

Bryn Mawr Elementary School



SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S MESSAGE

Week of May 18th – 22nd

Message & Activities: [Spanish](#) and [Vietnamese](#)

Do you know how I feel?

This week, we are focusing on another component of the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) standard of Social Awareness. Empathy is the ability to understand how another person feels, and to respond in helpful ways. When one child can empathize (put themselves in the other person's shoes) with another, they are better able to resolve conflict. Some children develop empathy more naturally than others, but all children need to be taught this critical skill.

Children who are empathic are better able to cope with conflict and difficult social situations. Children who are empathic will be less likely to engage in bullying behavior, and more likely to jump in and help a friend or peer who is being bullied. Children who are empathic are more likely to grow into well-adjusted adults with strong coping skills.

As parents, we are successfully modeling this skill all the time. We listen to our loved ones. We let them know we care and that they have a right to their feelings. Unfortunately, the stresses and worry that have entered our lives during this unprecedented time stretches our abilities to cope. We may snap and have a shorter fuse. This leads to hurt feelings all around. Take the time to listen to others, and in the meantime, you'll be giving yourself what you need too.

Please continue reading to see more resources and activities on empathy.

Kindly,

Lucero Alegre, School Counselor

[check-in form](#)


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COUNSELING, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Week of May 18th – 22nd

SUBJECT	ACTIVITY
FAMILY ACTIVITY	<div data-bbox="305 304 803 1927">  <p>KEY Strategies to teach CHILDREN EMPATHY</p> <p>3-5 YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DESCRIBE AND LABEL - Help children recognize their emotions and body, "You're clenching your fists. You stomped your feet. You seem angry." • READ STORIES and discuss character's feelings • Make a WE CARE CENTER • Coach their SOCIAL SKILLS <p>5-7 YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use PICTURES - Cut out pictures from magazines or print pictures that show sad, angry, or happy faces. • EMBRACE DIVERSITY - Help children understand what they have in common with others. • OBSERVE OTHERS - Note the body language of others and guess how they might be feeling. • Teach about HEALTHY LIMITS and their own boundaries <p>7-9 YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in high-level DISCUSSIONS about book characters • Try loving kindness MEDITATION • Engage in cooperative BOARD GAMES <p>9-11 YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up for ACTING CLASSES • Create EMPATHY MAPS - Choose an emotion, then brainstorm what you might say, think, and do when you feel that way <p>12+ YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss current EVENTS • Encourage your child to choose VOLUNTEER WORK • Try "WALK THE LINE" activity - perfect for classrooms, summer camps, or other places with a large group of older children/teens. <p>Big Life Journal - biglifejournal.com</p> </div> <div data-bbox="824 304 1518 508"> <p>It's never too late to start teaching empathy to kids. Watch this video as Dr. Dehra Harris shares a few tips for parents to ensure children develop healthy emotional habits and empathy skills.</p> <p>https://youtu.be/od6Va6zROJc</p> </div>

CULTIVATING ♥ EMPATHY ♥

Empathy is at the heart of good relationships of many kinds, and it begins with valuing other perspectives and other people. Parents can cultivate empathy in their children by showing their kids how to be empathetic and talking about why it's important.

-1-

EMPATHIZE WITH YOUR CHILD AND MODEL EMPATHY FOR OTHERS

When we empathize with our children, they develop trusting, secure attachments with us and want to adopt our values and model our behavior.

- ✓ Have conversations with your child (even before they can talk back!) and actively listen to them.
- ✓ Express interest in people in your community from various backgrounds.

-2-

MAKE CARING FOR OTHERS A PRIORITY

When other people are a priority, children will value a variety of perspectives.

- ✓ Help your children understand that they should be considerate of the people around them: be polite even when you're in a grumpy mood, help pick up your toys, listen while others are talking.

-3-

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO PRACTICE EMPATHY

Learning empathy is like learning a language or a sport, it requires practice and guidance.

- ✓ Encourage empathy for family and friends by asking your kids to think about how they think their family and friends are feeling, or why they reacted in a certain way.
- ✓ Notice when your child exhibits empathy and tell them you noticed; point out when people around you exhibit empathy and talk about it.

-4-

HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP SELF-CONTROL AND MANAGE FEELINGS EFFECTIVELY

Often, when children don't express empathy it's not because they don't have it, it's because they're having big feelings that are blocking it.

- ✓ Identify feelings with your kids; encourage them to always talk about their feelings.
- ✓ Come up with a system together for taking control of big feelings, such as taking a deep breath and counting to three. Practice this system together while you're calm, and model it when you're feeling upset.
- ✓ Practice resolving conflicts; try to achieve mutual understanding by listening and talking about each other's feelings.



Adapted from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Making Caring Common Project

COUNSELING
SOCIAL /
EMOTIONAL
ACTIVITY
FOR
3rd, 4th, & 5th
GRADE

Hello, Students!

This week we are going to learn about Empathy; what it is, why it's important, and how to practice it!

First, watch this [video](#) to hear how other kids understand and describe empathy.



Empathy is when you can understand how someone else might be feeling or thinking about a certain situation. Empathy is often described as "walking in someone else's shoes" as we try to *imagine* what another person might be feeling or going through.

This poster provides helpful steps in how we understand others using empathy.

It's important to practice empathy because it helps us know how to respond to someone in a helpful way. This is also called showing compassion.

Next, watch this [video](#) to learn more about empathy and how to *practice* it.

Now that you've learned what empathy is and how to practice it, think about the following prompts and how you might respond to these situations using empathy:

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In the restroom at school, a student gets teased and pushed into a stall by other kids. Imagine how the student is feeling. How can you show them empathy?2. A friend in your class has just failed a big test. Your friend is upset because they studied, tried their best, and still failed. Imagine how they're feeling. How can you show them empathy?3. It is your classmate's birthday and they are having a birthday party this weekend. Imagine how they're feeling. How can you show them empathy? |
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