# Social Emotional Learning Lesson

## You, Me, Empathy!

### 7th - 12th Grade

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<tr>
<th>SEL Competency: <strong>Social Awareness</strong></th>
<th>SEL Sub-Competency: <strong>Empathy</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Lesson Concepts:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lesson Objectives:</strong></td>
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<td>• I can put myself in another’s shoes, see the other person’s point of view and understand the other person’s feelings</td>
<td>• Definition and understanding of empathy and sympathy</td>
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<td>• How to empathize with others?</td>
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### Why this Lesson Matters:
Empathy is important for how we get along with people. Whether you can be a good friend, get hired for a job, be successful with a team of others... all of those things depend on being able to understand how other people might see a situation and how they are feeling. Empathy is at the root of all healthy relationships. It helps you know how your actions affect others, what actions you need to take to be a good friend or teammate, and it helps you understand more about the people and the world around you. ([www.talkingtree.com](http://www.talkingtree.com))

### Materials:
- Community circle centerpiece and talking piece
- Computer to show video
- *Walk a Mile in Another Person’s Shoes* Handout
- Review activity for possible materials

### Session Length and Pacing:
- Community Circle – 10 minutes
- Lesson, Group Activity and Role Play – 30 minutes
- Activity – 20-30 minutes
- **Total** - 60-90 minutes

### Morning Circle Question:
- What is empathy, and how is it different from sympathy? List some actions that show the differences between empathy and sympathy.
- What does this phrase mean? “Don’t criticize someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.”
- Why do you think it is easier for some people to empathize with others? What makes it difficult to show empathy?
- What images of empathy do you see around you on TV and in the movies? What effects do you think the media might have on how we act toward other people?

https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/growing/empathy.pdf

### Morning Circle COVID-19 Question Consideration:
- What are feeling you have about Covid-19?
- Did someone help you understand your feelings?
- Could you tell how other people felt about Covid-19?

### LESSON

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Teach Learning Objectives and Examples

- Say, “Today we are going to talk about empathy, sympathy and perspective taking. To start the lesson we are going to watch a video titled “Empathy Can Change the World.” While you are watching think about your definition of empathy.
  - “Empathy Can Change the World”
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=143&v=aU3QfyqvHk8&feature=emb_logo
  - Ask students to share their definition of empathy.

- Say, “the definition of empathy is the ability to understand how someone else is feeling or to understand the situation they are in. It is the ability to “put yourself in someone else’s shoes” and to understand the way a situation might make them feel.”
  (www.talkingtree.com)

  Say, “first, empathy is about sharing an emotion with someone, or feeling the way they feel, even if you aren’t in the same situation. When you feel an emotion along with someone, even if you are not directly affected by whatever is causing their situation, that’s empathy.”
  (www.talkingtree.com)

- Provide these examples:
  Example 1: Have you ever felt sad with a friend just because he was sad? That’s empathy! So for example, if you feel sad with your friend because he didn’t make the soccer team (even though you aren’t affected by him not making the team)... that’s empathy. Sharing his sadness is a kind of empathy.
    (www.talkingtree.com)

  Example 2: Have you ever been with a friend who just got a girlfriend and he’s so excited and you get super excited too? If you are feeling excited that’s empathy. Being excited with and for your friend is a kind of empathy.
    (www.talkingtree.com)

- **Sympathy**: Say, “Sympathy sounds like empathy, but they are different. Sympathy is having a shared feeling of pity, sorrow, sadness, compassion, etc. for another person. Sympathy is feeling for while empathy is feeling with.”
  https://www.teachthought.com/learning/difference-empathy-sympathy/

  Example: A fellow classmates broke his leg and you watch him struggle to get down the hallway with his crutches. If you are thinking, “wow, that really stinks” then that sympathy.

  Example: Your boyfriends Grandmother died, so you send him and his family a card. You are feeling sad for him and his family, this is sympathy.

- **Perspective Taking**: Say, “Is about being able to understand someone else’s way of looking at a situation, even if you see it differently. We often call this “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes” and it means you see things from their point of view, or from their perspective. Having empathy means you can step back from the way you see a situation and think about how someone else might feel from their side of the story.
  (www.talkingtree.com)

  Example 1: Have you ever thought a game was really fun but your friend felt it wasn’t fair? If you saw your friend was bothered by the game and understood she was not having a good time even though you were... that’s empathy. You showed empathy by understanding how things felt from her side of the situation.
    (www.talkingtree.com)
**Example 2:** Have you ever noticed that your mom is frustrated while she’s tidying up your room? You have taken a shower and left your wet towel and dirty clothes on the floor. But you think about it from your mom’s perspective and realize that she does not like picking up a messy space and she feels frustrated at having the extra work. When you look at the situation from your mom’s side of the story (from her perspective) and understand how she might be feeling... that’s empathy.

(www.talkingtree.com)

- Say, “we will discuss perspective taking more in another lesson, so the remainder of this lesson will be on empathy.”


- Say, “Empathy involves all aspects of how we communicate, which includes how we communicate and respect people using social media. We are going to watch a video that discusses empathy and how we interact with social media. In October of 2019, a group of high school students came together with some Instagram, Twitter and Facebook influencers to address negative social media comments and how they are encouraging followers to pay it forward with positive comments, lets listen to the recap of their work together.”


- Ask students the following after watching the video:
  - How is empathy related to social media?
  - What is good about social media? Possible answers:
    - stay connected with friends and family
    - volunteer or get involved with a campaign, nonprofit, or charity
    - enhance their creativity by sharing ideas, music, and art
    - meet and interact with others who share similar interests
    - communicate with educators and fellow students
  - What are some bad things about social media? Possible answers:
    - post photos of themselves online or use their real names on their profiles
    - reveal their birthdates and interests
    - post their school name and the town where they live
    - say mean things about people, start rumors


**Group Activity**


**Role Play**

Say, “We have reviewed the definition of empathy, I’ve provided you with some examples, and we discussed how to be empathetic with social media. Now let us practice.”

Directions: Use the “Walk a Mile in Another Person’s Shoes” handout. With a partner, read through the scenarios, select two of them, then discuss what is happening. What are the characters feeling? How do their actions and words show this? How are they not being
empathetic? Next, role-play the situations using strategies that show empathy toward one another.

**Teacher Preparation:** Read both activities and decide which activity is appropriate for your class. For Activity 1, decide if this activity will apply to your class, grade level or whole school. Determine if the messages will be posted on social media and/or the school. Break students into groups or have them work independently.

**Activity 1:**
- Life can be so hectic that we may not always take the time to try to be sensitive to other people’s feelings and experiences. To help remind students throughout school about trying to be empathetic, we are going to create Public Service Agency messages to share on social media and print to post around the school or classroom. First, come up with a catchy, memorable phrase or sentence that serves as a friendly reminder to be empathetic and sensitive to other people’s feelings and experiences. Then create or download images that illustrate or complement your message.
  
  ![https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/6to8/personal/growing/empathy.pdf](https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/6to8/personal/growing/empathy.pdf)

**Activity 2:** This can be done independently or assign partners/groups.
- Find or create a poem, song, or scene in a story or TV show and discuss how it portrays empathy.

**Closing Circle Question:**
- How will you practice the skill of recognizing another’s feelings this week? Who will be your first person to practice with?

**Digital Learning Adaptations:**

**Lesson:** Watch the video “What is Empathy?” at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icIIUdTEQnU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icIIUdTEQnU) and “Empathy Can Change the World” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=143&v=aU3QfyqvkHk8&feature=emb_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=143&v=aU3QfyqvkHk8&feature=emb_logo) Have students answer the following questions:
- What is empathy, and how is it different from sympathy? List some actions that show the differences between empathy sympathy.
- What does this saying mean? “Don’t criticize someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.”
- Why do you think it’s easier for some people to empathize with others? What makes it difficult to show empathy?

**Activity:** Showing empathy toward others can be tough to do, especially when you are experiencing strong emotions yourself. Watch a 30- minute, age-appropriate TV show and use the handout to examine the ways characters on the show are sensitive to other people and ways that they are not. Once you have completed the chart, pick one situation from the TV episode and determine how the characters might have acted more empathetically. Rewrite the scene with these revisions. ([https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/6to8/personal/growing/empathy.pdf](https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/6to8/personal/growing/empathy.pdf))

**Send to teacher**

**References/Resources:**


- Empathy 9-12: KidsHealth in the Classroom [https://teenshealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/growing/empathyPRE_1-20-11.pdf?ref=search](https://teenshealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/growing/empathyPRE_1-20-11.pdf?ref=search)
Teaching Kids to Be Smart About Social Media

Indiana, Department of Education Educational Neuroscience Toolkit: Built Upon A Neurodevelopmental Culturally Responsive Framework.
file:///C:/Users/DavisTara/Metropolitan%20Regional%20Education%20Service%20Agency/School%20Climate%20Tea m%20-%20General/SEL%20Project/Resources/educational-neuroscience-toolkit-cover.pdf

The Difference Between Empathy and Sympathy https://www.teachthought.com/learning/difference-empathy-sympathy/