

Module IV.1. Soft skills Library

Interpersonal Skills Course

Topic 3. Understanding others: emotional intelligence

Activity T3.L1.1. Cliff Metaphor



Cliff Metaphor

This short exercise is aimed at helping teachers to challenge their students with a fictitious situation they would face and that they need to answer, using their sense of empathy to find the right way to answer.



- Methodology: Riddle
- Duration: 10-15 minutes
- Difficulty (high - medium - low): low
- Individual / Team: Team – entire classroom. With some volunteers in front of the classroom
- Classroom / House: This activity is to be developed in the classroom

Cliff Metaphor

In this activity, you will expose the following situation to your students, and ask them what they would do in such a case:

Imagine a person stuck on the side of a cliff. This person is in despair and is screaming for help. You are nearby and listen to this voice calling. What do you do?

To make this exercise more interactive, you can ask one of your students (student A) to come on stage and role-play this person on the cliffside. Then, ask another student (student B) to come to his side and explain what he would do.

Probably, the first reaction will be for student B to make his way to the one falling and try to save him. Unfortunately, they are now both stuck on the cliff and can't get down.

Now ask the classroom to discuss what they should do, before sacrificing more students. They should conclude that instead of climbing up the slippery rock face to save them, they should consider how they got there and the best way to save them. They would then return with some rope and harnesses.

Cliff Metaphor

After this, you can provide students with the following comments:

- Student B felt bad for Student A and acted out of sympathy. It was a well-meaning sentiment but actually made the problem worse.
- After the discussion, the classroom listened to the others, recognized the problem, and used empathy to understand what was needed to resolve the situation.
- Student A, well, shouldn't have wandered off the trail.

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1 – Explain the situation

STEP 2 – Ask a student to mimic the situation

STEP 3 – Ask another student to help him

STEP 4 – Ask the rest of the classroom to talk about the situation and to plan an answer

STEP 5 – Debate

STEP 6 – Explain what is the difference between sympathy and empathy





EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Understand difference between sympathy and empathy
 - Develop empathy
 - Decision making
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ENTRECOMP (COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED):

- Working with others
- Planning and management
- Taking the initiative



