



# Exploring Leadership

## SOCIAL AWARENESS: EMPATHY

Empathy is a valuable skill for people of all ages. It goes beyond simply “walking in someone else’s shoes.” True empathy means trying to understand the reasons behind someone’s actions and feelings. We use empathy every day—with coworkers, friends, family, and classmates. Building empathy strengthens relationships and benefits both you and the people around you.

### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Have you ever tried to see things from someone else’s point of view? A successful leader knows how to understand and connect with the people they lead.

Henry Ford once said, “If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own.” That’s what empathy is all about—stepping outside your own view to understand someone else’s.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Understand empathy and why it’s important.
- Learn to recognize situations where empathy is needed and how to apply it effectively.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Two copies of the A/B Script (see Appendix A)
- Poster or whiteboard for Appendix B
- Copies of the BINGO game (see Appendices C, D, or E)
- BINGO markers, such as cereal pieces or writing utensils

## EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

In this fun BINGO game, you'll listen, think, and make connections. The goal is to learn new terms by matching them to everyday examples.

- Choose one person to read from the “A” script (Appendix A), and another to read the “B” script as the responder. Or, take turns reading the scenarios out loud.
- Hand out BINGO sheets to everyone (use Appendices C, D, or E).
- Go over any tricky words or terms on the BINGO cards so everyone understands them.
- As each scenario is read, students mark the word or phrase on their BINGO card that they think best matches the situation.
- A player gets BINGO by completing a full row across or down (no diagonals).
- When someone shouts “BINGO,” ask them to share their winning answers and explain how they matched the terms.
- Keep playing until all the scenarios have been used or most students have had a chance to win.

### FACILITATION TIPS:

- Some situations may fit into more than one category, so allow flexibility when students explain their answers.
- Optional: Consider awarding small prizes, like candy, for each BINGO.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Were there any scenarios that you found difficult to categorize?
- Did any scenarios seem to belong to more than one category?
- Identify the healthiest responses, and discuss why they might be the best choices.
- Are any of these responses easier to make? Why do you think that might be?

## APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Have you noticed any of these response types recently in your life?
- Why is it important to be empathetic in all of your interactions?
- Have a few students share what they now understand about empathy.



## CONCLUSION:

Empathy means recognizing and connecting with others' emotions. Even if we don't fully understand how someone feels, we can still try to connect and show we care. This effort helps people feel valued, supported, and respected—no matter their background, ability, or situation. When we lead with empathy, we create stronger teams, better friendships, and a more welcoming world for everyone.

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## REFERENCES

This activity idea came from AVPs the Transformer (2008) and was contributed by Sherri Sorro:  
<http://thetransformer.us/08-3.pdf>



# APPENDIX A: A/B SCRIPT

## Fixing it

- A: I'm worried about not having enough money to pay my bills this month.
- B: Don't worry, I can lend you what you need.

## One-upping

- A: Check out my scar from the cycling accident.
- B: That's nothing. You should see the one I have on my knee!

## Storytelling

- A: I was stuck in traffic for 2 hours in 100-degree weather with no air conditioning.
- B: That reminds me of the time when I...

## Consoling

- A: I feel so sad that my son was court-ordered to a rehab center.
- B: You are a good parent, you did the best you could.

## Sympathizing

- A: I just got the lab results back, and it's what I feared most.
- B: Oh no, that sounds so difficult.

## Empathizing

- A: I have so much to do today.
- B: It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed. How can I help?

## Advising

- A: It's scary for me to speak in front of people.
- B: I think you should take a public speaking class.

## Interrogating

- A: I've been trying to get this weight off and just feel frustrated.
- B: When did you start feeling this way?

## Shutting down

- A: I just lost my job.
- B: Don't worry, let's go get some food and forget about it.

## Explaining

- A: I'm really upset. You promised to be here at 11, and it is now after midnight.
- B: I'm sorry I'm late. The reason I'm late is...

## Correcting

- A: I'm upset by what you said to Mom last night.
- B: I don't think that's exactly what I said.

## Educating

- A: My boyfriend left for college 3,000 miles away.
- B: This could be a great opportunity for you to focus on personal growth.



## APPENDIX B:

### FILLABLE BINGO CARD INSTRUCTIONS

If you are using the blank BINGO card (Appendix E), display the following list of words on a whiteboard or poster. Ask participants to fill each of the 16 squares with one word from the list below. They should add the four 'free spaces' first, making sure these squares are not in the same column or row. Only do up and down BINGO, not diagonal.

- Advising
- One-upping
- Educating
- Consoling
- Storytelling
- Shutting down
- Sympathizing
- Interrogating
- Explaining
- Correcting
- Fixing it
- Empathizing
- Free Space
- Free Space
- Free Space
- Free Space



## APPENDIX C: BINGO CARD A

### EMPATHY BINGO CARD - A

ADVISING	ONE-UPPING	FREE SPACE	EDUCATING
FREE SPACE	CONSOLING	SHUTTING DOWN	STORYTELLING
EMPATHIZING	FREE SPACE	INTERROGATING	EXPLAINING
CORRECTING	FIXING IT	SYMPATHIZING	FREE SPACE



## APPENDIX D: BINGO CARD B

### EMPATHY BINGO CARD - B

ONE-UPPING	FREE SPACE	EDUCATING	CONSOLING
FREE SPACE	INTERROGATING	SHUTTING DOWN	ADVISING
FIXING IT	SYMPATHIZING	FREE SPACE	STORYTELLING
CORRECTING	EMPATHIZING	EXPLAINING	FREE SPACE



## APPENDIX E: BINGO CARD C

### EMPATHY BINGO FILLABLE CARD
