



Build and Improve Empathy

Review the lists below and check off those items you want to work on. Then, be courageous in making needed changes. Each of us can make a difference.

To build your listening and empathy skills:

- _____ 1. Notice when people show inconsistencies between their verbal and nonverbal behaviors.
- _____ 2. Work to describe what the other person is feeling in one word.
- _____ 3. Make sure people feel heard; test assumptions and check for understanding.
- _____ 4. Allow emotions to surface and expect to sit with any discomfort when you hear complaints, concerns or feelings.
- _____ 5. Make it about the other person and use more inquiry than advocacy.
- _____ 6. Be present and make time to listen to understand.
- _____ 7. Be curious about and seek out people and experiences that expand your world view.
- _____ 8. Look for commonalities rather than differences.
- _____ 9. Be open and willing to share your own experiences.
- _____ 10. Empathize with those with whom you don't agree.
- _____ 11. Be interested in the lives of others.
- _____ 12. Study, gain insight and structure dialogue about diversity.
- _____ 13. Examine and test your personal assumptions and unconscious bias.
- _____ 14. Listen respectfully to differences of opinion.
- _____ 15. Use positive stories to change the narrative about diversity.

Avoid:

- _____ 1. Interrupting or showing impatience.
- _____ 2. Thinking about what you want to say next or rehearsing a response.
- _____ 3. Multi-tasking while listening.
- _____ 4. Rushing to judgment or connecting when you feel rushed or under a deadline.
- _____ 5. Reacting defensively and/or being emotional.