

Module 4- EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. To have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society at large, we need to understand and care about other peoples' needs, desires and feelings. Without empathy, our communication with others will amount to one-way traffic. Our page on empathy defines empathy as '*feeling with*' someone – being able to put yourself in their place *as if you were them*, and feeling those feelings. It explains that there are several different elements that make up empathy. The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner also: the capacity for this. the imaginative projection of a subjective state into an object so that the object appears to be infused with it.

Sympathy vs. Empathy

Sympathy and *empathy* are closely related words, bound by shared origins and the similar circumstances in which each is applicable, yet they are not synonymous. For one thing, *sympathy* is considerably older than *empathy*, having existed in our language for several hundred years before its cousin was introduced, and its greater age is reflected in a wider breadth of meaning. *Sympathy* may refer to "feelings of loyalty" or "unity or harmony in action or effect," meanings not shared by *empathy*. In the contexts where the two words do overlap, *sympathy* implies sharing (or having the capacity to share) the feelings of another, while *empathy* tends to be used to mean imagining, or having the capacity to imagine, feelings that one does not actually have.

Genetics

Neuroscientific basis of empathy

Contemporary neuroscience has allowed us to understand the neural basis of the human mind's ability to understand and process emotion. Studies today enable us to see the activation of mirror neurons and attempt to explain the basic processes of empathy. By isolating these mirror neurons and measuring the neural basis for human mind reading and emotion sharing abilities, science has come one step closer to finding the reason for reactions like empathy. Neuroscientists have already discovered that people scoring high on empathy tests have especially busy mirror neuron systems in their brains. Empathy is a spontaneous sharing of affect, provoked by witnessing and sympathizing with another's emotional state

Environmental influences

The environment has been another interesting topic of study. Many theorize that environmental factors, such as parenting style and relationships, play a significant role in the development of empathy in children. Empathy promotes pro social relationships, helps mediate aggression, and allows us to relate to others, all of which make empathy an important emotion among children. A study done by Caroline Tisot looked at how a variety of environmental factors affected the development of empathy in young children. Parenting style, parent empathy, and prior social experiences were looked at.

IMPORTANCE OF EMPATHY

- Motivate to helping others
- Empathy is an important social skill
- It allows you to better connect with people and foster healthy relationship
- Empathy encourages us to respect and care for each other
- Empathy encourages us to show compassion, understanding for others and help make our communities better place to live
- Empathy can see in every kind of relationship
- Empathy is power full force to maintain social order and social cooperation
- It is the mechanism that allows people to understand and relate each other
- It helps to develop intimacy, trust and belongingness
- Facilitates social bonding
- Enhance social support
- Promotes forgiveness
- Improve moral decision making
- Reduce prejudice
- Discourage anti- social behaviour
- Provide altruistic behaviour

- Helps to understand our own emotions
- Helps to understand other's emotions
- Health benefits