

### **Activity 3 – Empathy Role playing**

**Activity type:** Role playing

**Learning goals:** The exercise of role playing based on participants' experiences aims at making participants aware of the emotional status of the speaker and trying to respond in an empathetic way and on the other hand at experiencing the feeling of knowing that the other person is trying to get into their shoes or not.

**Specificities:** Group activity (work in pairs)

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials needed:** none (You can print Instructions-page of this pdf, if needed)

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### **Instructions:**

Get in pairs. One person will be in the role of the practitioner and the other will be the client. The client shares an experience where s/he came up with strong feelings (negative or positive). The other person makes his/her best effort to respond in an empathetic way, trying also to notice signs of emotion in the partner's face or body language.

Some phrases the practitioner can use are:

“Given what you said about your... , I imagine you might be feeling \_ . Is that what you're feeling?”

“I imagine you might be feeling...,” or “I imagine you might have felt...”

Role play for 5 minutes and then change roles.

At the end of the 2 sessions, get back in the team to discuss how well the “practitioners” expressed their empathy and what was your overall experience of this exercise.

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### Questions for reflection:

- How did the client feel?
- Has the practitioner used empathetic questions?
- How did the practitioner feel? Was it difficult for him/her to get into the client's shoes?
- Did the body language help him/her in recognizing the feelings of the client?
- What did you learn from this task?

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## Useful information for the trainer:

This is a role-play activity. Invite trainees to get in pairs. One will be the practitioner and the other the client. They will practice both roles.

The client will bring into discussion an emotionally intense experience (negative or positive) that s/he wants to share with the “practitioner”. It’s important for the trainees who are in the role of the “client” to feel safe/secured when they go for their self-disclosure. So, they can share any experience they feel comfortable to share and to the extent they want to.

The practitioner makes his best effort to respond in an empathetic way, trying also to notice signs of emotion in the partner’s face or body language (listener).

Once the practitioner knows how his/her partner is feeling, he/she can use an empathetic phrase such as:

“Given what you said about your... , I imagine you might be feeling \_ . Is that what you’re feeling?”

“I imagine you might be feeling...,” or “I imagine you might have felt...”

This will last for 5 minutes. After the 1<sup>st</sup> role play, the roles are reversed and the process starts again.

When both trainees finish with the assigned task they come in one group to reflect upon their experience.

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