

# Connect with empathy

## 3 steps to the activity realisation



### Step 1 – preparation phase

In today's fast-paced world we tend to become more and more absorbed with ourselves, sometimes neglecting our relationships, eventually stepping further away from being able to empathise with others. However, relating and empathising with others can be a very enriching experience. It allows us to learn from others, about ourselves and the way we approach new experiences. You can therefore implement this exercise whenever you feel that young people need to re-connect with each other as a group. As a first step, you would think about their current life situation: which (controversial) issues may be of interest to them. Prepare moderation cards and write down one controversial topic on each card. Collate all other material required for this exercise. Also prepare questions that you could ask during the discussion in Step 2.

### Step 2 – activity phase

As a first step, engage the young adults in a conversation about learning from others. Why is it important to learn from others' opinions? Why is it an enriching experience? Have these experiences made them change their behaviour in certain respects or the way they approach challenges? Explain to the participants that people disagree on topics, because of different worldviews or experiences they have made. By showing empathy for other people's opinions, we allow ourselves to learn from their experiences. Next, divide them in pairs of 4. One youngster draws a card and expresses his/her opinion on the controversial topic for 3 minutes (without interruption). The other youngster is listening carefully and is not allowed to say anything. The aim is for the listeners to empathise with the talkers viewpoint. Afterwards, the listening partner has only got one minute to recap what the other one has said, but without expressing one's own opinion. The other 2 meanwhile function as silent observers and then assess how the tone and body language of the speakers helped to convey the message. Finally, the young adults discuss their roles, what was difficult / fun? How were they able to empathise with the person? How has his / her viewpoint contributed to a different view on the topic. This activity can be repeated with reversed partner roles and different topics.

### Step 3 – wrap up phase

To wrap up the activity, the participants summarise the value of the activity. How did it feel to put oneself in someone else's shoes? Not only will this reflection exercise raise young people's awareness of empathy, but it will also show them that staying open to new experiences is a valuable source of learning.



Type of activity:  
Group dynamic activity

Value of the activity:  
This activity aims at building up conscious relationships with others. Practicing empathy and being able to show empathy to other people can serve as a source of learning. This helps us to better relate with others, resulting in more meaningful relationships.



Timing:

Preparation: 20 min.  
Implementation: 40 min.  
Checking learning progress: 10 min.



Activity follow-up:

<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/teaching-with-empathy-why-its-important>



Other value case box components:

It is recommended to implement this exercise with young adults that are already familiar with each other.

Material:  
Moderation cards  
Pens



Value quoted: