Empathy

JULY NEWSLETTER - HEALTH AND MIND CLUB

Don't you feel at ease when you hear that one statement of relatability from someone like, "I get you, I understand" or "I see why you feel this way". This is empathy, the feeling of attachment. You might have heard of the idiom "Put yourself in their shoes" ; Empathy is the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place. It is putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they are feeling.
But how is empathy related to mental health?

1 *It helps with the reduction of stigma;* When we show empathy to someone who deals with mental health problems, we help to alleviate the guilt and isolation that these struggles can bring.

2 *It encourages healing and growth;* Someone who feels seen and heard is more inclined to open up and seek help.

3 *It results in more fulfilling relationships;* When we are empathetic, we are able to connect with others more deeply and create a more positive and supportive atmosphere.

Empathy vs Sympathy

Empathy

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person from their perspective.

Understanding and sharing emotions and experiences.

Active involvement in understanding and supporting.

Leads to a better understanding and connection between individuals.

Example: Feeling sadness when a friend is going through a difficult time.

Sympathy

Recognizing and acknowledging another person's emotions.

The feeling of compassion, pity, or sorrow for someone else's situation.

Passive involvement in acknowledging and comforting.

May result in offering help or support, but with less understanding.

Example: Feeling sorry for a friend who is going through a difficult time.

SPECTRUM OF EMPATHY

COMPASSION — I am moved by you.

EMPATHY — I feel with you.

SYMPATHY — I feel for you.

PITY — I'm sorry for you.

EFFORT

UNDERSTANDING & ENGAGEMENT

The size of the circles indicates the ability to positively impact users.
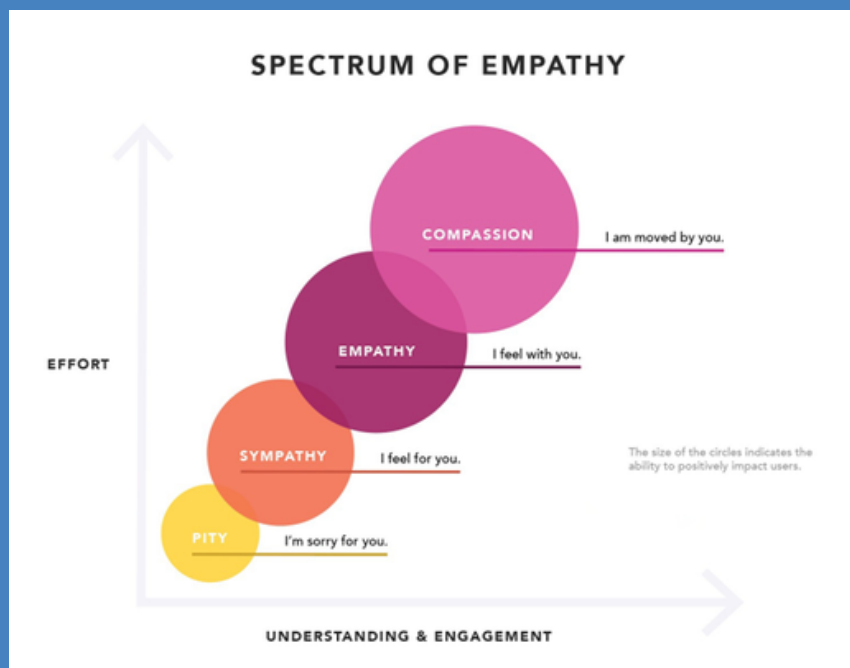
How to build empathy

"Empathy is about finding echoes of another person in yourself"

I   **Practice Active listening** by giving your full attention to the person speaking. Avoid interrupting or rushing to offer advice. Instead, focus on understanding their perspective and feelings. Show that you genuinely care by reflecting their thoughts and emotions back to them

II   **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Encourage others to share their feelings by asking open-ended questions. Open-ended questions invite deeper responses and allow individuals to express themselves more fully. This can provide you with a better understanding of their emotions and experiences.

III   **Practice empathy in everyday interactions:** Extend empathy to people you encounter in your daily life, such as the cashier at the grocery store or the person sitting next to you on the bus. Try to imagine what they might be feeling or going through.

IV   **Practice self-care and compassion:** Cultivate self-compassion and take care of your own emotional well-being. By being kind and understanding towards yourself, you become more capable of extending empathy towards others.

V   **Embrace cultural humility:** Adopt an attitude of humility and openness towards other cultures and perspectives. Recognize that you may not fully understand or know the experiences of others, and approach conversations and interactions with a willingness to learn and grow.

VI   **Get involved in volunteering for causes that matter to you.** By working with people who face challenges or are in need, you'll gain a deeper understanding of their struggles and have the opportunity to provide support, developing your empathy in the process.

Skills Strengthened by Empathy

Creativity · Feeling safe · Emotional Connection · Collaboration · Negotiation · Identifying Needs

Remember, empathy is a skill that can be developed with practice and a genuine desire to connect with others.

The decline of empathy and the rise of narcissism

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the decline of empathy and the rise of narcissism in society. Various factors contribute to this decline. One major influence is the pervasive use of technology and social media, which can foster a sense of detachment and self-centeredness.

Online interactions often lack the nonverbal cues and emotional depth present in face-to-face communication, making it easier for individuals to prioritize their own needs over those of others.

Additionally, cultural shifts towards achievement-focused societies may contribute to a decrease in empathy. Competitive environments can foster self-centered behaviors and diminish the emphasis on collective well-being.

Research suggests that lower empathy levels correlate with reduced social behavior, increased aggression, and decreased moral judgment. It can strain interpersonal relationships, weaken social cohesion, and hinder efforts to address societal issues collectively.

By recognizing the importance of empathy and nurturing it in ourselves and others, we can strive to reverse this trend and create a more compassionate and understanding society.

Journal Prompts
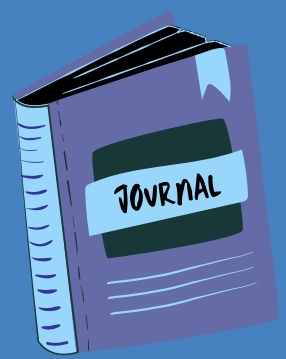
- Recall a time when someone extended empathy towards you. How did it make you feel and how can you pay it forward by showing empathy to others?

- Choose a person in your life and write down three things you appreciate and empathize with about them. How can you communicate your understanding and support to them?

- Think of a challenging situation someone close to you is currently facing. Write a brief description of their emotions and struggles. How can you provide empathy and support to help them through this difficult time?

- Reflect on a recent news article or social issue that evoked strong emotions. Write about how you can channel those emotions into empathy-driven actions or initiatives.

Credits

Graphics:
Amna Fatma 10H

Content:
Aarav Kuldeep 9J
Razeen Ashique 9P
Rida Habeeb 10E
Daniyal Khan 10I