

Choose Empathy



Ask before you act - Everyone has different boundaries and levels of comfort - and that's okay! We can practice respecting people's boundaries by asking questions about what they feel comfortable with. For example, when greeting a friend, ask before giving them a hug and respect if the person says no. Practicing these skills can lead to healthy relationships and, ultimately, healthy communities.

Take the time to listen - When we take the time to listen to others, we show that we respect and honor their experiences. Sometimes, people want to talk without looking for a solution to their problems- they just want to be heard! Create space for people to share their feelings without fear of judgment or criticism. By maintaining eye contact, nodding, and acknowledging what they're saying, we show we care about what they have to say. When people feel heard and respected, it creates healthy relationships and healthy communication across our community.

Step into their shoes - Our different experiences are what make us unique! However, it can be difficult to fully understand the struggles or challenges someone else may be going through if we haven't experienced it ourselves. Start by asking questions and then try to imagine how it would feel to experience something similar. (Quick tip: Reading a fiction book can help us practice the skills of stepping into someone else's shoes!)

Promote mutual respect - We have lots of relationships in our lives- friends, family, partners, even pets! It's important that everyone around us feels safe to share their thoughts and feelings. We can create spaces where people can be their authentic selves. In a healthy relationship, we support each other and have the right to be our own person. When we show that we care about others as much as we care about ourselves, we create healthy and safe spaces for all.

Try to learn, not judge - Because we all come from unique backgrounds and experiences, it can be surprising to hear that someone else's experiences may be vastly different than your own. This doesn't mean the other person's experiences aren't real - it just means they're different. Both realities can be true at the same time. We can learn about others by listening to their stories and gaining new perspectives. Communities thrive when we accept and respect others.