Bridge4Mothers
PSL Programme — Personal, Social and Learning-to-Learn Competencies

MODULE 4
Empathy & Interpersonal Awareness

BRIDGE 4 MOTHERS

Co-funded by the European Union

Topics Covered

Empathy helps participants understand emotions, respect different perspectives and build supportive relationships in learning, work and everyday life.

1. **Empathy**
   Understanding feelings and responding with care
2. **Perspectives**
   Recognising that people may see situations differently
3. **Awareness**
   Noticing emotions in ourselves and others
4. **Listening**
   Giving full attention and showing respect
5. **Communication**
   Expressing ideas clearly, kindly and confidently
6. **Relationships**
   Building trust, support and positive connection
7. **Inclusion**
   Creating respectful spaces where everyone feels valued
8. **Collaboration**
   Working with others through empathy and mutual support

The module supports learners to strengthen emotional intelligence, communicate respectfully and respond to others with patience, inclusion and understanding.

Introduction to Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand how another person may feel and to respond with respect, care and awareness.

- Empathy helps people feel heard, respected and less alone during challenges.
- It supports healthier communication, stronger trust and more positive relationships.
- Empathy does not mean solving every problem; it means listening and responding with care.
- Empathy can be practised through attention, patience, curiosity and respectful language.

Listen • Understand • Respond

Understanding Feelings & Perspectives

People can experience the same situation in different ways. Interpersonal awareness helps us pause, ask and understand before judging.

Feelings may be shaped by

1. **Experience**
   Past experiences can influence reactions, confidence and trust.
2. **Stress**
   Pressure can make communication more emotional or unclear.
3. **Needs**
   People may need information, reassurance, time or practical support.
4. **Culture & context**
   Background, language and life situation can affect perspectives.

Perspective-taking steps

Pause
Notice your first reaction before responding.

Ask
Use open questions to understand the other person.

Listen
Focus on meaning, tone and emotions, not only words.

Respect
Accept that different perspectives can exist at the same time.

Understanding another perspective can reduce conflict and increase cooperation.

Emotional Awareness & Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence means recognising emotions, understanding their impact and choosing thoughtful responses in social situations.

Emotional awareness helps us notice

1. **Feelings**
   Identifying emotions such as worry, anger, sadness, hope or pride.
2. **Signals**
   Observing body language, tone of voice and energy levels.
3. **Triggers**
   Recognising situations that create strong emotional reactions.
4. **Needs**
   Understanding what support, space or communication may be needed.

Emotionally intelligent responses

Name it
Describe the feeling calmly and without blame.

Regulate
Take a breath or pause before reacting.

Choose words
Use respectful language even in difficult moments.

Reflect
Think about what could be learned from the interaction.

Emotional awareness creates space for calmer and more respectful communication.

The Importance of Active Listening

Active listening means giving full attention, checking understanding and showing the speaker that their voice matters.

- Focus on the speaker and reduce distractions where possible.
- Use short verbal and non-verbal signals such as nodding, eye contact and encouragement.
- Reflect back key points to confirm that you understood the message correctly.
- Avoid interrupting, judging too quickly or preparing your answer while the other person is speaking.
- Ask open questions that invite clarification, reflection and deeper understanding.

Hear • Clarify • Respect

Respectful Communication

Respectful communication helps people express needs, ideas and limits clearly while protecting dignity and trust.

Respectful communication includes

1. **Clarity**
   Say what you mean in simple and direct language.
2. **Tone**
   Use a calm tone, especially when emotions are strong.
3. **Boundaries**
   Communicate limits honestly and respectfully.
4. **Confidence**
   Express opinions without aggression or apology for existing needs.

Helpful phrases

I feel...
Name your feeling without blaming the other person.

I need...
Explain the support, information or boundary that would help.

Can we...?
Invite cooperation and shared problem-solving.

Let me check
Confirm understanding before making assumptions.

Respectful words can make difficult conversations easier and more constructive.

Building Positive Relationships

Positive relationships are built through trust, kindness, honesty, reliability and mutual support over time.

Build connection by

1. **Showing interest**
   Ask about others' experiences, ideas and needs.
2. **Being reliable**
   Follow through on small commitments and communicate changes.
3. **Offering support**
   Help where possible while respecting your own limits.
4. **Appreciating effort**
   Recognise contributions, progress and strengths.

Relationship habits

Kindness
Small respectful actions create emotional safety.

Patience
Give people time to explain, learn and adjust.

Trust
Protect privacy and communicate honestly.

Repair
Apologise, clarify and reconnect after mistakes.

Supportive relationships strengthen confidence, wellbeing and participation.

Empathy in Everyday Life & Inclusion

Empathy supports everyday interactions at home, in learning environments, at work and in digital communication.

Empathy in practice

1. **Family**
   Listening to needs, sharing responsibilities and showing appreciation.
2. **Learning**
   Encouraging others and respecting different learning speeds.
3. **Work**
   Cooperating, giving constructive feedback and recognising pressure.
4. **Digital spaces**
   Communicating kindly and respectfully online.

Supporting inclusion

Invite
Make space for quieter voices and different experiences.

Respect
Avoid stereotypes and assumptions about others.

Adapt
Adjust communication when people need clarity or support.

Encourage
Notice strengths and help others feel valued.

Inclusive relationships grow when people feel seen, heard and respected.

Empathy grows when we listen actively, understand emotions, respect different perspectives and communicate with care.

1. When did I feel listened to, respected or supported recently?
2. What can I do to understand another person’s perspective more fully?
3. What communication habit can I practise this week to strengthen my relationships?

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IMPACT GRID

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