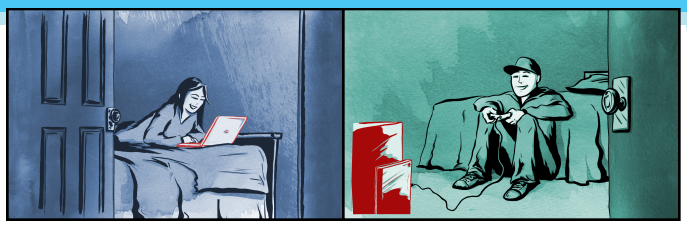
MODULE ONE: EMPATHY



EMPATHY

OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to explain the difference between empathy, sympathy, and apathy.
- Students will be able to define exploitation.
- Students will be able to demonstrate how empathy generates solutions to problems in their own communities.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION OF MODULE ONE:

What is empathy, and why is it important in my life?

STEP 1: TRANSITION

Explain that over the next five days, you'll be studying how empathy is an essential element to help answer this unit's essential question.

STEP 2: MEDIA

Play Module One Media. This media introduces the concepts of exploitation, empathy, sympathy, and apathy.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION

The film ends with a group discussion question: "Why is it difficult to empathize with someone you don't know, or someone who is different from you?" See page 11 for extended discussion questions.

STEP 4: CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Empathy Experience Activity: See page 12.

STEP 5: MEDIA ACTIVITY

Distribute an index card to each student. Then, play the Empathy Media Activity. Afterward, distribute the Empathy handout (page 14). Consider inviting students to work on the handout together in groups.

Did you remember to take the Pre-Unit Survey before starting?

Please begin with the Pre-Unit Survey. This short survey allows students to process what they already know (prior-learning assessment), and will create a basis for comparison after the unit is completed.

Essential Questions:

During Step 1 of each module, it is helpful to ask students to brainstorm their own answers for a few minutes before moving on to Step 2. Then, after Step 4, you can return to the question to informally assess learning.

Unit Vocabulary:

A glossary of all terms used in the unit is provided in Exhibit G (page 47).

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MODULE ONE: EMPATHY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FINAL QUESTION IN THE MEDIA:

"Why is it difficult to empathize with someone you don't know, or with someone who is different than you?"

1. What are the things that keep us from relating with people who are different than us, or that keep us from empathizing with people we don't know?
2. If we were a more empathetic culture, do you think we would feel safer?
3. Why is empathy such a better response than sympathy and apathy? Can you give some concrete examples of empathy, sympathy, and apathy?
4. If a lack of empathy creates issues like bullying and isolation, how might it also lead to harder issues like sexual abuse or human trafficking?
5. If Taylor was one of your classmates while she was going through the challenges of living with an alcoholic father, what are some things you could do to empathize with her?
6. How did empathy make a difference in PJ's life?
7. Is your school or neighborhood an empathetic place? Why or why not?

Nudge the class toward definitions similar to these:

Apathy: Disregard for the suffering of others

Sympathy: Feeling badly about the suffering of others

Empathy: Actively responding to the suffering of others

ESSENTIAL QUESTION OF THE MODULE:

What is empathy, and why is it important in my life?

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MODULE ONE: EMPATHY

EMPATHY EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY

Purpose:

This activity helps students discover that we share experiences of hurts and pains more often that we realize. By completing this activity as a group, students can discover that we are all in this together, so it makes sense to choose to be empathetic with each other. We do have the power to make a positive impact in one another's lives.

Steps:

1. Ask students to stand in a line side by side, allowing a little space between themselves and the person standing beside them. Ask students to take the hand of the person next to them and close their eyes.

2. Read the following script:
   "I am going to ask a series of questions. Some questions are personal in nature, so please keep your eyes closed. Don't let go of the hands of the people standing beside of you. As I read off statements, I'll ask you to respond as they apply to you. If you are not comfortable participating, you are welcome to step aside quietly and rejoin us in just a few minutes following the exercise, but please keep your eyes closed, too."

3. Allow a 5 second pause so that students may choose to step out. Then read the following statements one at a time, pausing after each one to allow students to respond.
   - If you are going through life right now without the help from a family member, take one step back.
   - If you have never gone through major surgery of some kind, take one step forward.
   - If you have been bullied, take one step back.
   - If you have felt manipulated to do something you would never do, take one step back.
   - If you have never lost a friend or family member, step forward.
   - If you have been lured and tricked by someone you trusted, take one step back.
   - If you know someone who committed or attempted suicide, take one step back.
   - If you have never been robbed, take one step forward.
   - If you have ever developed a relationship with an impoverished person, take one step back.
   - If you have never been impoverished, take one step forward.
   - If you are not going through a hard time right now, step forward.
   - If you are close to someone who is going through a hard time right now, take one step forward.
   - If you have feared for your life, take one step back.

4. Ask students to open their eyes and observe the proximity to those around them. Explain: "You all stepped forward and backward in response to questions about whether or not you've experienced difficult things in your life. Yet, notice how close you still remain to one another - close enough to still express empathy and make a difference in each other's lives if we would choose to do so. We don't have to go through hurts and pains alone, and we don't have to let others go through hurts and pains alone either. We can choose reach out to others and show empathy."

5. At the end of the activity, ask students to take hands once more to pull each other back to standing alongside one another. Explain that this allows us to end the activity standing in solidarity together, in a step of empathy!

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MODULE ONE: EMPATHY

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS:

ACTIVITY FOLLOW-UP:

Ask students to make a list of problems they see in their own school or neighborhood (i.e. bullying, racial divides, cliques, truancy, addictions, etc) on one side of an index card.

Next, ask them to work in groups to brainstorm how empathy could make a positive impact on those problems, writing their ideas on the other side of the card.

Finally, ask each small group to share aloud with the class about one problem and corresponding solution that they came up with.

How can empathy impact those issues?

- Actively demonstrating that I care about someone else's problems can help them feel like they aren't alone.
- Showing someone that I will give them my time to try to help them may empower them to believe they have a way out of their situation.
- If we all empathized with each other, we might be able to see past our differences to acknowledge what we share in common.

ACTIVITY: JOURNAL WRITING - IDENTIFYING EMPATHY, SYMPATHY, AND APATHY IN YOUR LIFE

Ask students to choose one of the two options below for personal journal writing time:

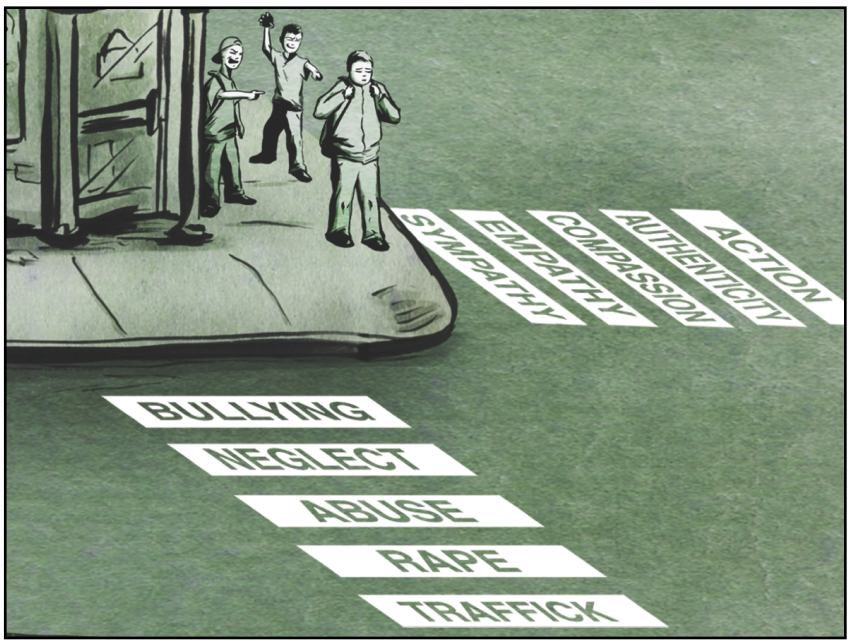
- Take three minutes to write about an example of when you experienced either empathy or apathy from someone when you were suffering or hurting. How did it make you feel? What was the result of that experience?
- Take three minutes to write about an example of when you offered empathy or apathy to someone. How did it make you feel? What was the result of that experience?

It is important to stress that this activity will not be graded.
It is rather a time for them to apply the concepts they are learning to their own personal experiences.

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EMPATHY - STUDENT HANDOUT

STANDING AT THE INTERSECTION OF EMPATHY AND EXPLOITATION



In the empathy film, there was an intersection with two paths. One is a path of empathy, and one is a path of exploitation. If you choose to bully someone, it doesn't mean that you are going to become an abusive person or a trafficker. But it does mean that you can become numb to other people's suffering without even realizing it.

Choosing the path of empathy means that you are sensitive to those around you. When we are empathetically aware of other people's needs and hurts, we can decide to respond in an active, helpful way. Empathy is a choice.

INSTRUCTIONS: Define what the words on the path of empathy mean to you. Feel free to use a dictionary or work in a group to come up with the best answer.

SYMPATHY:

EMPATHY:

COMPASSION:

AUTHENTICITY:

ACTION:

Now, on the back of the page, describe how you could use empathy in the situation depicted with the boys in the image above.

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