Empathy in the workplace

Definitions

Diversity: The presence of differences within a given setting. In the workplace, that can include (but is not limited to) differences in race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, and socioeconomic class.

Equity: The act of ensuring that processes and programs are impartial, fair and provide equal possible outcomes for every individual.

Inclusion: The practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging in the workplace. This means that every employee feels comfortable and supported by the organization when it comes to being their authentic selves.

Source: [Built In](#)

Tip: How to practice empathy

Are you comfortable when people start to start to talk about their emotions and their life experiences that have been difficult? Remember, empathy is a skill that can be improved with practice, so try to understand where your baseline is but don't let it hinder your willingness to practice and improve. Julie Corliss, Executive Editor of the [Harvard Health Letter,](#) offers some tips for practicing empathetic behavior:

- Be curious, but **ask questions sensitively**. Assume you don't know how the other person feels about a topic. Try asking "I might see this [topic] differently than you. What's your experience? How do you see it?"
- Once you ask for another's point of view, **listen actively.** Face the person, and focus on them while you listen. **Don't interrupt** or plan what you are going to say next. If negative emotions come up, don't offer suggestions unless you are specifically asked.
- Finally, when you ask someone for their point of view, and they offer it, **express appreciation.** For example, "Thanks for letting me know your thoughts on this."

Empathy is not the same as agreement, but asking for input and then listening is a way to make others feel respected.