

# The use of empathy as a communication technique

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



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Technique Virginia Howard HHS 307 Communications Skills for Health &  
Human Service Personnel Instructor Katherine Martinek November 14, 2011

The Use of Empathy 1 Using empathy as a communication technique is a good way to help the listener to understand their speaker as well as identify with the emotions of the speaker. The empathy technique allows the listener to be more tolerant, compassionate and be able to accept any differences that the speaker may have without difficulty. Empathy being used as a communication technique is important in the field of Health and Human Service profession. If you are able to use empathy in your session with your client correctly than you will be able to help your client more that you will ever know and you will start to build the foundation of a great human service worker and client relationship. Empathy in today's times is best described as an awareness of and insight into the thoughts, behavior and feelings of someone else including their significance of them. Empathy will allow a person to build a strong relationship off of trust and honesty along with understanding, and at the same time giving them the strength to disagree without prejudice or judging some else. Empathy is the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner Empathy is basically putting yourself in the emotional shoes of someone else by being able to feel what they are feeling as if it was you going through the situation. Empathy is a tricky technique that you must not get confused with sympathy which is a

term used to refer to the act of feeling the feelings or needs of another. It is usually accompanied by responses of sadness or pity. The Use of Empathy 2 Empathy is the ability to identify with and comprehend someone else's feelings or difficulties. With empathy, you relate through your own experience similar to what the patient is going so it is easy for you to relate to what they are going through. Sympathy is the ability to enter into or share another person's feeling. Sympathy is expressing feelings such as sorrow and pity. With sympathy, you can basically show pity or the need to feel sorry for someone else's down falls. When you use empathy you have to know the right moment or time to use empathy. Knowing this will let your patient or love one know that you understand. You need to pay close attention to their body language, tone of their voice pay close attention to their facial expression. These gestures may be on display but the words are not matching their actions. If you have ever experience a loss of a love one or you have had to deal with financial problems think about how the person was comforting you and how you receive their actions. Was it an offending action or was it an accepting thoughtful action. When showing empathy in an intimate relationship it should bring those involved closer to each by sharing an emotional moment, where as in a professional relationship showing empathy allows the patient to be more relaxed and probably open up more to discuss their problems with you and are more likely to receive any suggestions that you may have for them and meet the expected goal with little to no resistant. When a patient is feeling along and isolated & having problems they will feel better if they can just talk to someone about it and when you give them a positive feedback response they will come out of that

isolated shell and interact more in the discussion and you will get more participation from them than before you let them know that you care and you are concerned

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When you implement active listening while showing empathy your patient will feel that they have your undivided attention and you will have a more positive productive outcome. You have to make and maintain good eye contact, have good posture and facial expression, make sure that the tone of voice you use does not make the patient feel afraid or uncomfortable always remain non-judgmental regardless of what the patient does or say. Always remember to keep your interpretation of what the patient has said separate from what the patient is feeling and saying. You are dealing with two kinds of empathy and they are affective empathy which is what we deal with on a regular basis that deals with the ability to sense what someone else is feeling and then you have cognitive empathy which is the ability to sense what someone is thinking. A lot of people with mental illnesses lack the ability to possess to have cognitive empathy even though they can exhibit affective empathy. People with the diagnosis of schizophrenia or autism-spectrum are an example of mental disorders that do not have cognitive empathy, but they do have emotional or affective empathy. A person without mental illness or brain damage can freely select the way that they choose to use any type of empathy skills that they may have. There is a Bible verse and I am not sure exactly what book in the Bible that it comes from but I think it's Matthew 7: 12 and it states " Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you". I think this is a Godly way of showing empathy because you want to be treated with respect and you should treat others the way you want to be treated. You should always

listen very carefully to what your patient is saying instead of talking and interrupting them all of the time. Give them the time that they may need to express themselves. Let them know that you understand and be sincere about what they are saying. The Use of Empathy 4 Have self control over and for your own actions. You may have heard this story already and you just can't hear it again, just be patient and hear them out, there may be something new and you have not heard it yet. So show some self control and don't go overboard. Stop talking and listening to the other person for a change, it's not about you all of the time. It's more important to try and understand the other person's feelings and thought more than the fact that they are mad or sad. For example, if one your clients or patients come to you with an emotional problem about their pet parrot has died, you need to find out the reason the loss of a parrot has gotten them so upset. Once you have talk with them a little longer you realize that they got the parrot after a love one had passed away to try and fill a void in their life and it was their way of dealing with their loss. You then come to the reality of the parrot passing is bringing up memories of a love one that was deceased. You must be sincere with the words that you use to try and help them to cope with yet another loss. You must be sensitive toward them, so try using words such as " I understand how you must be feeling", continue to listen, this will let them know or feel that understand even though you may not agree with the way they are handling the situation. You also can apologize to them by saying something like " I sorry you had to go through this so soon". When using empathy as a communication technique you have to put yourself in the other person's position. You must establish trust with the other person in order to

get them to open up and discuss their problems with you. A human service professional with a high level of empathy is less likely to be judgmental or stereotype another person. Always take responsibility for your actions and try not to hurt someone's feeling and if you do unintentionally, apologize.

The Use of Empathy 5 By doing this, it may let you client know that you are interested in them and value their opinion and emotions as well as their thoughts. The Use of Empathy Reference: Van Survellen, G. (2009).

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