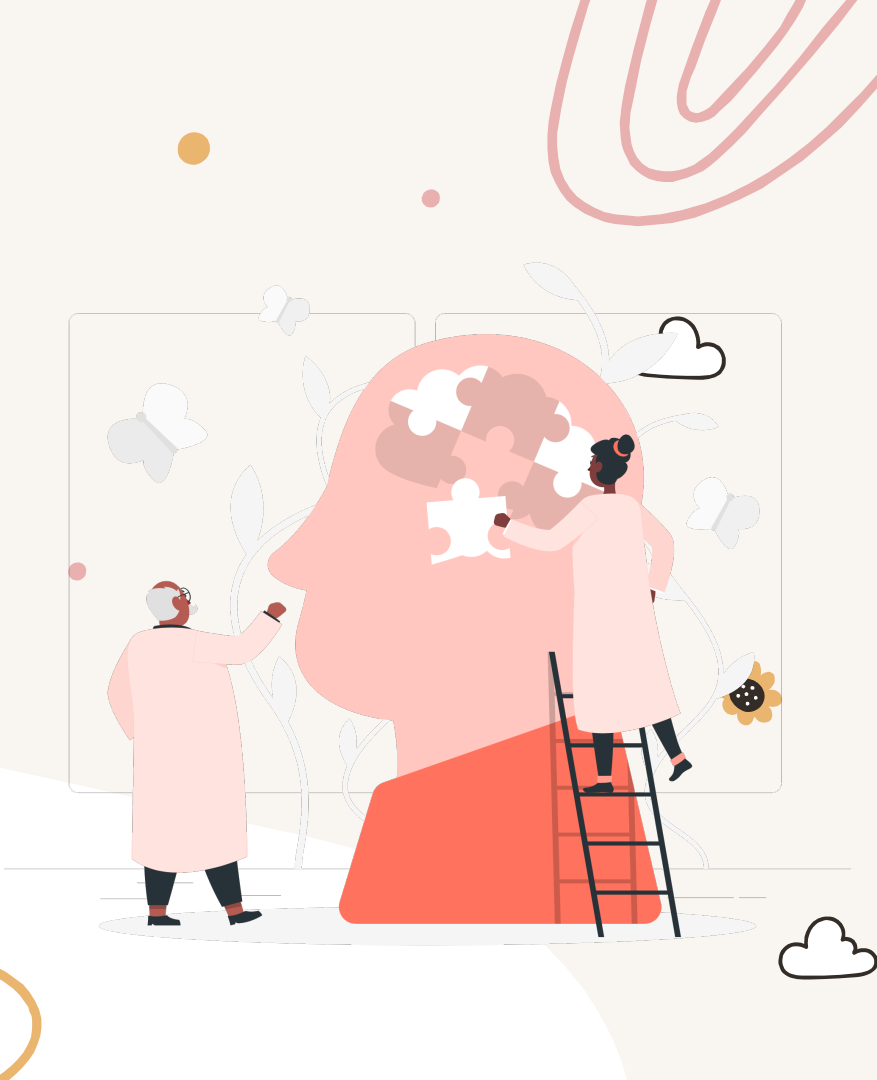


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Techniques: How to help people in need

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5 ways to show empathy



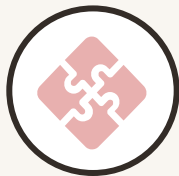
Listen carefully to what others are saying



Share your own feelings and experiences



Don't jump to conclusions about how someone feels



Be aware of your own opinions and how they might colour your judgement

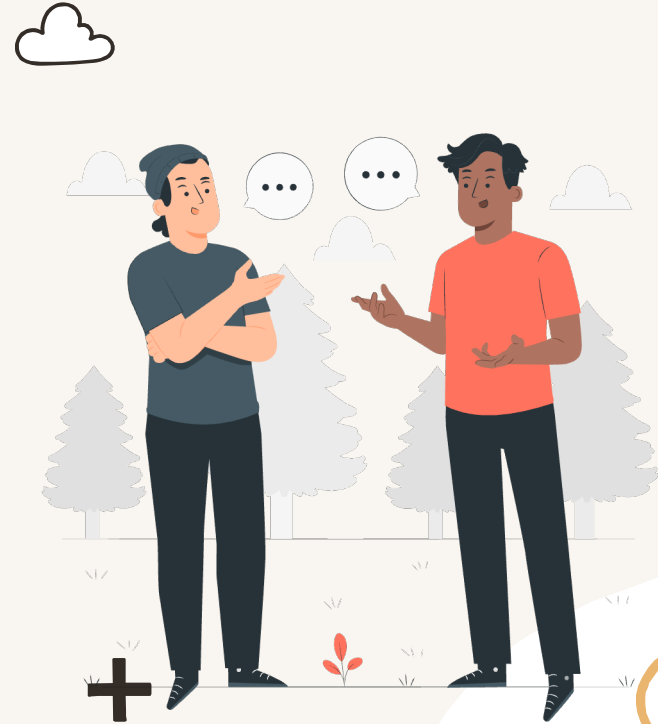


Offer your support, whether it's a helping hand or a listening ear



Active Listening

- Face the speaker and have eye contact
- Pay attention to the non-verbal cues too
- Don't interrupt
- Listen without judgment or jumping to conclusions
- Don't start planning what to say next
- Show that you're listening
- Don't impose your opinions or solutions
- Stay focussed
- Ask questions
- Paraphrase and summarise



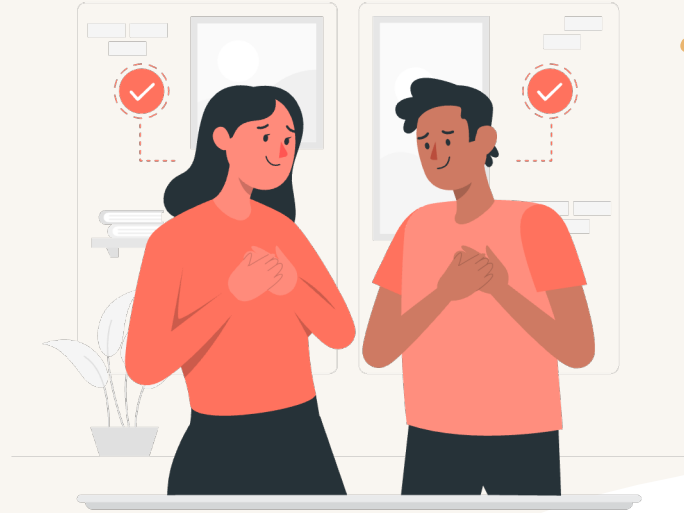
Improve Your Empathic Listening Skills

- **Practice empathic awareness skills**
 1. Recognize the inherent dignity and value in yourself as well as the speaker.
 2. Develop a personal desire to listen to others.
 3. Think of positive qualities of the other person.



Improve Your Empathic Listening Skills

- Practice empathic listening skills
1. Transform your listening skills and quiet your mind.
 2. Listen through the words, fully and openly.
 3. Vow not to interrupt people.
 4. Say back to the speaker what they said to you, capturing the emotion



Examples of Empathic Questions

- - You seem upset. Do you want to talk?
 - Tell me what happened.
 - How do you feel about this?
 - What was it that caused you to feel that way?
 - You sound frustrated (angry, sad, or fearful.)
 - What can I do for you?
 - That sounds really hard.
 - How can I best support you?
 - What do you need right now?



Watch out for red flags

- Sometimes, the ability of a person to function in daily routines can become severely impacted.
- Watch out for signs of self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.
- These behaviours may signal that a person needs additional support of a mental health professional.
- Refer to mental health professionals when appropriate.



04

Exercises to develop empathy



Practice mindfulness to build awareness

- When it comes to moving towards being a more empathetic person, you may have to build awareness before you can develop empathy.
- By engaging in mindfulness practices in your daily life, you'll strengthen your ability to be fully present with what's around you, a necessary skill to becoming a more empathetic person.



Be curious about other people's experiences

- Dive into books, movies, and conversations to help you imagine what someone else's lived experience might be like.
- Putting yourself in another person's shoes can help you deepen your understanding of others.
- Ask yourself what emotions you'd feel in their position and what type of support you'd want to be offered.



Listen with your full attention



- When someone's talking, focus on their words and feelings, not what you'll say next. Reflect back what they say to show you're really listening.
- Pay attention to non-verbal clues. People say a lot without words. Keep an eye out for facial expressions, gestures, and posture. These silent signals can tell you how someone is feeling.
- Ask questions instead of making assumptions. Thoughtful questions demonstrate a level of care and a curiosity to understand another person's unique experiences and point of view.

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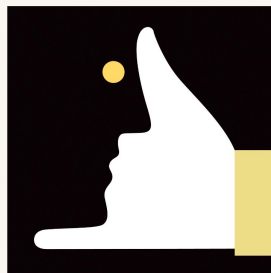


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