

# Empathy Practice Trio Outline and Directions

## PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

To practice connecting empathically with another person by guessing at feeling and needs.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Using the feelings and needs sheets and this template, we work in trios to connect empathically by guessing at feelings and needs in response to a specific situation.

## PREPARATION

Start out by remembering that the work is a practice in creating connection, so take a few moments to be present with your intention for connection. There is no right or wrong. Also, bear in mind that the practice is primarily an opportunity *to practice* our listening and empathy skills. So each Speaker may choose a story they feel comfortable sharing in this situation.

Decide who will take the role of the Listener (guesses at feelings and needs), the Speaker (shares their story), and the Observer (supports the Listener and Speaker by watching the time and ) for this first round.

Decide the time you have for each of the three rounds of practice.

## LISTENING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITY

This usually takes between 5-15 minutes depending on what is decided by the group.

- The Speaker talks about the topic.
- The Listener guesses at feelings and needs.
- The Observer monitors the time and asks the harvesting questions at the end of each round.

## HARVESTING

Allow three to five minutes for the harvesting. Bearing in mind that this is a practice in listening for feelings and needs, The Observer asks the following questions:

### Of the Speaker

1. How do you feel in this moment regarding the original situation?
2. How does it feel to have another person guess about your feelings and needs?
3. Do you experience any shifts in your thoughts or feelings about the original situation or in general?

### Of the Listener

1. Was it difficult or easy to guess at the feelings and needs?
2. Did you notice thoughts coming up about the person's situation while you were guessing at feelings and needs?
3. Is there anything else that seems meaningful to share at this time?

## ROUNDS 2 AND 3

When the Round 1 has been completed everyone swaps roles for another round. Repeat this until each person has taken the role of Speaker, Listener, and Observer.

### **Some guidelines for the Listener:**

The role of the Listener includes both listening to the speaker and also keeping their awareness on how they listen. When the Listener has heard as much as can be remembered, then the Listener demonstrates his/her listening by reflecting back what he/she heard.

- Speak as close as possible to the words that were originally spoken, a summary is ok.
- Use “I” statements e.g. “I heard you say...”, “I think you said...”
- The Listener may or may not match the intensity of the feelings heard.
- Check if the reflected content for accuracy, and if anything more wants to be added.
- We only need reflect like a mirror, we don’t need to include our opinions or interpretations.
- There are no right or wrong guesses. Each guess models curiosity and care, and can lead to greater clarity.

### **The role of the Observer includes:**

- Stays aware of the time
- Reminds the Speaker about the topic and where we are in the activity
- At the end of the session the Observer checks with the Speaker whether or not they feel heard
- And finally, offers the Listener an opportunity to describe what was easy or difficult or insightful about the exercise.

### **The role of the Speaker includes:**

- Addressing the relevant topic