

Practicing Empathy

Employability 9th

2022-2023

This lesson was adapted from the Yale RULER curriculum



Let's Get a Pulse of the Room

- In the past week. . .
 - What, for you, was the most **frustrating** part of this week?



Let's Get a Pulse of the Room

- In the past week. . .
 - What, for you, was the most **enjoyable** part of this week?



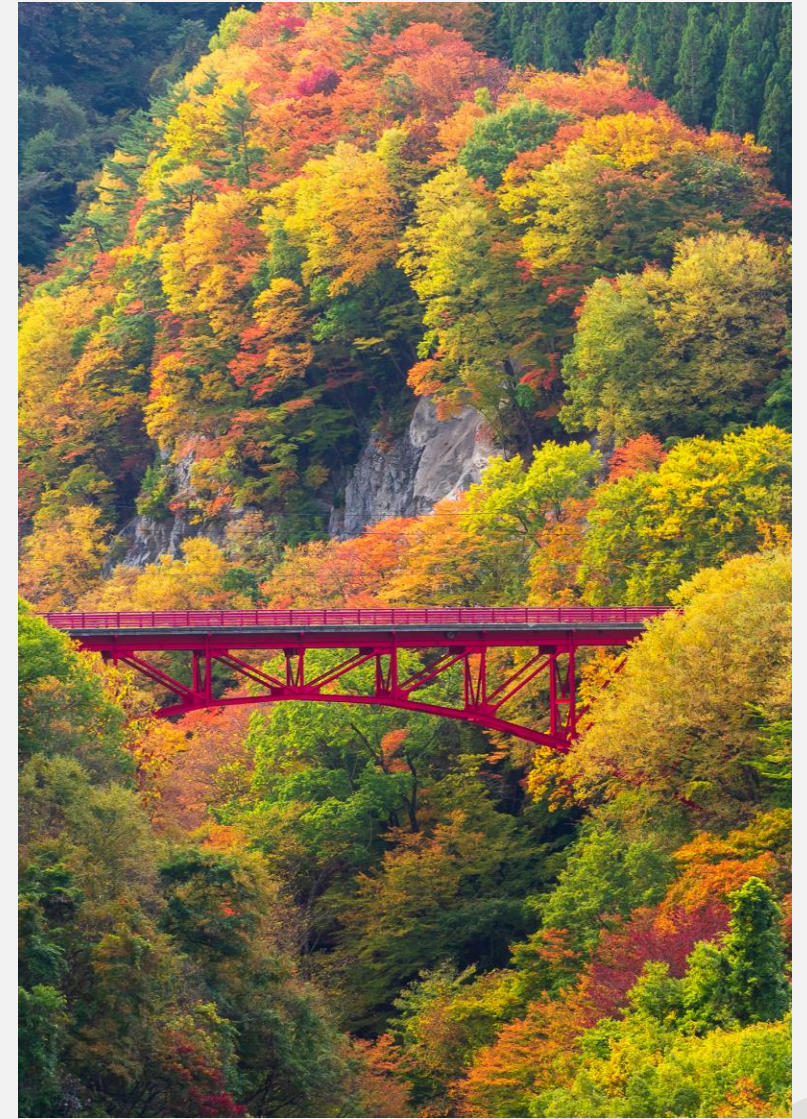
Essential Question

- What is the difference between empathy and sympathy?
- What is the benefit of showing empathy in relationships?

Why are we learning about this concept?

- Empathy:
 - Allows us to **build social connections** with others, even when we feel most alone
 - Teaches us the importance of **understanding other people's feelings and perspectives**
 - Helps us practice how to **respond appropriately** in social situations.
 - Helps us learn to **regulate** our own emotions
 - Promotes **helping** behaviors

Empathetic behaviors help create a safe space for us in school and beyond.



The Importance of Definitions: Group Activity

- In your groups of 3 or 4, use the Feeling Words handout provided by your teacher and match up the words to the definitions.



Let's Review the Answers!

How many did you get correct?

Which words were hardest to figure out?

- Empathy: Putting yourself in someone else's shoes and experiencing the same feelings as that person
- Sympathy: Feeling sadness or sorrow for the suffering or misfortune of someone else
- Consideration: Thinking about the thoughts and feelings of someone else
- Compassion: Feeling concerned and wanting to help someone who is suffering
- Pity: Feeling sorry, often in a condescending way, for someone because of his or her suffering or misfortune
- Commiseration: Expression of sadness for someone who is suffering, usually by sharing similar suffering you have experienced
- Altruism: Feelings and behavior that show a desire to help other people and a lack of selfishness



Let's Explore More About
Empathy with
Dr. Brené Brown





Brené Brown

- Clinical social worker, Doctorate in Philosophy and Social Work
- Academic Public Speaker
- Brown has spent decades studying the topics of courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy.
- She the author of five number-one New York Times bestsellers.
- Focuses on the themes of authentic leadership and wholeheartedness in families, schools, and organizations



As you listen to Brené Brown explaining the differences between sympathy and empathy, consider times in your life when you've experienced responses like these.



Turn to a partner and choose one of the questions to discuss:

1. What does empathy mean?
2. What role do you see empathy playing in relationships?
3. How have you shown and received empathy?
4. What might be some limitations or downfalls of empathetic responses?



Think of people in your life with whom you've had trouble empathizing, but would like to feel more empathy?

Keep those people in mind as you learn about a strategy for empathy.



Practicing Empathy with Active Listening

Take a moment to think about a recent, challenging situation with a friend, parent, sibling, or someone else.

You may not think you handled this conflict as well as you should have, and it isn't resolved to your liking.

- Now, fill out the Blueprint for Past Conflicts to reflect on the situation, independently.
- Keep names anonymous because you will be sharing the situation with a partner.

Before we share our past
conflict, let's learn about active
listening.

BEING A GOOD LISTENER



Practicing Active Listening!

- **Now, partner up and complete the activity using these steps:**
- Choose who will go first, then spend three minutes describing your situation to your partner. If you are the listener, use the active listening skills you just learned.
- After three minutes, the listener should take another three minutes asking the person open-ended, clarifying questions.
- Repeat the process by switching roles.
- After both partners have shared, give each other two minutes to share ideas for handling the situation differently the next time, or things you can do now to help the situation.



What are other times in your life when you might want to intentionally use active listening skills?

Hearing

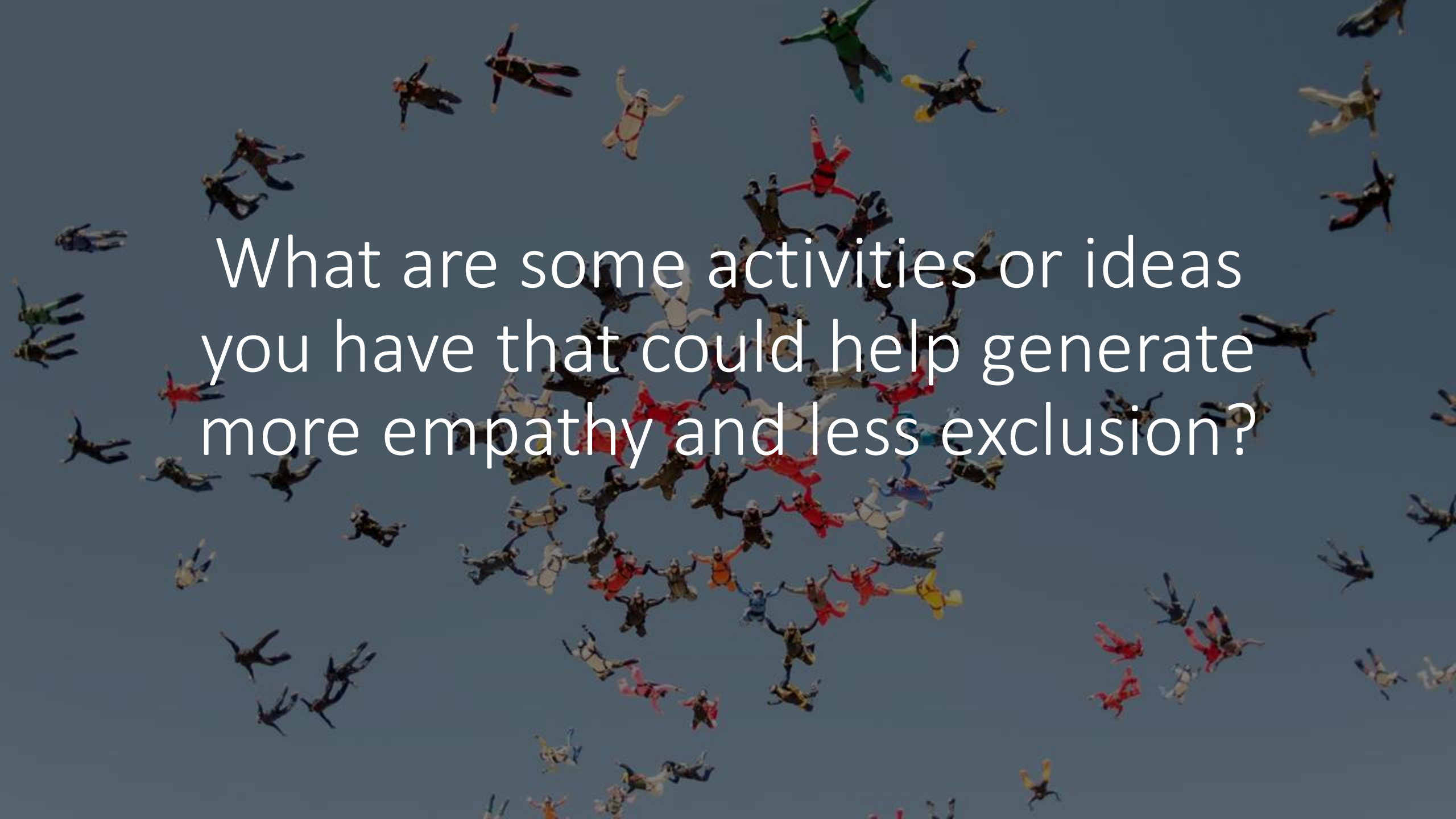
- Accidental
- Involuntary
- Effortless

Listening

- Focused
- Voluntary
- Intentional

What elements of our high school
environment discourage
empathetic behavior?

What elements of our high school environment encourage empathetic behavior?

A large group of skydivers are captured in mid-air against a clear blue sky. They are in various poses, some with arms outstretched, others in more dynamic, acrobatic positions. The skydivers are wearing colorful suits in shades of red, yellow, blue, green, and black. The overall scene conveys a sense of freedom, movement, and collective activity.

What are some activities or ideas
you have that could help generate
more empathy and less exclusion?

EMPATHY IS

SEEING WITH THE EYES OF ANOTHER,
LISTENING WITH THE EARS OF ANOTHER,
AND FEELING WITH THE HEART OF ANOTHER.

ALFRED ADLER

Teachers!

We want your feedback to help review this lesson.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions in this optional survey:

- [SEL Teacher Feedback](#)