

Foundations

Empathy exercise

Supplies Needed:

- A bowl/hat
- Pen/pencil
- Paper

Best for ages 9 and up. **The purpose of this activity is help children develop their “perspective-taking” muscles.**

People generally relate to others based on their own thoughts and feelings and it takes practice to learn how to put oneself in someone else’s shoes and recognize that others may often feel differently.

Everyone responds to triggers and stress in their own way. When one acquires this understanding, it is easier not to rush to judgement and to provide empathy to others in need.

1. Prompt your children to write down one situation that was difficult for them. This could range from failing a test after a lot of studying, to experiencing the death of someone close.
2. Once they write down the experience (parents should participate in this as well), have them fold the paper and place it in a bowl or a hat.
3. Pass the hat around and have everyone pick up one of the papers (if someone gets their own, switch it out for a different one).
4. Have each person read the scenario that they picked and express how they envision they would have felt if they went through that experience.
5. Once everyone has their turn, ask each person to talk about which struggle was theirs, and label how they actually felt when going through it.
6. Explore how everyone experiences and copes with struggle in their own way.



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