

Empathy

Activity 1 – Recognize Responds

Activity type: Cognitive method

Learning goals: This exercise can help participants to learn about the different ways they can respond to a person in need of support, and why empathy is usually a good way to assist other people in overcoming their difficulties.

Specificities: Individual or group activity, but shall be implemented in groups for the reflection part. The learners can go through the activity alone or in groups of 2 persons and then come back in one group to reflect upon their experience over the activity.

Duration: 45 minutes

Material needed: “The list with responses” & Dialogues ([link to online version](#))

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Instructions: There is a list of different types of responses that are common during interactions. Read each dialogue between A and B and decide what type of response B uses. Connect each type of response to each of the following “short dialogues” between user A and B.

This exercise has been inspired by the Bingo Exercise of Sherri Sorro (source: Sherri Sorro-AVP/ The transformer: <http://thetransformer.us/08-3.pdf>)

List of Responses

- advising
- one-upping
- educating
- consoling
- story-telling
- shutting-down
- sympathizing
- interrogating
- explaining
- correcting
- fixing it
- emphathising

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Dialogues

1. A: I've been trying to get this weight off and just feel frustrated.
B: What actions have you taken so far for that?
2. A: I'm worried about having enough money to pay my debts this month.
B I can lend you some money.
3. A: I lost my job.
B: Cheer up, let's go have a drink and forget about it.
4. A: Look at my scar from my accident.
B: That's tiny, look at what I got when I was hit by a bike.
5. A: I was standing in the cue to get into the bank for 1 hour and it was too hot and people around be starting shouting and pushing each other.
B: That reminds me of the time.....
6. A: I have so much to do today.
B: Are you feeling overwhelmed and wanting help?
7. A: It's scary for me to get up and speak in front of people.
B: I think you should join a theater team.
8. A: I'm really sad over your saying that I'm not a good mother.
B: That's not what I said.
9. A: My husband found a new job and had to move in a town 300Km away from our home.
B: See it as a chance to learn how is to leave alone.
10. B: A: I feel so sad that my son was expelled from school due to his bad behaviour towards his professor.
B: It's not your fault, you are a good parent. You did the best you could.
11. A: I'm really upset. You promised to be here at 23.00 and it is now after midnight.
B: It's only because the traffic was terrible.
12. A: I just got the results from the medical exams and it was what I most feared.
B: Oh, that's terrible. I'm so sorry.

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Questions for reflection:

After having finished the matching exercise participants get in groups for further reflections upon their choices.

- Which of the response style is most appropriate in a counselling session?
- Which is/are not appropriate and a counsellor should avoid?
- What role might empathy play in your workplace, classroom and community?
- How has this activity impacted you?

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