

Compassion: Caring enough to do something about someone else's need.

At the middle and high school level, noticing a need and acting on it is a very reasonable expectation. Students this age have the ability to be empathetic (noticing and relating to the emotions of others) and also have the ability to choose to help.

As parents, we can move them toward compassion by encouraging them to have moments away from their phones or devices to notice and react to the world around them.

We can also find causes that mean something to them (even if it is not what we would choose) and find ways to contribute or help bring awareness to that issue. Showing them what compassion looks like in the real world will help them find ways to live it out beyond your home and their school.

I heard a story last week from a young man who learned a tough lesson at his first job:

"I have an embarrassing story, but it is inspiring to me. In my early days, I fell victim to an email scam where I was asked to purchase a \$200 gift card for my boss. I fell for it and later found out it was a scam. When I approached my boss, he insisted on covering the \$200 even after I told him not to. He told me we would chalk it up to \$200 worth of learning and move on. The lesson for me was a little bit about the scam, but more about compassion and helping others. I'll never forget that lesson."

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT COMPASSION:*For parent reflection:*

- How is compassion modeled to your child?
- What messages does your child get about compassion from adults in their life?
- How can you help your child practice compassion and empathy?

With your child:

- When is it easy to show compassion?
- When do you have trouble showing compassion?
- What could help you find moments to show compassion?
- How might compassion help YOU as well as help someone else?

COMPASSION

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Caring enough to do something about someone else's need

WEEK ONE:**What is compassion?**

Compassion is good for you, too! Research shows that helping others extends your life, fights off stress and depression, and gives us a sense of purpose and satisfaction. Caring about others' needs also prepares you for working with others at college or in your career, when your success and the success of others becomes more and more intertwined.

WEEK TWO:**We aren't always heroes (fixers). Sometimes we are listeners.**

Sometimes, people need a helper to show them compassion. Other times, showing empathy and compassion is simply about being a good listener. We can learn how to be a good listener and show empathy and care, even when that's all we have to give.

WEEK THREE:**How do I do something when the issue seems so big?**

It's tough. There is so much need in the world, so many people who need help, how can we know where to start? This month, instead of feeling overwhelmed by the different ways you are asked to help, try these strategies to take a first step.

WEEK FOUR:**CHALLENGE: Create your own compassion challenge**

Every community has different needs. This challenge invites you to think about your community's needs and what you might be able to do about them. Remember, a little compassion goes a long way in a group!