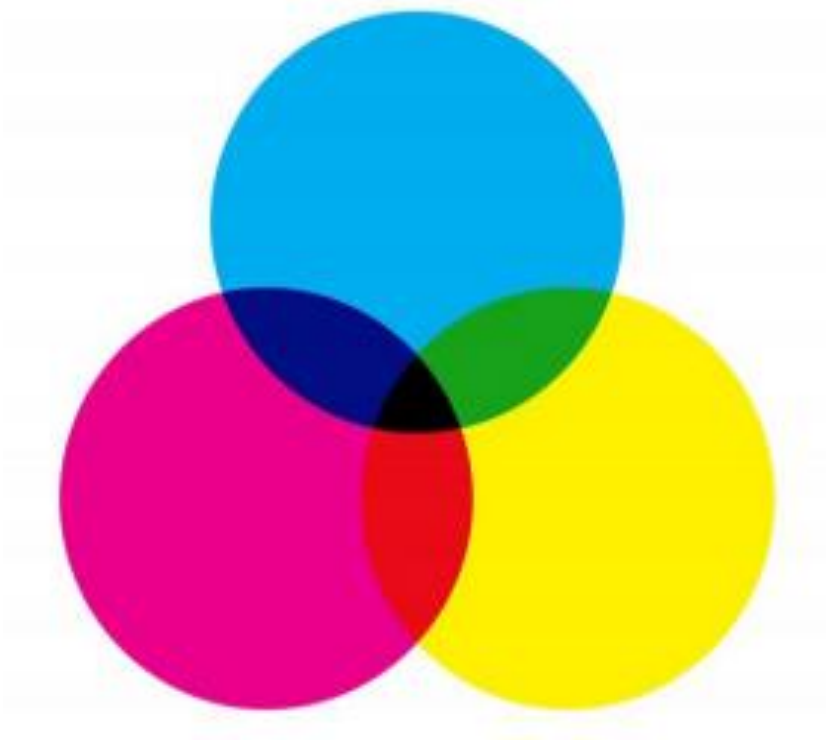
ACTIVATING SOCIAL EMPATHY

TEACHER'S MANUAL



UNESCO CHILD & FAMILY RESEARCH CENTRE

The *Activating Social Empathy* programme was developed by researchers at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the University of Galway and the UNESCO Chair in Community, Leadership, and Youth Development at the Pennsylvania State University. It is designed as a resource for teachers working with secondary school students. The content of the programme builds on theory and practice in the area of Social and Emotional Learning and is underpinned by a research programme exploring empathy, social responsibility and civic behaviour in adolescence.

Recommended citation: Boylan, C. & Dolan, P. (2019) *Activating Social Empathy: Teacher's Manual*. Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, University of Galway.

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For further information, please contact:
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre
Institute for Lifecourse and Society
National University of Ireland, Galway
Tel: +353 (091) 495398
E-mail: gillian.browne@nuigalway.ie
Web: www.childandfamilyresearch.ie

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Introduction

Empathy is a topic that is currently receiving considerable attention from social scientists, philosophers, psychologists, educationalists and policy-makers. It is seen as particularly important in our digital age where young people's reality is often virtual, and within that reality, anonymity and interpersonal distance are common. Furthermore, empathy is believed to be critical for navigating modern multicultural society where difference can sometimes be used to justify division and discrimination. While school-based programmes that target students' social and emotional development sometimes include empathy as an outcome or objective, there is a lack of programmes that focus specifically on empathy and no existing empathy education programmes for adolescents.[1] This programme aims to address empathy as a teachable social skill with important implications for how people behave towards one another and how they respond to societal challenges at a local and global level.

"Empathy can and must inform our relations with neighbours near and far… There is a power in placing empathy alongside participation, solidarity and creativity at the heart of policy and action."

President Michael D. Higgins, Inaugural Speech, 11 November 2018

What is Social Empathy?

Empathy is a fundamental social capacity which lies at the basis of our ability to understand and respond to one other. Empathy operates on two levels. Firstly, empathy operates at the interpersonal level, impacting on relationships between family members, peers, co-workers and community-members who interact with one another in everyday contexts. Secondly, empathy operates at the global level, impacting upon our responses to those who exist outside our immediate experience - to strangers and groups of 'others' - potentially reaching beyond national, ethnic and cultural borders.

From a psychological perspective, empathy is often seen as comprising of two components:

1. Cognitive empathy: Perceiving and understanding the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others. The ability to understand and identify another person's thoughts, feelings, perspective and intentions.
2. Emotional or affective empathy: Joining with others in their feelings but recognising that these feelings belong to the other person. The capacity to share another person's feelings or to feel what they feel.

[1] The successful Roots of Empathy programme is currently the only other programme with a central and explicit focus on empathy. The programme is aimed at primary school-aged children and involves experiential learning in which a baby from the local community visits a classroom with its parent. The children observe the baby and discuss what he or she is feeling and thinking and use this to open up discussion about their own feelings. See http://rootsofempathy.org/

Some theorists have also recognised a third aspect of empathy: empathic action. This third component is an active behavioural response, which is based on empathy. This refers to any action that is taken with the aim of helping someone else, and is sometimes called prosocial behaviour.

This programme is based on this fuller definition of empathy, which we have called ***Social Empathy*****.** This is empathy that is dynamic and active rather than static or passive. It is not just an understanding or a feeling, but a compulsion to act. ***Social Empathy*** involves active empathic responding that is demonstrated at an interpersonal, community and societal level.

Further reading on empathy

David Howe (2013). *Empathy: what it is and why it matters*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peter Bazalgette (2017). *The empathy instinct: how to create a more civil society*. London: John Murray.

Simon Baron-Cohen (2011). *Zero degrees of empathy: a new theory of human cruelty*. London: Penguin.

Roman Krznaric (2015). *Empathy: why it matters, and how to get it.* London: Rider Books.

Zaki, J. (2019). *The war for kindness: Building empathy in a fractured world*. New York: Penguin Random House.

Why Teach Social Empathy?

"A recognised school shall … promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students"

- Education Act, 1998

There is a significant body of international research that demonstrates the positive impact of empathy. For example, empathy has been linked to:

- ***Greater quality peer relationships*** (e.g. Dekovic & Gerris, 1994)
- ***Lower levels of aggression, antisocial behaviour*** and bullying (e.g. Miller & Eisenberg, 1988; Raskauskas et al., 2010; Zych et al., 2019)
- ***Increased prosocial behaviours*** (e.g. Eisenberg, Eggum & Di Giunta, 2010; van der Graf et al., 2018)
- ***Reduced prejudice and improved intergroup relations*** (e.g. Nesdale et al., 2005; Miklikowska, 2018)
- ***Greater academic achievement*** (e.g. Caprara et al., 2000; Wentzel, 1993)

We also know that empathy is both a disposition and skill that can be promoted and taught in individuals (Garandeau et al., 2022; Krznaric, 2015). Importantly, adolescence has been identified as a crucial period for empathy development (van Lissa et al., 2013), and it has been shown that the experiences during adolescence can set the stage for citizenship and prosociality across the lifecourse (Chase-Landsdale, Wakschlag, & Brooks-Gunn, 1995; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011).

The potential benefits of empathy education in schools include:

- ***More positive classroom climate and relationships***
- ***Fewer disciplinary issues***
- ***Reduced levels of bullying***
- ***A more positive school culture***
- ***Improved academic performance***

The benefits to students centre on the ***development of key skills, behaviours, values and attitudes*** including empathy, communication skills, decision-making skills, social awareness, social responsibility, prosocial behaviours and positive social action. Social empathy in young people matters because of its capacity to enhance personal and social development at an individual level and to foster wider social values that enable societies to thrive.

Theoretical Framework: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

There is now a broad consensus that schools must provide students with more than academic, cognitive and analytical skills if they are to be fully prepared for the challenges of work and life and that the education system should promote young people's social and emotional development. This evolution in policy developed largely in response to emerging theory and research in the area of **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL),** and work on Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Mayer and Salovey 1997).

There is now substantial evidence that school-based SEL interventions deliver consistent positive effects, including improvements in mental health and positive health behaviours, increases in social competence, reductions in school drop-out and rates of exclusionary discipline, better academic performance and improvements in classroom climate (for recent reviews see: Domitrovich et al. 2017; Mahoney, Durlak & Weissberg, 2018; Osher et al., 2018; Wigelsworth et al., 2022).

Research supports the view that SEL supports, bolsters and improves academic improvement and should not be seen as a separate or 'add on' piece of learning. Rather, it can underpin and strengthen academic learning.

Activating Social Empathy is a programme designed to address the SEL needs of secondary school students. It follows the framework provided by the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a global leader in SEL practice.

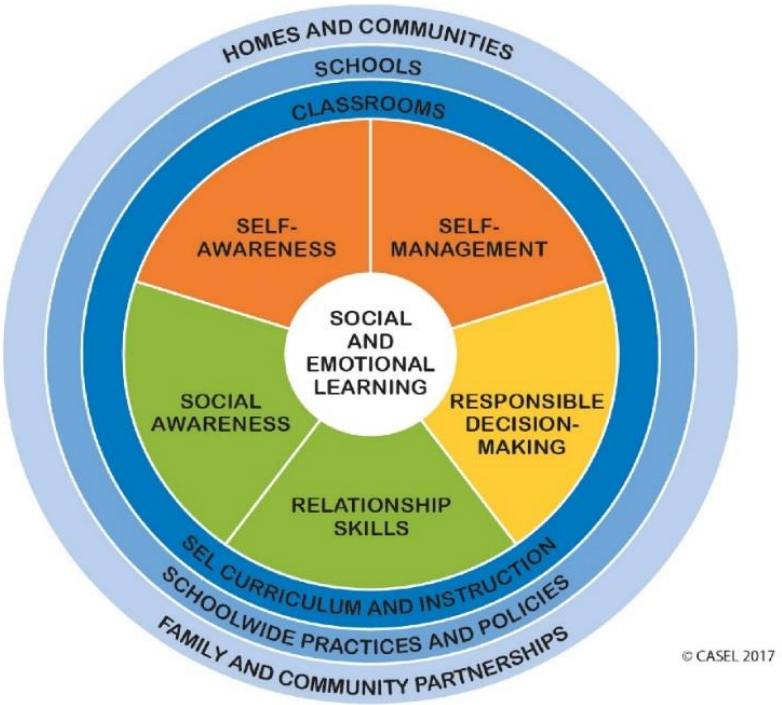
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is 'the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions' (CASEL, 2018)

For More Information See: https://casel.org/

CASEL outlines five core competencies that can be taught in many ways, across a range of settings:

1. Self-awareness (e.g. identifying emotions, recognising strengths, self-confidence)
2. Self-management (e.g. impulse control, self-motivation, goal setting)
3. Social awareness (e.g. empathy, perspective-taking, respect for others)
4. Relationship skills (e.g. communication, relationship-building, teamwork)
5. Responsible decision-making (e.g. identifying problems, solving problems, reflecting).
6.

Activating Social Empathy includes elements targeting all five competencies.



CASEL's *Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning*

CASEL's Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning highlights the importance of adopting a variety of approaches to SEL, including SEL curricula and instruction, school-wide practices and policies, and partnerships with families and communities. There are, therefore, a variety of ways in which empathy skills can be fostered in students, which are outlined in the table on the next page.

Approach	Setting	Example of practice in Irish schools
Programmes	Classroom	Running *Activating Social Empathy* programme
Curricular and Cross-curricular approach	Classroom	Empathy as a theme in SPHE Empathy built into CSPE project Perspective-taking exercises for novel / drama study in English and Irish Perspective-taking exercises in History and Geography lessons Historical empathy as an approach in History lessons
Whole School Approach	Schools	Linking empathy to school policies or including empathy in school policies (e.g. Anti-Bullying policy; Behaviour Policy/Code) Cultivating teacher-student empathy through perspective taking practices and open discussions. Use of Restorative Practices in school Global Citizenship Education
Partnerships with Family and Community	School, Community	Organising service learning for students e.g. volunteering opportunities in the community Inviting speakers from the community to talk about their experiences

The *Activating Social Empathy* programme can therefore be used as part of a range of approaches and methods that aim to promote empathy in students using cross-curricular, co-curricular and whole-school approaches.

The Activating Social Empathy Programme

Overview

The *Activating Social Empathy (ASE) Programme* aims to reclaim some space in classrooms and schools for students' personal, social, emotional, and relational development, by teaching core empathy skills and fostering a connection between empathy, prosocial behaviour, and social action. The programme aims to help students become more aware of the feelings and emotions of others; develop increased understanding of those who are different; and feel more comfortable intervening or helping others.

The specific aims of *Activating Social Empathy* are to:

- Increase cognitive and affective empathy.
- Improve interpersonal skills.
- Strengthen student-peer relationships.
- Foster social responsibility.
- Promote prosocial behavior.
- Enhance engagement in civic and social action.

Prosocial Behaviour is a voluntary action or behaviour that is enacted with the intention of helping another individual or group (e.g. sharing, defending, comforting).

The ASE programme is comprised of 12 individual sessions, which are intended to be facilitated on a weekly basis. Each session is facilitated by a teacher, who guides students through a variety of active learning methodologies (e.g. role-plays; creative writing; drama/artwork; discussion; pair/group work) that are connected to particular themes (e.g., overcoming barriers to empathy). Students are also encouraged to test out their new knowledge or skills in their everyday lives between the sessions. The programme is designed to be facilitated in the sequence outlined in this manual, as each session builds on the skills and knowledge gained in the previous session. The programme culminates in a social action project where students plan and engage in focused (i.e., goal-directed) prosocial behaviour in their school or local communities.

The ASE Programme is divided into four parts, with each section addressing a specific learning objective(s):

1. **Understanding Empathy** – *Students expand their understanding of empathy*
2. **Practicing Empathy –** *Students enhance their empathy-related skills*
3. **Overcoming Barriers to Empathy –** *Students identify and address some of the barriers that can prevent youth from showing empathy.*
4. **Empathy in Action –** *Students act on the empathy skills they have developed and implement a social action project.*

Part	Session	Methodologies
Part I Understanding Empathy	Session 1 What is empathy?	Discussion, Brainstorm
Part II Practicing Empathy	Session 2 Understanding Other People	Game, Quiz, Listening, Pair Work
	Session 3 Perspective-taking I	Story exchange, Perspective-taking, Role play, Scenarios
	Session 4 Perspective-taking II	Walking Debate, Perspective-taking
	Session 5 Showing empathy	Group work, Role play, Scenarios
Part III Overcoming Barriers to Empathy	Session 6 Finding Common Ground	Group work, Discussion
	Session 7 Overcoming Stereotypes and Prejudices	Discussion, Group work, Creative writing
	Session 8 Overcoming Fear and Taking Action	Discussion, Group work, Scenarios
Part IV Empathy in Action	Session 9 Empathy in Action Project	Action Project
	Session 10 Empathy in Action Project	Action Project
	Session 11 Empathy in Action Project	Action Project
	Session 12 Review	Review, Reflection, Goal Setting

Place in the Curriculum

Junior Cycle Wellbeing

ASE is designed to be delivered as a short unit of learning within the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme (see Appendix). In particular, *Activating Social Empathy* supports the aims of the *Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle* 2017 to 'include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students' (p.8) and help students to build skills that will enable them to become more active, aware and connected to their school and community.

Curricular Links

At Junior Cycle, the programme has curricular links to SPHE and CSPE. Cross-curricular links can also be made by teachers to core subjects such as English, Irish, Art, Drama and Geography and Environmental and Social Studies. The programme supports Classroom Based Assessments by enabling students to participate in group work and to plan, execute and report on a group action project.

School Policies and Ethos

At a wider level the programme can be linked to a range of relevant school policies, such as those concerned with the promotion of positive values and behaviours (e.g. Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour Policy, LGBT Policy, Internet Safety Policy) and those concerned with teaching, learning, inclusion and school culture (e.g. Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Education Policy, Guidance Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, and Inclusion Policy). The programme may also be linked to the ethos of the individual school.

Student Voice

The student voice can be supported through the 'Empathy in Action' project, which has the potential to impact upon the whole school culture.

Statements of Learning

The Empathy in Action Unit supports a broad range of learning experiences at Junior Cycle. The following table shows how this unit of learning is linked to the statements of learning and teaching at Junior Cycle.

Statement of learning	Example of related learning in the unit
5. Has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making.	Students will investigate the meaning and importance of empathy and will be challenged to show empathy to those around them.
6. Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives.	Students will be able to practice perspective-taking and feeling empathy for individuals and groups in different circumstances.
11. Takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others.	Students will be able to describe different ways in which people can actively respond with empathy. In participating in the Empathy in Action Project students will be actively working to help others in their community.

Key Skills

The programme directly addresses the Eight Key Skills outlined in the *Framework for the Junior Cycle (NCCA, 2015)*. The table below outlines some of the most relevant links to these Key Skills.

Junior Cycle Key Skills

Key Skill	Key Skill Element	Student Learning Activity
Working With Others	Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict	Practice feeling empathy for others and responding with empathy. Pair work, group work and project work.
	Co-operating	Group work and project work.
	Respecting difference	Learn to respect differences in opinion and diversity of views through discussion. Create a class contract to ensure a respectful atmosphere.
	Contributing to making the world a better place	Engage in social action through the Empathy in Action project.
	Learning with others	Pair work, group work and project work.
Communicating	Listening and expressing myself	Learn to express their viewpoints, to listen to others and respect their views during discussions and group work.
	Performing and presenting	Role plays and exercises with a performative element. Presenting Empathy in Action project.
	Discussing and debating	Discussions
Being Creative	Imagining	Perspective-taking and role play exercises to explore other people's perspectives.
	Exploring options and alternatives	Discuss challenging issues and explore alternative modes of responding to other people and to social issues.
	Implementing ideas and taking action	Undertake self-directed social action projects.
Managing Myself	Knowing myself	Learn more about personal attitudes and dispositions.
Staying Well	Being Social	Learn to improve interpersonal relationships.

Key Skill	Key Skill Element	Student Learning Activity
Managing Information and Thinking	Gathering, recording, organising, and evaluating information and data	Undertake research as part of their Empathy in Action project.
	Thinking creatively and critically	Engage in creative and critical thinking in discussions, brainstorms, perspective-taking and role play activities, and in project work.
	Reflecting on and evaluating my learning	Reflect on their learning at the end of each session and at the end of the programme.
Being Numerate	Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving	Learn to consider problems and situations from multiple perspectives
Being Literate	Developing spoken language skills	Discuss social issues with other classmates and listen to the perspectives of others.
	Writing for different purposes	Engage in reflective writing tasks within student workbooks.

Guidance for Facilitators

The Teacher's Manual contains instructions for facilitating the ASE programme. Given the focus on active learning methodologies, it is recommended that teachers feel comfortable engaging students in this style of learning, prior to engaging in the programme.

Step-by-step instructions on how to deliver each ASE activity are detailed in the manual at the start of each Session. Please note, while is recommended that the programme is implemented as described in this manual, teachers are free to adapt or modify activities to suit the school context and/or the needs of their individual class groups.

Sample materials (e.g. scenarios; photographs; video links etc.) are provided for each session. Teachers may prefer to source their own materials for the activities. It is recommended that teachers review the sample materials in advance of each session, to assess their suitability, and source alternative resources, if needed.

Teachers are encouraged to facilitate the ASE sessions in a sequential manner (e.g. Starting at Session 1 and culminating at Session 12), as each session is designed to build on the skills and knowledge gained in the previous session.

It is recommended that each ASE session be delivered over the course of one double/60-minute class, to allow for adequate discussion time. However, the programme can be delivered during shorter classes if required.

Notes on the Teacher's Manual

Materials

Students will need their Student Workbook (or subject specific copy), along with additional paper/notebooks and pen. Teachers will need access to a whiteboard and internet connection for many activities. It is assumed that teachers and students will have access to all of the above (Student Workbook/Copy, notebooks, pens, whiteboard, internet). Where additional materials are needed, this is highlighted at the beginning of each activity.

Reflection

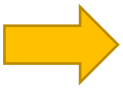
Students should be given a few minutes at the end of each sessions to reflect on their learning. Space is provided for this in their Workbooks. This is time for personal reflection on their learning, asking students to identify key 'take-home messages' from the session.

Resources

Resources such as videos are sometimes embedded as part of the activities. In other cases, a list of additional resources (e.g. A3 paper, pens etc.) is provided. Teachers are encouraged use self-sourced resources if they feel they may be better suited to their own specific context.

Key

The following symbols are used throughout the Teacher's Manual.



Teacher's Note

The Teacher's Notes throughout the manual provide teachers with prompts and information for facilitating the activities.

Class Discussions

The Class Discussions are essential to the programme and students' empathy development, as they allow for reflection on the activities. The questions provided are prompts for reflection, but the teachers facilitating the programme are best placed to adjudicate on what kinds of questions will provoke discussion and reflection within their own student groups. Teachers are encouraged to engage students in class discussions throughout each session, and challenge students to reflect on their opinions and beliefs, or their learning from the session in a meaningful way.

Learning outside the Classroom

These are suggestions for students' post-session learning (e.g. testing out or practicing skills). These suggestions are included in the Student Workbook. They offer an opportunity for students to practice their learning from each session and help create continuity between sessions. It is recommended that the learning outside the classroom tasks should be briefly discussed at the start of each new session.

Alternative Method

These are suggestions for alternative options or different ways of facilitating an activity. Teachers should choose the method of facilitation which they believe is most suitable for their class group, or which will encourage the most engagement and discussion.

Setting the Tone

It is important to ensure that students are in the right frame of mind for the programme. As it involves activities like role plays and class discussions which may force students out of their comfort zones, it will be important to keep reminding them that that there are no right or wrong 'answers' but rather opinions, which are all valued, and that they do not have to be gifted actors or public speakers. ***The aim is that students enjoy the programme, partake fully in it, and learn from it.*** Teachers are encouraged to help students feel comfortable engaging in the programme, and, where necessary, adapt the methodologies to suit the characteristics of the individual class. Suggestions for alternative methodologies are provided in the manual.

To assist teachers in setting the tone, the first activity is the *Class Contract Activity* where students work together to establish and document the ground rules they will

follow to ensure they get the most from the programme. Teachers are encouraged to remind students of the Contract throughout the programme. Displaying the Contract somewhere in the classroom may help in this regard. Where teachers already have a class contract in place, students can be encouraged to review/revisit it in the context of the ASE programme.

The programme is designed to be **student-led** as far as possible in that students should be encouraged to initiate and lead discussions, direct activities and adapt them to their own interests, exercise their own creativity in completing activities, and direct their own project work. This self-directed learner-led approach is particularly relevant in the Empathy in Action project.

Teachers as Role Models

Teachers are ideally situated to model empathy for their students through their daily interactions with both students, colleagues and other members of the school community. As a teacher, it is important to be aware of your positive influence as an authority figure for students who can model a caring, empathic approach in interactions.

Therefore, in this sense, the teacher's own learning is a key element of this programme which should not be overlooked. Teachers should ask themselves whether they can take on the challenges of the programme themselves, and whether they can extend an empathic approach to their teaching, their interactions with students, and their interactions and relationships with other school members.

Introducing the Programme to Students

Teachers should begin with an overview of the programme. The aims of the programme should be highlighted, along with the number of sessions, and the kinds of activities that they will be undertaking. The Empathy in Action project should be highlighted from the outset, and emphasised as an opportunity to put their learning into practice by planning and executing their own social action project on a topic that interests them. Students should be encouraged to 'think big' in terms of their projects. For example, their project could be something that impacts the entire school and that can be showcased to the whole school community (e.g. at an assembly or parent's evening), or something that impacts the local community and merits showcasing to a wider audience.

Sample Introduction

Teacher: *"This course is about developing your personal and social skills. It looks at a concept called empathy, which we will examine more closely in the first session. Empathy is the ability to understand what other people are thinking and feeling, to 'put myself in your shoes'. It is at the heart of our ability to treat each other kindly and respectfully, to show compassion and to make a positive difference in our communities.*

We will be taking the course for 1 class per week, for the next 12 weeks. You will need your Workbook with you every week. We will be learning through doing: discussions, group work, walking debates, role plays [you might stress here that nobody will be asked to 'perform' unless they want to], *writing, artwork, and an action project at the end so you can put your learning into practice and have a positive impact on others. The Empathy in Action project is yours to plan, undertake and showcase however you like and it can be as ambitious as you want. You can pick any topic that interests you like homelessness, refugees, LGBT rights, bullying and design an action that will help with this issue. This could be something that has a big impact in the school, but also possibly in the wider community. Think big!*

This course will challenge you to examine your behaviour and to change it, but these aren't things we should be afraid of. We also need to be mindful of one another and to respect each other's views so that everyone feels that their opinions are respected. This is not a graded course, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way of doing the activities or the project. This is a place to forget your competitive instincts and worries about being 'right'. This course is about exploring the best elements of being human: our capacity to support each other and treat one another with respect and kindness.

This is a student-led course, I am not here as a teacher teaching you facts but as a facilitator helping you to learn about empathy, practice empathy skills and undertake your Empathy in Action project".

Part I – Understanding Empathy

Part I of the programme is short but important. It aims to give students an understanding of what empathy is. Some students may struggle to grasp the concept initially, and may confuse it with closely related attitudes and dispositions like sympathy, compassion and kindness. Empathy is different to these since it involves actively understanding and taking on another person's perspective and/or feelings.

Session 1 - What is Empathy?

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Define and explain what empathy means.
- Identify examples of empathy they have encountered in their own lives.
- Describe the difference between empathy and sympathy.

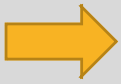
Activity 1 - Class Contract

Type of Activity: Discussion, Creating A Contract
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to list the rules that they think will help the group to work together and get the most from the programme.

Method:

1. Give an outline of the programme to the class, using the script on page 15 as a guide if you like. The key points to emphasise are (1) the importance of having open, respectful group and class discussions where everybody feels comfortable and safe sharing their voice (2) that difficult topics like bullying, discrimination, prejudice might come up (3) that some of the activities involve role play of some kind, but that nobody is expected to be an amazing 'performer' and (4) that nobody should have to do something they are extremely uncomfortable doing.
2. Break the class into groups and ask them to consider what kinds of rules they would like to develop to ensure that they all work together respectfully and effectively, enjoy the programme and get the most out of it.

3. After a few minutes ask the groups to call out their answers and begin to collate these on the board. Eventually, you should have a number of rules that comprise the Contract.
4. Ask each student to write these down in their Workbook.



Teacher's Note

The following are suggested themes for rules:

- Respect (for each other, for the teacher) e.g. Listen actively, and attentively; Avoid insults.
- Participation (everyone should join in as long as they feel comfortable doing so).
- Confidentiality (what's said in group time belongs in group time).
- Competition (this programme is not a competition, it is not graded, there are no right or wrong answers).
- Comfort (nobody should have to do anything they are really uncomfortable doing).

Activity 2 - What is Empathy?

Type of Activity: Brainstorm, Discussion
Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to define what empathy means, give examples and describe the difference between empathy and sympathy.

Method:

This activity is broken into three parts: (1) defining empathy (2) giving examples of empathy and (3) distinguishing between empathy and sympathy. It is worth spending time on this activity to ensure that students have a good grasp of the concept before moving on to the rest of the programme.

1. Write the word 'Empathy' on the whiteboard and ask students how they would define empathy. Note any keywords on the whiteboard.
2. Explain empathy to the class. Some methods are described below.
3. Ask the students for some real-life examples of empathy. This could be a time when somebody showed empathy to them; an occasion when they showed empathy to another person; or a time they witnessed a display of empathy between other people. You may want to ask students to break

into pairs and spend a few minutes with their partner coming up with some examples.

4. Ask students whether they think empathy is different from sympathy/pity. Explain that empathy is often confused with sympathy, pity or compassion, but that these are different things. Explain the difference between Sympathy and Empathy. Some definitions/suggestions are described below.

Explaining Empathy

Use definitions:

Empathy is the ability to understand what other people are feeling and thinking, and to share their feelings.

Perhaps the most famous quotation from literature on empathy comes form To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Atticus tells Scout: "*If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."* (Lee, 1989, p. 33).

Empathy is also very often described as '*putting yourself in somebody else's shoes'* or '*walking in somebody else's shoes'*

Use examples:

Give the example of watching somebody drop something heavy on their foot and how you might wince, lift your own foot off the ground in an involuntary reaction, and maybe even feel a little flash of pain in your own foot.

Give the example of someone telling you about an experience that you yourself have gone through and how you find yourself understanding the other person's thoughts and feelings in a very clear and profound way.

Use Videos:

Sesame Street, 'Mark Ruffalo: Empathy' (Running Time: 2.28)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xbM

Lifehacker, 'The importance of empathy' (Running Time: 3.30)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzPMMSKfKZQ

CogSai, 'What is empathy?' (Running Time: 3.31)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5jrUg_kXjY

The Royal Society of Arts, 'Jeremy Rifkin, The Empathic Civilization' (Running Time: 10.39)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7AWnfFRc7g

Explaining the Difference between Empathy and Sympathy

Use definitions:

Sympathy is a feeling of care and concern for someone else, often accompanied by a wish to see him or her better off or happier. “I feel sad for you, I wish you were feeling better”. Sympathy can often lead to empathy but it is different. It does not involve sharing the other person’s perspective or feelings.

Use videos:

The Royal Society of Arts, ‘Brené Brown on Empathy’ (Running Time: 2.53)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw

SoulPancake, ‘The Parking Ticket Experiment | The Science of Empathy’ (Running Time: 6.48)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObYLerYbzts&list=PLzvRx_johoA85tJ4dNepYNjRXM0svNOXH&index=7

Oxford Dictionaries, 'Empathy' and 'sympathy': what's the difference?’ (Running Time: 0.56)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YDpQke-gwY

Alternative Method

A Venn diagram can be used to help students visualise or discuss the differences between empathy and sympathy. Using the whiteboard or post-its, students could discuss the differences and similarities between these two key ideas and place them in the appropriate place on the Venn diagram.

Online quizzes comparing the difference between empathy and sympathy are also freely available and could be completed as a class group (See examples: https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/60349f162320dc001c1ed282/empathy-vs-sympathy OR https://www.softschools.com/quizzes/vocabulary/sympathy_vs_empathy/quiz9184.html).

Class Discussion:

- How do you think empathy could lead to compassion and kindness for others? Why does this happen?
- Is it easy or difficult to show empathy?
  PROMPT*: Does it depend on who you are showing empathy too? Is it easier to feel empathy for some people?*
- Where do you think empathy comes from?
  PROMPT: *Do you think that empathy is something we’re born with or something we learn?*

Session 1 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Ask students to reflect on *three key messages* they have learned from the session. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

Suggest to students that they make a note of any example of empathy they come across during the week. This could include times they showed empathy or somebody showed empathy to them, an example of empathy they witnessed in their family or amongst their friends, or examples of empathy from television programmes, on social media or in books. At the beginning of the next session, ask them for a few examples, and ask them whether the listed examples represent demonstrations of empathy or sympathy.

Part II - Practicing Empathy

Part II of the programme focuses on the practice of empathy and empathy-related skills. The term 'self-efficacy' refers to a persons' belief in their ability to complete a task. Young people need to feel that they have the skills to show empathy in order to actually show it. The most important empathy-related skills are: reading other people's emotional states, empathic listening and perspective-taking (practicing seeing things from another person's perspective). It is also important for students to think in practical terms about empathy, in other words to consider what kinds of behaviours we can engage in to show empathy and compassion to others.

Session 2 - Understanding Other People

Empathy is, in effect, a social skill. Social skills involve understanding others as part of effective communication (since you can't respond appropriately to another person unless you understand what they are saying, thinking or feeling). Session 2 therefore focuses on understanding others through reading their emotions and empathic listening - a form of active listening - as a basic foundation for feeling and showing empathy.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Describe how the skill of reading other people's emotions is important for empathy.
- Feel confident in practicing the skill of reading other people's emotions.
- Be able to discuss how empathic listening is an important skill for empathy.
- Know the key skills of empathic listening, be able to recognise them in conversations, and feel enabled to practice this skill in their everyday lives.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this Session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom activity from Session 1.

RECAP: Over the course of the week, make a note of any example of empathy that you come across before the next session.

This might include times that you showed empathy or somebody showed empathy to you, an example of empathy you witnessed in your family or amongst their friends, or examples of empathy from television programmes, on social media or in books.

Did you notice any examples of empathy this week?

Activity 1 - Understanding others

Type of Activity: Game
Additional Materials: Emotion Cards, Hat/Bowl
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to describe the importance of body language in determining the emotional states of others.

This activity is divided into two parts: a game and a quiz. Both aim to get students thinking about how they read other people's emotions through body language and facial expressions.

Method:

1. Remind the class of their Class Contract before this activity.
2. Before you begin, explain the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication, and define what is meant by body language. Some definitions are provided below.
3. Explain that this next game is like a game of charades - Emotion Charades - designed to help you practice reading people's emotions through their body language.
4. Ask volunteers to come to the top of the room and pull an Emotion Card (see below) out of a hat. They must act out the emotion using body language only.
5. One of the tests psychologists use to test Emotional Intelligence is to ask people to guess what emotion is being conveyed in photographs of facial expressions (which are one type of body language). Load this Quiz from the Greater Good website http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei_quiz/. You can do some or all of this quiz with the class, accepting the answer that most of the class agree on in each case (the quiz gives you the answer).

Emotion Cards:

Sadness	Disappointment	Excitement	Annoyance
Hurt	Irritation	Triumph	Pity
Worry	Anger	Shyness	Joy
Fear	Guilt	Loneliness	Pride
Boredom	Happiness	Frustration	Embarrassment

Alternative Method

You might prefer to give the class the option of acting out the emotion in pairs or small groups. A competitive element could be introduced between the pairs/groups to increase engagement.

Communication skills are divided into verbal & non-verbal communication.

Verbal Communication:
Any form of communication using verbal language (e.g. speaking, writing).

Non-verbal communication:
Any form of communication that does not use words. This includes facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, body position and posture, known collectively as 'body language'.

Body language is a form of non-verbal communication. It includes the gestures we make (e.g. with our hands), facial expressions we use (e.g. furrowing our brows, smiling, widening our eyes), and postures we adopt (e.g. folding our arms, crossing our legs). A significant amount of information is transmitted by our bodies in social interactions. Some would even say we unconsciously give things away with our body language. For example, it is suggested that when a person is lying or holding back information they might use certain hand gestures like concealing their mouth or blinking for slightly longer than normal.
It is also true that there are cultural differences in the use of body language. For example, maintaining eye contact when you are being asked a question is considered polite in some cultures but rude in others.

Why is body language important?

It is therefore important to be able to read people's body language to fully understand what they are saying or how they are feeling. For example, if somebody tells you they are not nervous before a test, but you notice they are fidgeting and their eyes are moving around a lot, do you think they are actually nervous?

Class Discussion:

- Does body language help us understand how others are feeling?
  PROMPT: Does body language help us connect or feel empathy for others?
- How easy or difficult is it to read body language?
  PROMPT: Are some people easier to read than others? Does it depend on the situation?

Activity 2 - Empathic Listening

Type of Activity: Listening, Pair work
Additional Materials: *Guide to Empathic Listening*
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to describe the importance of empathic listening and practice empathic listening skills.

Method:

1. Ask students what they think makes a good listener? Brainstorm with students as a group, writing their answers on the whiteboard.
2. Ask students to open their Workbooks and go through the *Guide to Empathic Listening* with them. Reflect on how the guide compares to students' opinions about what makes a good listener.
3. Split the class into pairs and ask them to assign a Speaker and a Listener.
4. Ask each person to think of a time when they felt unhappy or challenged in some way or a time when they felt great happiness or excitement. Give some examples for the class such as a time when they were ill or injured; they didn't perform as well as they expected in an exam or at sports; they felt unfairly treated by a parent/teacher; a great holiday; winning something with their sports team.
5. Each Speaker will be given 3 minutes to tell their story while the Listener practices empathic listening. At the end of each conversation they will swop roles.
6. Walk around the room observing the interactions and helping students if necessary.

Teacher's Note

Teachers may want to demonstrate this activity first before assigning students to their Speaker and Listener roles in order to make this activity maximally effective. You could use a student volunteer or show a short video of empathic listening.

Remind students that they do not have to share a deeply personal experience unless they are comfortable doing so. Emphasise that if students choose an unhappy/challenged option, they should focus on an event that was temporary and triggered only mild to moderate feelings, rather than severe negative feelings.

Guide to Empathic Listening

1. Give your full attention.

- Put away phones and get rid of other distractions if possible.
- If your attention wanders while the other person is speaking, gently bring it back to them.

2. Maintain eye contact.

- Try not to let your eyes wander around the room
- Maintain eye contact during the conversation but without staring hard at the person speaking!

3. Remove barriers.

- Try not to use physical barriers like tables
- Don't cross arms when you are listening.

4. Use encouraging body language.

- Use encouraging body language like nodding and smiling.

5. Let them speak.

- Don't interrupt the other person unnecessarily.
- If you need to clarify what the person is saying, wait for a natural break in the conversation.
- Allow for silence, you don't need to fill every gap in the conversation.

6. Understand.

- Really try to understand the emotions the other person is feeling and the thoughts they are thinking.

7. Show that you understand.

- Reflect back to the person what you have heard e.g. 'I understand from what you are saying that…'; 'What I am hearing is…'; 'You sound…'
- Share examples from your own experience if you have any (but be careful not to make the conversation about you!).

8. Don't judge.

- Don't judge or criticize what the other person is saying.

Class Discussion:

- How did you find practicing empathic listening? What was easy? What was most challenging?
- Do you think empathic listening is important?
  PROMPT: How does it feel when someone listens to you with empathy/ how does it feel when someone doesn't seem to listen?
- How can you best practice empathic listening?

Session 2 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

Suggest to students that they try out empathic listening with somebody. Ask them about this at the beginning of the next session.

Session 3 - Perspective-taking I

Perspective-taking is a key empathy-related skill. Indeed, many would argue that cognitive empathy (see Introduction) and perspective-taking are the same thing. Perspective-taking is an attempt to put yourself in somebody else's shoes in an effort to see things from their point of view. The next two sessions focus on perspective-taking.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Describe the importance of perspective-taking for empathy.
- Practice perspective-taking and feel enabled and motivated to practice perspective-taking skills in their everyday lives.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 2.

Over the course of the week did you practice empathic listening with family or friends? What was your experience of this?

Activity 1 - Character Identification

Type of Activity: Character identification, Creative writing
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to take the perspective of a fictional character and write a narrative from their point of view.

Method:

1. Ask students to choose a fictional character from a book, film or television programme. Alternatively, you might prefer to use a book or film the class has covered as part of the English curriculum.

2. Give them a few minutes to fill in the Character Questionnaire in their Workbook. Ask them whether they found this challenging or straightforward.
3. Now ask students to write a short first person narrative from the point of view of this character in their Workbook using 'I' throughout. They might like to describe a specific incident or event from the book/film/programme; the character's opinion of another character; or their view of the world in general. The main focus of the exercise is to ask students to see the world from the character's point of view. If they are not sure about some details, ask them to imagine what they think the character is like. Give them 5 minutes to complete this exercise.

Character Questionnaire

Where is this character from?

What age are they?

What do they look like?

What do they do (e.g. pupil in school, doctor, business owner etc.)?

What else do we know about them e.g. their religion, ethnicity, family etc.?

What is the world they live in like? Is it like our own or different? In what ways?

What has been the most important event or events in their life?

What three words would you use to describe this character?

Alternative Method

You may prefer to provide students with an extract from a book or show students a clip from a film/series. Extracts could depict an emotional scene, or a situation of conflict between a number of characters. The same extract or video clip can be provided to all students, and students can have the option to take the perspective of any character in the extract.

Class Discussion:

- What did it feel like writing from the character's perspective?
- Do you think it might be easier to empathise with characters that are more like ourselves?
- Is it important to be able to empathise with every character, even if they are different from us?

Activity 2 - Perspective-taking Role Play

Type of Activity: Role play, Scenarios
Additional Materials: *Scenario Cards*
Learning Intention: Students will be able to describe the importance of perspective-taking to resolving conflict.

Method:

1. Divide students into groups of 4 and give each group one of the *Scenario Cards* below or create your own scenarios. The Scenario Cards are in the Student Workbooks.
2. Each group of 4 is to divide into pairs. Ask the pairs to write out a short role-play script based on the scenario they have been given. The first pair in the group should role-play a situation of conflict, where both characters put forward their own positions forcefully. The second pair in the group should role-play a situation where the characters listen to one another and try to understand each other's thoughts and feelings (e.g. perspective taking).
3. Give the pairs time to prepare their role-plays and to act them out within their group. You could ask some groups to volunteer to perform in front of the entire class.

Alternative Method

Other strategies can be employed to engage students who do not respond well to role-play options. For example, students/groups can be given the option of developing a comic strip, contrasting the differences between the empathic and conflict solutions. Other suggestions include asking students to write a story or create a script for a TikTok/YouTube video.

Scenario Cards:

1.

Charlie and Cameron have been best friends since primary school. Charlie really likes Jesse and told Cameron about this last month. Cameron also likes Jesse but couldn't say anything since Charlie had said it first. At the weekend Cameron got together with Jesse. Cameron found out through social media and is very upset. Imagine the scene where Cameron confronts Charlie about this.

2.

Jamie and Alex have just finished football training. During the practice match, Jamie made some joking comments about a few mistakes Alex made on the pitch. Alex was hurt by these comments and felt humiliated. Jamie meant the comments as a joke to lighten the mood. Imagine the scene when Alex confronts Jamie after training.

3.

Jordan's elderly grandmother Mary is living on her own. Jordan is the only grandchild who lives in the town, the rest live much farther away. Mary feels that Jordan hasn't been coming to visit as often as he/she should. She feels increasingly isolated without regular visitors, and misses her grandchild. Jordan is in Leaving Cert, has a part-time job at the weekend and has been especially busy these last few months and hasn't been able to visit his/her grandmother as often as he/she used to. Imagine the scene when Mary confronts Jordan about the lack of visits.

4.

Kai and Omid are over at Kai's house messing around filming dance videos on TikTok. Kai and Omid both agreed that this would be for their eyes only and saved in drafts. The next day Omid wakes up to the dance video they filmed being shared by different people in school. Omid felt embarrassed by this and was hurt Kai lied about keeping the videos in drafts. Imagine the scene of Omid confronting Kai about this.

Class Discussion:

- What are the likely outcomes of both situations (i.e. trying to see things from another person's perspective or failing to do so)? How might both parties be likely to feel in these situations?
  PROMPT: Does gender matter in these scenarios?
- How important is perspective-taking to resolving conflict?
- How can you apply perspective-taking to your own lives? Give examples of how you might do this.

Session 3 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

1. *First Person Stories*

Suggest that students practice telling other people's stories in the first person for themselves as a mental exercise. For example, they could be looking at a news story or reading about a character in a book, or watching a TV programme or film. They could practice adopting their perspective and telling their story as an exercise to improve their perspective-taking.

2. *Perspective-taking in situations of conflict*

Suggest that students practice perspective-taking when they are interacting with other people, particularly if a situation of disagreement or conflict arises. Could you put yourself in their shoes? Did it change how the situation unfolded? Ask them for any examples at the beginning of the next session.

Session 4 - Perspective-taking II

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will:

- Have gained further experience in practicing perspective-taking
- Feel enabled and motivated to apply perspective-taking in their everyday lives.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 3.

How did you find trying to put yourself in other people's shoes? Did this impact the situation you were in?

Activity 1 - Walking Debate

Type of Activity: Walking debate
Additional Materials: *Role Cards*
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to practice perspective-taking and feeling empathy for individuals and groups in different circumstances.

This activity is adapted from Barrett, J. & Richardson, F. (2007), 'Giant steps' in *Ireland – a level playing pitch? A Transition Unit resource*. Combat Poverty Agency, pp. 31-2. Available at: http://www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/IrelandALevelPlayingPitch_2007.pdf [Accessed: 29 August, 2018]

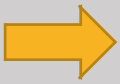
Method:

1. Give each student a *Role Card.* The Role Cards are included in the Student Workbook.
2. Ask students to read their *Role Card* and to enter into their roles. They should think about who they are, where they live, how many are in their family, what kind of life they have, what opportunities they have, and whether they feel as though they belong in their community, school, family etc.

3. Ask students to line up on one side of the room with their backs to the wall. Ensure that they line up in random order, so that each person will move a greater or lesser distance than the person beside them.
4. Explain that you are going to read a series of statements. Students should take a giant step if they can do that thing quite easily or if the statement fully applies to them. They should take a baby step if they can do it but with difficulty or if it applies to them a little bit. They should not move if the statement does not apply to them.
5. Read each statement in turn (see page 40).

Class Discussion:

- For those who had the role card of a privileged person, how did that feel?
- For those who had the role card of someone underprivileged, how did that feel?
- How did you feel when others beside you were moving ahead or being left behind?
- What practical things can we do to help people who are less privileged than us?



Teacher's Note:

Social exclusion occurs when people are denied resources, rights and the ability to participate in normal relationships and activities which are available to the majority of people in a society. Being excluded from education, work, the political system, a good living environment and access to decent health care are all types of social exclusion. One definition is 'a process which pushes people out to the edge of society and distances them further and further from the chance of a job or an adequate income, from social and educational opportunities, from social and community networks and from power and decision-making' (Barrett & Richardson, 2007, p. 8). As can be seen from this definition, social exclusion is very closely linked to economic disadvantage and poverty which often exclude people from resources, rights and participation in society which others take for granted.

When giving out the *Role Cards*, be sensitive to the individual circumstances of your class. If you feel that certain students should not receive certain cards, exclude these cards altogether.

Role Cards

SORCHA, 17
You live in Galway in a large house overlooking the sea with your two sisters. Your mother is a solicitor and your father is a doctor. You are thinking about studying medicine so have asked for a laptop for your birthday to help with your studies. You've also asked for grinds in English and Maths. This summer you are hoping to go to Irish College and French College to improve your languages. You went on the school tour to Paris this year and loved it and are hoping to do some more travelling with your family this summer.
Overview: Plans to study medicine; Plans to go to Irish & French Summer Colleges; Went to Paris; Hopes to do more travelling

JOHN, 15
You live in Athlone, Co. Westmeath with your two older brothers. Your father and mother run a café in the town, but this year it was flooded for the second time in four years. The family lost lots of money as a result and things are stressful at home and money is tight. One of your older brothers is already in college and the other is hoping to start a degree next year. Your parents would also like you to go to college but they are not sure where they will get the money. You have offered to start a weekend job in a shop from next September to start saving.
Overview: Parents' café was flooded; Money is tight at home; Plans to get a weekend job

CAMERON, 16
You live with your three younger siblings in social housing in Dublin City. Your mother is at home minding your little brothers and sister and your Dad isn't around. You have just finished your Junior Cert and have left school to get a job. You don't mind what kind of work it is, as long as it brings in some money for your family. Sometimes there isn't enough food in the house and you worry about the little ones getting enough to eat. You try to hide all of this from people outside the family and pretend everything is fine.
Overview: Lives in social housing; Dad is not around; Left school to find a job; Sometimes not enough food at home; Tries to hide worries

JAMES, 13
You live on a halting site with your mother, father and four brothers and sisters. You like it but it can be difficult sometimes as the facilities aren't great. You go to the local school but you find it hard because there aren't many other children from the Travelling Community and you get verbally abused all the time and you can only hang out with other children from your community. You've stopped going to school some days and you're not sure how much longer you will bother with it. Your father says there's no point staying on in school as it won't help you get a job because employers all hold being a Traveller against you anyway.
Overview: Lives on a halting site; Part of the Traveller community; Gets verbally abused at school; Stopped going to school some days

SARAH, 12

Your father lost his job and the landlord raised the rent a year ago. As a result you, your parents and two younger brothers were made homeless and were placed in a hotel room while the council try to find you all a place to live. It takes three buses to cross the city from the hotel to your school, and you are exhausted by the time you arrive. It's really hard to do homework on a hotel bed with your brothers jumping around and you have no space of your own. You are tired and upset so much of the time and are losing focus at school. You're also cut off from your friends now that you live so far away.

Overview: Family made homeless; Lives in a hotel room; Takes 3 buses to get to school; Tired & upset a lot; Feels cut off from friends

ELAINE, 15

You have been in a wheelchair since birth. You live at home with your parents and older sister, who are all really helpful and supportive. Your parents are well off and they have been able to make the house very wheelchair-friendly and can afford to bring you places and buy you what you need so you don't feel different. You are going to the local secondary school and have plenty of friends. You miss out on some things like sport, and it's not always as easy for you to get around which can make socialising a problem depending on where your friends want to go. You want to go to college but worry about your ability to live on your own away from the support of your family.

Overview: In a wheelchair since birth; Parents are well-off; Plenty of friends; Misses out on some things; Worries about ability to live alone

SHANE, 18

You live with your sister, brother and parents in County Limerick. You realised you were gay two years ago but so far you have only come out to your two best friends, who were very supportive. You love cooking and Home Economics and want to be a chef when you're older. You have a hard time in school, with people calling you homophobic slur words. You can't wait to leave school and get as far away from home as possible.

Overview: Came out as gay to best friends; Loves cooking; Has a hard time in school; Can't wait to leave school and get away

ALI, 15

You live in a Direct Provision Centre with your mother and 10-year-old sister. You came to Ireland a year ago after fleeing from Syria where your father was killed in the war. You are all waiting to see if the government will let you stay in Ireland as a refugee. You are all still grieving and very worried about family back home. You get your meals at set times and there is a curfew meaning that you have to be back in the Centre by a certain time. You go to school but speak little English so it is very hard to understand what is happening. You get English lessons every week and are improving very slowly. Your mother can't work and only gets a small amount of money each week.

Overview: Lives in a Direct Provision Centre; Came to Ireland fleeing Syria; Doesn't speak English; Mother can't work

MERCY, 17

You were born in Nigeria but moved to Ireland when you were 8 and have been attending the local secondary school. Most of the students at school treat you well and are friendly, but you have also experienced a lot of racism. You've been subjected to nasty comments at school and in the street and have had people telling you to 'go home to your own country'. You feel that teachers don't ask for your contribution as often as they do with other students and you sometimes feel that your teachers assume you don't have any ambitions to go to university. You've tended to end up being friends with other kids from Africa or whose parents are African.

Overview: Born in Nigeria; Most students are friendly; Subject to nasty comments; Feels left out by teachers; Mainly has African friends

AMIRA, 12

You are from Syria but had to leave your home months ago because of war. You are now in Europe, living in a huge migrant camp in France. You, your parents and your four siblings live in a tent with no heat or running water. You line up for food and toilets during the day. If you get sick there is a doctor's station with long queues. The authorities are worried about infectious diseases breaking out in the camp. Your schooling has been put on hold. You want to be a doctor when you are older, but first you want your family to be settled somewhere safe to start a new life.

Overview: Lives in a tent in a migrant camp in France; Schooling put on hold; Wants to be a doctor & for family to be settled

ARIFA, 17

You are from Bangladesh and work in a clothes factory. You started there when you were 10 years old cutting extra threads from clothes and now work on the sewing machines making clothes. You work 12 hour shifts, from 9 AM until 9 PM, six days a week. You get paid the minimum wage of 3,000 taka per month but the 'living wage' is 5,000 per month. The work is exhausting and hard on your body, causing frequent back pain because of the long hours hunched over the machine. You are worried about the safety of the building and are scared of the risk of fire or collapse. You will marry next year but will continue working in the factory.

Overview: Works in clothes factory; Has frequent back pain; Scared of the risk of fire/building collapse; Getting married

PETER, 12

You are from Kenya and are one of eight children. Your family lives in a small mud-walled hut with no electricity or running water. You live on one meal a day of maize and beans, but most of the beans are kept for the younger children in the family. You go to school on an empty stomach where you share one textbook between five of your classmates. During class breaks you rush to the nearby baobab tree to see if there are any fruits to pick, but you rarely find any as it is only in season once a year. Your father is planning to leave soon to find work and talks about taking you with him.

Overview: Lives in a small mud-walled hut; Lives on one meal a day; Shares school textbook with five others

MALIKA, 17

You are from Afghanistan. You were lucky that you were allowed to attend a local girls' school but it was burned down after you had been there for 2 years by extremists who don't believe in female education. At the age of 12 your parents told you that you were going to be engaged and married. You married your husband when you were 14 and he was 30 years old. You now have a 1-year-old daughter and live with your husband's family, and spend your day cleaning and cooking in the home and looking after your child.

Overview: School was burned down; Engaged at Age 12; Married at Age 14 to 30 year old man; Has a daughter; Spends day cleaning & cooking

DINARA, 14

You are one of the 'street children' of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. You are part of a group of about 50 children who survives on the street together. You sleep in a park that is locked at night, so at least you feel safe there. Your mother also grew up on the streets and although you once had a home, you were kicked out because you couldn't pay the rent. You try to attend school but only make it from time to time. You go to a drop-in centre to get food, wash and play football. The authorities want to place you in accommodation for homeless children, but you don't like the restrictions and escape to the street at night.

Overview: Sleeps in a park; Kicked out of home; Only makes it to school sometimes; Goes to a drop-in centre for food

Walking Debate Statements

- You will stay in school until you are 18.
- You will go to third level (college, university) when you finish school
- Your basic needs for food, drink and medicine are met.
- You feel physically safe.
- You can get most of the things you ask for like clothes, spending money etc.
- You have a secure and happy home life.
- You like living where you do
- You have plenty of friends.
- You are able to go on holidays each year
- You can easily go out and socialise with friends.
- You can join in the life of your school and community easily.
- You get extra help and support whenever you need it.
- You are confident you will reach your full potential in life.
- You don't feel isolated.
- You will never suffer from mental health difficulties
- You can go to the shop easily on your own
- You have access to social media
- You are able to read and write
- You feel accepted and valued in the community where you live
- You can be yourself without being bullied or made to feel different.
- You are looking forward to the future which is pretty secure.
- You will easily get a part time job
- You are happy at school
- You can access facilities in your town such as shops & restaurants.
- You have your own bedroom

Activity 2 - Someone Else's Shoes

Type of Activity: Perspective-taking
Additional Materials: Photographs, Pair of shoes, Music
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to practice perspective-taking and feeling empathy for individuals and groups in different circumstances.

Method:

1. Explain to students that they are going to take part in a perspective-taking activity and explain that perspective-taking is a way of stepping into another person's shoes to try and see the world from their point of view.

2. Ask students to stand in a wide circle. Place the pair of shoes somewhere around the circle, in front of one of the students.
3. Explain to students that this is a version of musical chairs. They will walk in a circle until they hear the music stop.
4. The person who stops nearest to the pair of shoes will be given a photograph. They are going to try to step into that person's shoes and tell that person's story in the first person ('My name is…, 'I am…'). You might like to demonstrate for the class using a photograph. Some sample photographs are provided below or you can source your own.
5. Ask students to hold the picture facing outwards while they are telling the story so that the rest of the class can see it.
6. Remind them that they shouldn't feel any pressure to tell an amazing story. The aim is for them to do their best to think about life from another point of view and to try to imagine how the person in photograph might be feeling. This is not about being 'put on the spot', and there is no right or wrong way to do this. If a student clearly feels unable to do the exercise in front of the class, let the person next to them try.

Alternative Method

If you feel students in your class would prefer a different version of this exercise, you could split the class into groups of 5 or 6 and give each student a photograph and ask them to tell their story to their group.

Class Discussion:

- Was it difficult to put yourself in somebody else's shoes?
- How did you feel when you were telling the person's story?
- Did you feel empathy when you heard other's stories? Which ones in particular?
- Give some examples of times when you might use this ability to put yourself in somebody else's shoes? What would be the consequences of doing this?

Sample Photographs

(No copyright infringement intended)
https://www.flickr.com/photos/rightsatduke/492668802

(No copyright infringement intended)
https://www.maxpixel.net/Homeless-Homeless-Man-Orange-Clothes-Sign-Advice-833017

(No copyright infringement intended)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Two_caged_lions_at_the_Los_Angeles_Zoo,_ca.1920_(CHS-9745).jpg

(No copyright infringement intended)
https://www.flickr.com/photos/syriafreedom/21202355138

(No copyright infringement intended)

https://pixabay.com/en/laptop-woman-education-study-young-3087585/

Session 4 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

Suggest that students practice putting themselves in other people's shoes when watching the news or reading news stories. Ask them to do this once and check how this went at the beginning of the next session.

Session 5 - Showing Empathy

This session focuses on how we show or demonstrate empathy, and asks students to reflect on the responses and behaviours that follow when we feel empathy for others.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Describe ways of responding to others with empathy.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 4.

What news story did you watch or read during the week? Did you come across an interesting news clip on TikTok or other social media platform?

Did you put yourself in the other person's shoes?

How did you feel?

What did you learn?

Activity 1 - Responding with Empathy: Scenarios

Type of Activity: Group work, Role play, Scenarios
Additional Materials: Situation Cards
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to describe different ways in which people can actively respond with empathy.

Method:

1. Divide the students into groups and give each group a different *Situation Card*. The *Situation Cards* are included in the Student Workbooks.

2. Explain that each group should write down how they might respond with empathy to the situation they have been given. Ask them to write out the actions they would perform and the words they might use. They can give a few different responses if they like. Remind them to consider things from the point of view of the person at the centre of the scenario.
3. Ask the groups to prepare a role play to act out the scenario.
4. Walk amongst the class prompting and helping if necessary.
5. Ask some or all of the groups to role-play the scenario to the rest of the class. After each role play has been performed, ask the other groups if they can come up with any other ways of responding with empathy in that situation.

Alternative Method

Other strategies can be employed to engage students who may not respond well to role-play options. For example, students/groups can be given the option of developing a comic strip, showcasing what they would do in the scenario. Other suggestions include asking students to write a story or create a script for a TikTok/YouTube video.

Situation Cards

A new girl/boy arrives to join your sports club or youth club and seems shy. They hang back by the door and seem afraid to come into the room.
You and your friends see that an elderly man is struggling with his heavy shopping bags while walking down the street.
In the hallway at school, you see that some pupils have grabbed another student's phone and are looking through their social media, laughing and making comments. You see that he or she is upset and fighting back tears
You and your friends have just seen your friend lose an important match, where he or she did not perform their best. You meet them leaving the venue afterwards.
You get along really well with your science partner at school, and find them funny. One day you are invited to a Snapchat Group and find out the person who made the group said they are not inviting your science partner into the chat because everyone thinks they are weird.
Your older sister/brother arrives home very upset and tells you that she/he has just broken up with their boyfriend/girlfriend.

Class Discussion:

- Is it sometimes difficult to know how to respond with empathy or kindness? Why/In what ways is it difficult?
- What are the potential consequences of showing empathy to others?
  PROMPT: Does it differ depending on the situation you are in or the person you are with?
- Can you think of some everyday examples where you are called on to respond with empathy, kindness or compassion? How might you respond in these cases?

Activity 2 - Showing Empathy in School

Type of activity: Discussion, Brainstorm, Group Work
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to list ways to show empathy in a school setting

Method:

1. Examine the ***Sit With Us*** website. The website was created by Natalie Hampton based on her own experience of being bullied in middle school and having to eat her lunch alone. After changing schools she wanted to make sure that no student would suffer like she had done, and invited others to join her lunch group if she saw them eating alone. She then created the ***Sit With Us*** app to create open lunch groups to ensure nobody ate alone. http://www.sitwithus.io/#!/Home These short videos explain the app***: 'This Bullied Teen's App Helps Kids Find Lunch Buddies',*** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BFgIK2306A (Running Time: 1.44) and ***'High School Student Develops 'Sit With Us' App To Encourage Inclusion At Lunchtime'***, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rT43jzpBwTU (Running Time: 1.46).
2. Use the Class Discussion Questions below to initiate a discussion.
3. Divide the class into groups, and ask them to elect a spokesperson for the group. Ask them to think about situations in school in which some people are isolated, bullied, excluded or feel anxious. How can students and others in the school show empathy for these people?
4. Bring the class back together and ask for some examples of showing empathy in school.

Teacher's Note

Students should be warned in advance of the session that the topic of bullying or related issues is going to be discussed, and that if the session is going to trigger distress relating to past or current experiences of this issue then it is acceptable for them to sit out of the activities.

Teachers should also encourage students to talk to them about any issues they have with bullying at the end of the session.

Class Discussion:

- Do you think people in your school show empathy to one another? Give some examples of where they show empathy and where there is a lack of empathy.
  PROMPT: Consider the interactions between friends in school; between people in the same class; between people in different classes or year groups; between students and other adults in the school.
- Is the way you interact with different people/groups different?
- Is it harder to feel empathy for people outside your own friend group? If so, why do you think that is? What can we do to overcome this?

Session 5 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

Ask students to keep a note of how they responded with empathy to others during the week and ask them for examples at the start of the next session.

Part III – Overcoming Barriers to Empathy

While understanding and practicing empathy are important, in reality there are particular barriers to showing empathy. Indeed, it is entirely possible that a person might feel empathy or compassion, but still feel unable to act. Part III of the programme focuses on overcoming barriers to empathy, in particular perceived differences (the perception that other people are different to us or part of an 'out group'), stereotypes and prejudice, and fear of social judgement when it comes to showing empathy and evincing helping behaviours. In order to challenge young people to overlook perceived difference, the first session in this part focuses on finding common ground with others. The next session examines stereotypes as one particular form of prejudice that can create distance between individuals and groups in society. Finally, there is a session devoted to overcoming a fear of being judged negatively for showing empathy, which is a particularly potent fear in adolescence. An activity on youth social action links to the Empathy in Action project in Part IV.

Session 6 - Finding Common Ground

One of the main barriers to empathy is perceived difference. We find it easier to show empathy to our family and friends than for strangers or people we perceive as different, for example, people from different ethnic, cultural or social backgrounds. We all divide the world into 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' and tend to feel empathy more easily for the in-group. In a school setting various in-groups and out-groups can be established. For example, a student might see their friendship circle as their in-group, while other students they are not friendly with or are in conflict with form an out-group. In another context, a student might see those in their own year as an in-group and those in other years as an out-group. In broader terms, adolescents may view members of their own ethnic group as an in-group excluding those of different racial background.

The aim of this session is to overcome the barrier of perceived difference. It does this by focusing on finding common ground with others, regardless of apparent difference.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Find common ground with others.
- Describe the importance of establishing common ground with others to practicing empathy.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 5.

How did you respond with empathy during the week?

Activity 1 - Finding Common Ground

Type of Activity: Group work
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to list common traits they share with classmates.

Method:

1. Remind the class of their Class Contract before this activity.
2. Explain that one of the barriers to feeling empathy for someone is feeling no connection with a person or seeing them as different to yourself. Maybe this person is in a different group of friends and you don't know them that well, maybe they are in a different year in school, maybe they are total strangers, maybe they are from a different ethnic or cultural background. Trying to find common ground is a way of breaking down these barriers as a first step to connecting with others and empathising with them. This game is designed to prove that within your own class group, there is a lot of shared common ground.
3. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4, trying to mix the class up rather than allowing students to form groups with their own friends, and ask them to stand up.
4. Give one member of each group paper and a pen.
5. Explain that each group must find 10 things that they all share in common with one another. Examples are given on the next page, but tell students they can be as inventive as they like with these commonalities.
6. When a group has reached 10 things they can sit down.
7. When all groups are seated again, ask the group who sat down first, and perhaps one or two other groups, to read out their list. Ask the rest of the class if they came up with any interesting examples of common ground.

Teacher's Note:

Examples of commonalities might include:

- Having a particular number of brothers, sisters or siblings
- Being in the same school / year
- Having the same eye colour or hair colour
- Being from the same area or street
- Sharing a birthday month / year
- Liking a particular sport or sports team / music or band / book or author
- Having been to a particular country / place in Ireland
- Liking or disliking the same subject in school
- Being concerned about the same social and political issues like mental health or climate change
- Liking or hating certain foods
- Sharing the same skills in a particular domain
- Having a pet
- Owning a bicycle
- Being scared of the same things e.g. spiders, elevators, flying
- Character traits like being prone to worry, being an optimist etc.

Class Discussion:

- Did you find that people had unexpected things in common?

Activity 2 - Finding Common Ground with those who are Different

Type of Activity: Video, Discussion
Additional Materials: N/a
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to practice global empathy for groups different to themselves.

This activity challenges students to find common ground with those whose experience is different from the majority. It focuses on the experiences of refugees in Ireland. There may however be students in your class for whom this is a direct experience. You may prefer therefore to use the videos which show the experiences of refugees in other countries, e.g. **'Clouds over Sidra'** or **'The Displaced'**.

Method:

1. You might want to begin this activity by viewing this video on 'the empathy gap' which demonstrates that we are more inclined to feel empathy for people who are like us: SoulPancake, ***'The Empathy Gap | The Science of Empathy'***, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdLOkqMfRJk (Running Time: 8.10)
2. Begin by showing the class images of refugees in camps, arriving in Europe or Ireland.
3. Play one or more of **the 'Syrian Voices from Ireland'** videos. http://swansongfilms.ie/syrian-voices-ireland// (Videos have a running time of between 5 and 8 minutes). Alternatively you might prefer to use the Virtual Reality videos: Gabo Arora & Chris Milk**, 'Clouds over Sidra',** https://with.in/watch/clouds-over-sidra/ (Running Time: 8.35 mins) or Imraan Ismail & Ben C., **'The Displaced'** https://with.in/watch/the-displaced/ (Running Time: 11.08 mins) which give a unique first person view of refugee camps from a child's perspective. These videos are best viewed individually in a computer room, but can be watched with the entire class with the teacher controlling the movement of the camera view.

Class Discussion

- Is it easier to feel empathy for people who are more like ourselves? Those who look, sound and have similar life experiences as us? Why?
- Can we establish any common ground with the people in these videos?
- How can we help ourselves to feel empathy for groups of people who are not like us?

Session 6 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

1. *Finding Common Ground with others around us*

Ask students to try and put their learning into practice by trying to find common ground with people during the week, especially when they find themselves feeling negatively towards somebody. Can you think of common experiences and feelings? Did this help to ease your frustration and negative feelings? Ask them whether they put this into practice at the start of the next session.

2. *Finding common ground with those who are different*

Suggest that students try to find common ground with people who are very different from themselves. Can they source any videos, news reports, films or stories that give the perspective of marginalised groups? Could they find any commonalities with them and did this change their view of those people?

Session 7 - Overcoming Stereotypes and Prejudice

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Describe what a stereotype is and how it prevents us from feeling empathy.
- Challenge stereotypes and prejudices.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 6.

Finding Common Ground with others around us

Did you put your learning into practice by trying to find common ground with people during the week, especially when you found yourself feeling negatively towards somebody? Did you think of common experiences and feelings? Did this help to ease your frustration and negative feelings?

Finding common ground with those who are different

Did you find common ground with people who are very different from you? Did you source any videos, news reports, films or stories that give the perspective of marginalised groups? Could you find any commonalities with them and did this change your view of those people?

Activity 1 - Labels and Stereotypes

Type of Activity: Discussion
Additional Materials: Blank A3 Sheets, Markers / Pens, Post-its, Blu-tack, A large box
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to list common labels and stereotypes and state how these impact on our ability to empathize.

This activity is adapted from Ingram, P.D., 'What do you know or what have you heard?' in *Diversity activities for youth and adults.* Pennsylvania State University. Available at: https://extension.psu.edu/diversity-activities-for-youth-and-adults [Accessed: 29 August 2018]

Method:

1. Remind the class of their Class Contract before this activity.
2. **Before the session**: Gather a number of sheets of A3 paper. Use a marker to write the name/label of a social group across the top of each sheet. Try to cover a broad selection of social groups for whom prevalent stereotypes exist, but remain sensitive to the composition of your own class. For example, you could choose labels such as Irish people, Americans, Catholics, Muslims, Travellers, LGBTQ+, Influencers, Rich people, Poor people, The Elderly, Teenagers, Teachers, Principals, Models, Celebrities, Rugby Players etc**.** **N.B. It is important to remain sensitive to students' own backgrounds and avoid the use of social groups/stereotypes that may have negative connotations for the students that are present**.
3. Stick one of the prepared A3 sheets up around the room.
4. Provide students with post-its and pens.
5. Ask students to list all the things they have heard about the named social group using the post-its provided (e.g. *What positive or negative things have you heard about this group? What words are sometimes used to describe people like this?*). Students should list one word/description per post-it. **N.B. Emphasise to students that no reference to specific individuals from the school environment is allowed as part of this exercise.**
6. Ask students to place their answers in the box.
7. Ensure that each student places at least comment in the box.
8. Read out the comments posted by the students, and add each post-it to the A3 sheet. **You may choose to censor any comments which you feel are not appropriate to read or place on the sheet.**
9. Repeat this exercise using another A3 sheet with a different named social group. Try to cover a number of different social groups.
10. When you are finished, take note of the number of comments made by the students for each group, and whether there were more negative or positive descriptions provided.
11. Ask students if they know the term for these kinds of comments? Explain what stereotypes are and how negative stereotypes can lead to prejudice. Some definitions are provided on the next page.

Alternative Method

An alternative strategy is to place a number of A3 sheets around the classroom and ask students to list one thing they have heard about each group by writing directly on the A3 sheet. Students can be asked to write the first word or description that comes to mind when they think about that social group. When they are finished, allow a few minutes for students to circulate and read the comments on all the groups.

Definitions of Stereotypes

'A stereotype is a belief that all members of a given group share the same fixed personality traits or characteristics as a result of this group membership. Stereotypes are always based on an oversimplified generalisation of a social group' (The Equality Authority & The National Youth Council of Ireland, 2008, p.1).

Stereotypes can be positive or negative e.g. French people are arrogant, Irish people are warm and friendly. But whether positive or negative, stereotypes diminish people and groups by assuming that all members of the group are the same, that 'all x are y'

Stereotypes can lead to prejudice, examples of which are racism, sexism or homophobia. For example, believing a negative stereotype about people from another ethnic group might lead to holding racist views. We need to stop ourselves from 'all x are y' thinking, and try to stop lumping people into groups. When we lump people into groups and hold negative views of these group members it becomes harder to show empathy for these people, individually or collectively.

Class Discussion

- Why do we know more words to describe some groups than others? Why do we know more positive/negative stereotypes for certain groups?
  PROMPT: Are some groups talked about more or talked about in different ways on social media or by our friends?
- How might stereotypes impact how we respond to people from these groups?
- Do negative stereotypes or other prejudices prevent us from feeling empathy for people from certain groups/backgrounds?

Activity 2 - The Human Face

Type of Activity: Group work, Creative writing
Additional Materials: Photographs/Images
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to take the perspective of individuals who experience social prejudice.

Method:

1. Before the session: Source and print out photographs/images of different groups in society who face prejudice.

2. Split the class into groups.
3. Give each group a print out of one of these groups. For example, you could provide images of refugees and migrants, gay people, members of the Trans community, members of the Muslim faith or members of the Travelling Community. You don't have to choose obvious groups. Supplying a photograph of a group of girls or boys for example might prompt students to think about prejudices that people face based on gender.
4. Ask each group to think about and discuss the kind of stereotypes and/or prejudices that people like this might experience. Bring the group back together and ask for examples.
5. Explain to the students that they are now going to put a human face on a member of the group they have been studying. Ask each student to imagine themselves as one of the people in the photograph and to write a short paragraph in their Workbooks describing the prejudices they face in their lives, how they feel about this, how it affects them, and what they would like to change. The paragraphs should begin 'My name is…'
6. Ask for volunteers to read their paragraphs.

Class Discussion

- How did it feel to imagine things from this person's perspective?
- Can we apply this exercise in our everyday lives? Give some examples.
- What can we do to help overcome stereotypes and tackle prejudice/discrimination?

Session 7 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

Ask students to try to be aware when they find themselves employing stereotyped thinking about people. Do you think you use stereotypes? Do you think you are aware enough of your own thinking to notice?

Ask them to make a note of any times they see people displaying prejudice about groups in society, and ask them for any examples they noted at the start of the next session. What was the context? What group was being targeted? How can we combat this kind of thinking?

Session 8 - Overcoming Fear and Taking Action

One of the strongest barriers to showing empathy, amongst young people, is fear of being judged for one's actions. Adults feel such fears too, worrying that they may have misjudged a situation or a person's need for help, or worrying about looking foolish. However, in adolescence these fears can be heightened and intense. Many young people feel that if they show empathy publically, they will be laughed at, ridiculed, or even incur the anger of their friends. For example, a young person might refrain from intervening when they see somebody in their circle bullying another person, fearing a backlash from their peer group. This session aims to get students to reflect on these fears and consider ways of overcoming them.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this session students will be able to:

- Describe the bystander effect and describe how it might prevent them showing empathy
- Describe and provide examples of youth social action.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 7.

During the week were there times when you found yourself employing stereotyped thinking about people? Do you think you used stereotypes? Do you think you were aware enough of your own thinking to notice?

Did you see any examples of people displaying prejudice about groups in society? What was the context? What group was being targeted? How can we combat this kind of thinking?

Activity 1 - The Bystander Effect

Type of activity: Video, Discussion, Group work, Scenarios
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Outcome: Students will be able to describe the by-stander effect and explain the influence of social judgement on our ability to show empathy.

Method:

1. Explain the bystander effect using the definitions provided below.
2. Watch this video on the bystander effect: SoulPancake, **'The Bystander Effect | The Science of Empathy',** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wy6eUTLzcU4&index=3&list=PLzvRx_johoA85tJ4dNepYNjRXM0svNOXH (Running Time: 5.53)
3. Ask the class how they think we can overcome the bystander effect?
4. Tell them that one of the ways we can overcome the bystander effect is simply to be aware of it. If you find yourself in a situation wondering if you should intervene and help, knowing about the bystander effect means you are aware that everyone is feeling the same as you and that you should intervene (or inform an adult) because there is no guarantee anybody else will!
5. Split the class into groups and give each group the list of Scenarios below. These Scenarios are included in the Student Workbook. Ask them to make a note of how they would feel in these situations. Ask them to think about how they would they would react in that situation?
6. Ask students to rank the scenarios 1 to 5, based on how likely they are to intervene, with 1 as the least likely and 5 as the most likely. What influenced their decision?

Definitions of the Bystander Effect

The bystander effect is a phenomenon in which individuals are less likely to offer help to somebody when other people are nearby and much more likely to help when there is nobody watching.

So why don't we help when we are part of a crowd?
One reason is the 'diffusion of responsibility'. This means that when there are other people around, you feel less pressure to help as you assume the responsibility is not all yours. The trouble is that when everyone thinks like this, nobody takes responsibility.

A second reason is the need we feel to behave in a socially acceptable way. When other people fail to react, we often take this as a signal that a response is not needed or not appropriate. We worry that if we respond we are overreacting and will look stupid.

It is usually spoken about in cases of emergency such as if somebody is drowning and the people on the shore don't go to their aid. But it also applies to less serious situations, for example when somebody drops their bag on a busy street and the contents spill out on the floor.

Scenarios

The final bell has gone and you are walking out of school with your friends. Everyone is around, heading home. You see another student drop their schoolbag and the contents fall out all over the path.
You are in a busy supermarket. A foreign looking woman is carrying a heavy shopping bag, which splits, spilling everything on the floor.
You are walking through the park to get home. It's quiet and there is no one else around. You see a man looking everywhere for his dog, calling the dog's name, looking really worried.
You are chatting on social media with a group of your friends when some of them begin to gang up on another member of the group and criticise their behaviour and appearance.
You are walking down an empty hallway to go to the toilets during class. You see two people physically fighting right outside the toilets and see one is getting badly hurt
You are on your own and about to walk into the student disco, to meet your friends, when you see another student from your year sitting alone on the ground outside. They do not seem well and look like they need to go home.
You are at school and see a student from your class break another student's phone on purpose.

Class Discussion

- Can you think of any examples where you have not acted or helped or intervened when you thought you should have?
- Are there situations where it is difficult or not safe to act?

PROMPT: How can we overcome our fear of judgement and act?

Activity 2 - Youth Social Action

Type of activity: Video, Discussion, Group work
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Outcome: Students will be able to give examples of youth social action

Method:

1. Youth researchers are young people who have been trained to undertake research on an issue that they feel is important. Young people in Ireland and the US have taken part in training in order to have their voices heard on a social issue by making recommendations. A suite of videos demonstrating youth researchers work is available here https://bit.ly/376WuLQ (the videos have a running time of between 3 and 7 minutes) and here https://agsci.psu.edu/unesco/the-penn-state-unesco-youth-as-researchers-program (the videos have a running time of between 4 and 8 minutes). Show some of the videos to the class.
2. Using the content of the videos, start a discussion about young people and social action. Some prompting questions are listed below in the Class Discussion section.
3. Split the class into groups. Ask them to make a list of social issues that they think are important. Bring the class back together and ask for their answers. Focusing on one or two of these issues, ask the groups to list three ways that young people could help. Some examples are provided below.

Example Social Issue	Example Actions
Bullying	Join the Anti-bullying Campaign https://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/
	Make anti-bullying/information posters to put around the school
	Undertake research on bullying in schools and make recommendations
	Ask for anti-bullying training for the class so everyone understands what to do if they are bullied or they see someone else being bullied
	Show kindness and compassion to people who are being bullied

Class Discussion:

- What social issues are people your age most concerned about (e.g. bullying, racism, climate change, the plight of refugees etc.)?
- Do you think young people tend to get involved in trying to tackle these social issues? Why/Why not?
- What stops people taking social action?
  PROMPT: Is it difficult for young people to have their voices heard? Why might some young people be afraid to get involved? What other barriers are there?
- What opportunities do you have as young people to take action on issues that are important to you?
- Can you think of any examples of young people who are involved in social action that you know of? (e.g. Malala Yousafzai, Greta Thurnberg, or Joanne O'Riordan, or ask students to think of people they know).

Session 8 Reflection

Allow the class five minutes to reflect on their learning from the session in their Workbook. Alternatively, ask students to share one take home message from the session (e.g. Do they feel they learned something new from this session or was there anything that surprised them?).

Learning outside the classroom

Challenge students to intervene and show empathy during the week, even it means pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones. Check at the beginning of the next session to see if any students did this.

Part IV – Empathy in Action

This part of the programme allocates three classroom sessions for students to plan, research, undertake and make a record of a social action project. You may prefer to undertake a project as a class or break the class into groups to undertake separate projects. These projects can be as ambitious or small-scale as you and the students like. Examples range from a stint volunteering in the community, to a school bake sale for charity, a pledge to do one kind thing every day for a week or making videos to post on social media. The aim is to engage students in other-oriented behaviour in which they are thinking about the needs of others and engaging in helping or prosocial behaviours of some kind. Research tells us that learning that is relevant to young people's lives is much more effective and that they are much more likely to engage with a project if they feel they have ownership of it. Students should therefore be supported to choose their own project as far as possible. By recording their experience, students will engage in reflection on how it felt to engage in positive, empathic, prosocial behaviour.

Sessions 9 - 11 – Empathy in Action Project

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this project students will be able to:

- Put empathy into action in the form of a social action project
- To plan and undertake a social action project.
- To record their project using a variety of media.

CHECK-IN: Learning outside the classroom

Begin this session by asking students how they got on with the Learning Outside the Classroom Activity from the Session 8.

Last week did you try to intervene and show empathy, even it meant pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone?

Activity 1 - What is a Social Action Project?

Type of activity: Discussion
Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to explain what a social action project is.

Method:

1. Explain to the class what is meant by social action (see resources on page 64).

Class Discussion

- Have you taken part in any social action before (e.g. volunteering, charity fundraising)?
- How did you find the experience and what did you get from it?
- Is social action important?

Resources

The British Council defines Social Action Projects as follows:

'Social action projects are carried out by individuals or groups of people working together for the good of others and not for profit. The objective of the project is to bring about social change that will benefit an individual, communities or society'.
https://www.britishcouncil.org/active-citizens/what-we-do/social-action-projects/what

Creative Thinking Consortium, booklet on Social Action Project (for primary school children but still relevant)
https://tc2.ca/en/creative-collaborative-critical-thinking/resources/imagineaction/

Activity 2 - Planning Your Project

Type of activity: Planning
Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to decide upon and plan their empathy in action projects.

Method:

1. Divide the class into groups who will work together on their project or work with the class collectively if it is a class project.
2. Explain to the class that there are three things to think about: The topic their project will focus on (What issues are we covering?); The form their project will take (What are we going to do?) and; How they will record the project (How will we record and present what we have done?). Highlight to the class that there are a great many types of projects that can be undertaken and a wide range of ways for them to record their project.
3. What issues are we covering? Explain to students that they should decide on an issue that they are concerned about and interested in. There are guiding questions in their Workbooks (see below). A list of suggested social issues is also provided (see below). Give the groups' time to brainstorm their topic using the **'Ask yourselves'** questions in their Workbooks.
4. What are we going to do? Once they have decided on a topic, they will need to start thinking about what form their projects will take. A number of websites are provided in the Workbooks with project ideas along with a list of possible project formats (see below). Ask them to fill in the Social Action Project details in their Workbooks (see below).
5. How will we record and present what we have done? Explain that there is a wide range of ways for them to record their work e.g., a scrapbook, poster, web page, PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, Facebook page or other social media page that describes the aims of the project, the planning, what they did. This record could potentially include photographs, videos, quotations, artwork and any other media. You may also like to devote a class to presentations, where each group presents their record to the rest of the class and describes their project.
6. Ask them to do up a To Do List in their Workbooks and divide up their jobs.

Ask yourselves:

1. What issues are most important to us?
2. What do we feel strongly about?
3. What things affect our lives?
4. What would we like to bring awareness to?

Ideas for Projects:

- ✓ https://www.dosomething.org/us
- ✓ http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au/organise-an-activity/ideas-for-activities/
- ✓ https://www.svp.ie/what-we-do/young-svp/svp-in-schools.aspx
- ✓ https://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/

Example Projects Include:

Poster campaign in school / community	Holding a public reading
Letter writing campaign to politicians	Writing and staging a play
Creating a website, blog, or social media account to raise awareness	Writing or recording a song
Making a video	Joining or taking part in an existing campaign
Writing articles for newspapers or websites	Setting up a reading group
Organising a workshop in the school	Organising a fund-raising event in school
Organising an exhibition of art / photographs to raise awareness	Organising a film festival
Petitioning the school council	Creating a dance or piece of art

Example Social Issues/Topics:

Bullying	Mental health	Disability	Poverty
Older people	Animal rights	Climate Change	Asylum Seekers / Refugees
Homelessness	Body image	Discrimination / Racism	Illness
Drugs / Alcohol	Loneliness	LGBTQI issues	Crime
Unemployment	Peer Pressure	Human rights	Sexism

Examples of ways to present your project:

Exhibition
Scrapbook
Poster
Create a web page
PowerPoint or Prezi presentation
Create a Facebook page / Instagram / Snapchat account.
Photographs
Artwork
Videos

Project Details:

The members of our project team are…

Our project will be on…

We will do the following…

Activity 3 - Research

Type of activity: Research
Materials: Internet, Books, Magazines etc.
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to research the topic of their *Empathy in Action* project.

Method:

1. Bring the class to the school library or computer room and help them to complete some research on their topics in their groups.
2. The questions in their Workbooks can be used to guide their research. Ask each member of the group to fill this out.

Activity 4 - Creating your Empathy in Action Project Record

Type of activity: Writing, Art work, Use of technology, Group work
Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to create and showcase a record of their Empathy in Action project.

Method:

1. Give the groups an opportunity to put together their project record. As noted there is a wide variety of ways they might present this information. It could be a scrapbook, poster, web page, PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, Facebook page or other social media page. It might include photographs, videos, quotations, artwork and any other visual materials they wish.

Session 12 – Review

Learning Outcomes

On complete of this project students will be able to:

- Reflect on their learning from the programme
- Set personal empathy goals

Activity 1 – Review

Type of Activity: Discussion, Reflection
Additional Materials: N/A
Learning Intentions: Students will be able to review their learning from the programme. Students will be able to set personal and collective empathy goals.

Method:

1. Review the programme with students using the Class Discussion questions below as prompts.
2. Ask students to fill in the personal reflection in their Workbooks.

Class Discussion:

- What did you learn about yourself and the way you respond to others during this programme?
- What did you learn about empathy and its role in our lives?
- What did you like or dislike most about the programme?
- Do you think you have more empathy now? Why/Why not?
- Do you think you will behave differently in future? If so, how?

Activity 2 - Creating Empathy Goals

Type of Activity: Goal setting
Additional Materials: N/A
Aim: To set personal and class empathy goals

Method:

1. To finish the programme ask the students to devise empathy goals for the class as well as their own personal empathy goals.
2. To work on the class goals, break the class into groups and ask them to come up with three 'Empathy Goals' for them all to aim towards as a group. These goals can include attitudes or behaviours e.g. 'We will be tolerant of different opinions in the class', 'We will protect each other from bullying behaviour', 'We will try to talk more to people outside our friend groups', 'We will do one volunteering or charity activity as a class', 'We will watch a film about a social issue'. The *Guide to Increasing Your Empathy* in their Workbooks might help.
3. Bring the class together and collect the goals and create a single list of Empathy goals. These might be displayed somewhere in the classroom.
4. Finally, give students a few minutes to write out their own personal empathy goals in their Workbook.

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