



CREATING EMPATHY – GRADES 7-12

Creating Empathy years 12+ (grades 7-12)

Discuss current events.

Learn about current events and develop empathy by reading newspapers, news magazines, or watching the news together. Alternatively, you can do this activity when the child mentions a current event to you.

Ask questions like:

- How might the people involved in this situation be feeling?
- How would you feel in a similar situation?
- Is there anything we can do to help?

Encourage children to choose volunteer work.

Encourage your students to choose volunteer work that they are passionate about. As children get older, they can take a more direct role in helping the community or society in general. They may even want to start their own projects or charitable organizations to solve a problem they feel strongly about.

It's important for kids to explore the world beyond themselves. Have students map out ways they can make a difference in the world. They can take these ideas and turn them into opportunities to serve their communities.



Walk the line - Activity

“Walk the Line” was demonstrated in the movie Freedom Writers. Put a line of tape in the middle of the group, with students facing each side’s line. Read a series of statements. If the statement is true for the student, they go stand on the line.

This could include statements like “I’ve lost a family member,” “I’ve been bullied at school,” and so on. Students can also help create the prompts.

The activity shows the struggles they have in common and helps them understand what their peers experience and feel. At the end of the activity, students return to their seats to reflect through writing or discussion.

NOTE: It is important to know your students, if you are concerned about students being triggered, choose your questions carefully or invite a counsellor or mental health expert into your classroom during the activity.

One option is to have students write a letter (that they can deliver or keep to themselves) to a student who walked to the line on one of the same prompts they moved on, sharing more about this experience or offering words of encouragement.

Empathy can be taught and developed over time, and it will give children a foundation on which to build sound judgment, success, and positive and healthy relationships throughout their life.

Retrieved and adapted from: <https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/key-strategies-teach-children-empathy>

Writing Activity - In order to foster perspective without having to go through tragedy is to cultivate empathy and compassion. An exercise to achieve this is to make a list of what matters most – “a to-be list”. Free-flow writing. Just get your ideas on paper without judgement.

1. What are you grateful for?



2. What can you not live without?
3. What kind of a person do you want to be?
4. If someone was going to describe you in five words, what would those words be?
5. What would you want those words to be?
6. Who do you want to be?
7. How do you want to be remembered by your friends and family?
8. What type of body do you want to live in? (Do you live now in a body of regret, hurt and disappointment or a body of gratefulness, joy and peace?)

How do you want to be? You cannot not live a positive life with a negative mind.

*Adapted from pages 136-140 **Calm Within the Storm: A Pathway to Everyday Resiliency**. Dr. Robyne Hanley Dafoe. 2021*



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES CAN BE
FOUND AT saskatooniec.ca/mindovermatters
For more information, contact admin@saskatooniec.ca

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