



LESSON HANDOUT

How to Be Empathetic

Directions: Using the guidelines and examples of empathetic questions, have a conversation with your partner. The pair share questions can be used as a jumping-off point for the conversation.

GUIDELINES

- 1 Actively listen.
 - Block out all surrounding noise and distractions.
 - Directly face the person you are listening to, and listen with your whole body.
 - Be attentive, and display good posture.
 - Make eye contact.
- 2 Listen without judgment.
- 3 Do not offer advice or try to fix any problems.
- 4 Do not think or worry about what you will say next.
- 5 Be curious and ask questions that are open-ended.
- 6 Even if you have not had the same experience, imagine what it must feel like.⁴⁸

EXAMPLES OF EMPATHETIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

- 1 Tell me more.
- 2 How are you impacted by that?
- 3 How do you feel?
- 4 What difficulties are you having?
- 5 What do you enjoy about that?
- 6 What have you learned about yourself?
- 7 How did you overcome that?

PAIR SHARE QUESTIONS

- 1 Share who you live with and how you feel about them.
- 2 Share a time that you felt a strong feeling.
- 3 Share a challenge you have had in your life.

NOTE

You might think in your mind, I cannot imagine experiencing that, as your partner shares their story. If you are having difficulty putting yourself in your partner's shoes, focus on the values that you have in common and the feelings that you can relate to, to help you "feel with" your classmate.

⁴⁸ Adapted from Elliot D. Cohen, "How to Be Empathetic," *Psychology Today*, May 17, 2015, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-would-aristotle-do/201505/how-be-empathetic>.