Thrive 365

Dragonfly: Impact Education



Did you know?

Empathy has been described as 'societal glue' as it's a human capacity that enables us to maintain relationships and remain accepted within a group. Empathy is a complex process whereby a person can recognise and even feel the emotional state of another person. It is more than just being able to see someone's point of view - empathy provokes genuine compassion. The good news is empathy can be nurtured.

[1] https://enableleaders.com/empathy-the-glue-we-need-to-fix-a-fractured-world/

1 Tell stories

Stories can be understood as empathy in practice. For millennia, we have told stories and been transported by characters, plots and settings. One key value that stories bring is an opportunity to practise empathy.

When we talk to others about the feelings of different characters we can walk in the shoes of people who experience vastly different circumstances to our own. Giving young people regular opportunities to tell their own stories is key to their empathy practice.

2 Use prompts

Studies that use brain imaging have found that the area of the brain responsible for empathy is underused by teens. This is due to the huge developmental changes that are taking place and is usually a temporary state while the brain focuses on other priorities.

It may be helpful to offer prompts that tap into empathetic responses, such as the question: what might the person be feeling that you haven't already thought of?

[2]https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna14738243

3 Encourage self-compassion

Decades of research by Dr Kristen Neff has found clear connections between being able to be kind to yourself and being able to empathise with others. This research suggests that we may have been barking up the wrong tree trying to force young people to empathise with others and perhaps we should be focusing more on how they feel about themselves. Useful questions may be: How are you talking to *yourself* in this situation? What is the impact on *you*?

[3]https://self-compassion.org/

www.dragonflyimpact.co.uk @dragonflyimpact
www.dragonflyimpact.com/how-we-can-help
Email: info@dragonflyimpact.co.uk



Islands in the Stream: Senior Mental Health Leads in Schools by Claire Pass & Rachael Bushby