



Participants create a story from the perspective of an animal, bird or insect and role play the story.



4/5

1/5

2/5

30 min



Activity Overview

Purpose

Learn about empathy and looking at life from the perspective of others.

Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Discuss the meaning of empathy.
- ▶ Express and communicate ideas from the perspectives of others.

Competency domains

Empathy and respect; Communication and expression.

Works well for

Adolescents who know each other.

Phase

Knowing Ourselves.

Before

No activities required before this one.

After

No activities required after this one.



1

Explain:

Participants will create a story and a role play to learn about the meaning of empathy.

2

||| Facilitator says:

"Empathy is putting ourselves in another person's place and trying to understand a feeling or situation from their perspective. This is probably something you have done before, maybe without even realizing that you are doing it. Have you ever found yourself thinking about something from another person's perspective? Was it helpful to you or the other person?" Let a few adolescents respond and share examples from their own experience.

3

||| Facilitator says:

"Today we are going to practice some empathy exercises by thinking from the perspective not of another person, but of an animal, bird or insect. Start by thinking of a specific kind of animal, bird or insect. Close your eyes and imagine that you are that animal, bird or insect. How big or small are you? Where are you sitting or standing? What do you see around you? What would you be thinking about? Keep your eyes closed and imagine you are in the body of that insect, animal or bird for a moment."

4

Explain:

Adolescents will get into small groups of 3-4 participants. Each adolescent should stay in the character of the same insect, animal or bird. Their task is to create/improvise a small role play about what happens when their characters interact.

Share and Take Away

Invite each group of participants to perform their role play.

5

Discussion:

- ▶ What did it feel like to think about the perspective of a bird, animal or insect? How did you see the other characters in your story? How did you see the world differently?
- ▶ Have you ever thought about looking at life through someone else's perspective? What would it be like to be someone else?
- ▶ How can this idea of empathy help us in our relationships? In arguments or conflicts?



Do & Don't

- ✓ Encourage participants to have fun with the role plays.
- ✓ Repeat the meaning of empathy and use examples to help participants understand what it means.
- ✗ Force participants to role-play if they don't want to.

Adaptation

High-literacy: Adolescents who enjoy writing could write a story, letter or diary entry from the point of view of an animal, insect or bird, or could write a story or fable based on their role play.

Environment

Indoor or outdoor space.

Supplies

None needed.

Improvise

Create stories from the point of view of human characters, instead of animals, birds or insects. Start by imagining people with different characteristics, and create role plays based on their perspectives.

Continue

Build on the story adolescents created through their role play to create a longer play, story or fable using the same animal, insect or bird characters.

Refer to this activity and the meaning of empathy when discussing conflict and relationships.