

Teacher's Guide

This guide includes:

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Standards

This guide correlates with the following National Health Education Standards:

Students will:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
- Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

National Health Education Standards: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm>



Grades 9 to 12 • Personal Health Series Empathy

When life seems so fast-paced that we have difficulty taking time for ourselves, it's easy to be less compassionate toward those around us. These activities will help students understand what empathy is and how they can take steps toward acting more empathetically.

Related KidsHealth Links

Articles for Teens:

Understanding Other People

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/understanding-others.html

Emotional Intelligence

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/eq.html

What Does It Mean to Be a Friend?

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/friend-comments.html

I Hurt My Friends' Feelings. What Should I Do?

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/apologize.html

Apologizing

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/apologies.html

Getting Along With Your Teachers

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/teacher-relationships.html

Talking to Your Parents – or Other Adults

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/talk-to-parents.html

Discussion Questions

Note: The following questions are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

1. What is empathy, and how is it different from sympathy? List some actions that show the differences between empathy sympathy.
2. What does this saying mean? "Don't criticize someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes."
3. Why do you think it's easier for some people to empathize with others? What makes it difficult to show empathy?
4. 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?



Activities for Students

Note: The following activities are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

Walk a Mile in Another Person's Shoes

Objectives:

Students will:

- Recognize actions that don't show empathy
- Identify ways to show empathy

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- "Walk a Mile in Another Person's Shoes" handout

Class Time:

60 minutes

Activity:

In the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch gives his daughter Scout a tip about empathy: "If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

You've may have heard this old saying, that puts it another way: "Don't criticize someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes."

Read the articles at TeensHealth.org to learn about actions that show empathy, as well as those that don't. With a partner, select and discuss two scenarios from the "Walk a Mile in Another Person's Shoes" handout. 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.

Extension:

1. Choose a song, poem, or scene in a book, movie or TV show, and write an essay on how the characters show empathy for each other.



Plan of Action

Objectives:

Students will:

- Identify how empathy exists in the school community
- Discuss ways for students to show more empathy toward one another

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- Pen and lined paper

Class Time:

1 hour

Activity:

Mother Teresa – who spent most of her life helping the poorest, sickest people of Kolkata, India – once said, “I want you to be concerned with your next door neighbor. Do you know your next door neighbor?”

How does this quotation apply to empathy?

Using these thoughts and the articles at TeensHealth.org, write article for your school newspaper about empathy in your school community. What acts of empathy have you seen? Where could there be improvement? Write about how students and faculty could get to know each other better and show empathy each day.

Extension:

1. List everyday ways you can show empathy to the people in your life – classmates, teachers, family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Reproducible Materials

Handout: Walk a Mile in Another Person's Shoes

KidsHealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/growing/empathy_handout1.pdf



Name: _____

Date: _____

Walk a Mile in Another Person's Shoes

Instructions: With a partner, read through the scenarios, select two of them, then discuss what's 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.

1

A group of students is milling about in the hall. Micah teases Adam, a younger student, about not making the soccer team, and Adam argues back. The argument escalates to a shouting match.

2

You're excited to go out with your friends on Friday night, but your mom wants you to go out to dinner with the family. You refuse, your mother grounds you, and you storm to your room.

3

Sarah is telling Jeanne how hurt she is by her recent break-up with her boyfriend, but Jeanne isn't really paying attention and keeps changing the subject. Sarah eventually yells at Jeanne for not listening to her.

4

The bell is about to ring, and everyone is rushing to their next class. In the rush, Samantha accidentally knocks books out of Dan's hands. Everyone laughs and keeps moving on while Dan turns red and scurries to pick up his books.

5

You get your math test back only to discover you got a low grade. You're not surprised because you've been really busy getting ready for the school play, but when your friend picks up the test and starts showing everyone, you feel angry and embarrassed. You rip the test out of his hand and stomp away.

6

You have a big date this weekend and really want to borrow one of your sister's sweaters. When you ask her to borrow it, she says no because she doesn't want it to get ruined. You beg her, explaining that the date is very important, but she won't budge.