

BASIS ON EMPATHY

2:Empathy Workshops

"The most important question facing humanity is this: Can we reach global empathy in time to avoid the collapse of civilization and save the Earth?"

Jeremy Rifkin is an American economic and social theorist, writer, public speaker, political advisor, and activist.

Image 1.



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By the end of this unit:

- you will be able to organize and perform workshop on empathy



Learning-time:

- 30 minutes for understanding the text and the stories
- 30 minutes for preparation of workshop

1. THE STRUCTURE OF THIS UNIT

This Unit is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: Covers the following topics
 - How to prepare the empathy workshop
 - Tools you can use in the workshop
 - The preparation of scenario for workshop
- Part 2: Covers the following topics
 - Realization of workshop
 - Analysis of workshop

In the first part, we will suggest you some ideas how to prepare empathy workshop, which simple tools you can use, and some hints how to prepare scenario for the workshop

In the second part, we will suggest you how the workshop should be realized and analysed.

In the preparation of this unit, we have profoundly used the experience we got during realization of empathy workshop in elementary and high schools, in the companies and on open space.



2. WHY EMPATHY WORKSHOPS?

"I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it."

Maya Angelou, American poet

"I was taught that if you see a person drowning, you must jump into the water to save them, whether you can swim or not."

Irena Sendler, nurse

We believe that most people are empathic, however they show their empathy mostly in special circumstances for example when they are going to help somebody in troubles, even risking their own life.

In everyday life, relationship usually we do not try to understand the feeling of other persons, their problems and traumas. We follow standardized procedures and rules we learnt and which we have accepted. For example in most cases when child has problem with reading and writing, first reaction of teacher (and in most cases even of the parents) are like this pupil is not learning enough and even worse, it is gifted but lazy. However, it would much better if the teacher will ask himself: "What if this girl or boy has dyslexia? How can I know that? What I can do to resolve this problem?"

We believe if people start to look at above described (and similar) problems differently their empathy potential will be realized and their approach to other person's problem will changed in the positive direction.

Somehow we have to trigger the empathy. From our experience the best way to do it is to organize short workshops (not more than 30 minutes) in which some problems which have people with disabilities in their everyday activities, will be simulated. For example on image 1 the scouts had to go some place with closed eyes. On image 2 we have asked random selected

people at main square at Velenje to try to complete simple puzzles with closed eyes, on image 3 we did the same simulation at the elementary school

Image 2.



In all cases we ask participants how they were feeling during activity they already have realized. Always the answer was something like that: I did not think that it is so difficult. I was never thinking about the problems, which have people with disabilities in realization of everyday activities, which are everyday routine for me.

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When we ask them will they voluntary work in non-governmental organizations supporting people with disabilities more than 90 % of participants they wanted to do voluntary work.

Image 3.



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The tools

To simulate special conditions you can use very simple tools like:

- A piece of textile which will be used to cover the eyes during some experiment (image 4)

Image 4.



- The puzzles which can be used to be arranged with covered eyes (image 5)

Image 5.



- The selection of shoes which have different size and forms (image 6)

Image 6.



- Ear plugs or a piece of cotton wool to put in ears during simulation of problems, which have deaf people.
- Eyeglasses, which will be used to simulate poor vision. Take some old glasses and ask participants with normal sight to look through them.
- The text with which we can simulate how the text is seen by people with Irlen syndrom

Image 7.

When Sampler CPU 1 boots up "Code Meter" automatically loads. This is a Wibu application (free online from Wibu.com). This is essential to recognize the DVZ-RT/Space/Library authorization USB key (dongle). This may be immediately visible because it's in the Windows Task Tray. This runtime program is actually installed on all the DVZ-RT computers (Control and Samplers).

If the Code Meter task Tray icon is green, this means the authorization key is present on the computer being viewed. On those computers where the key is not installed, the icon will be gray, but it will work because the program accesses the valid key over the network.

Also, On all Samplers, you will see an AI Crypt VST Host (Helix) icon. That also loads automatically upon boot up. This AI Crypt info pertains only to beta turn-key systems, and will change later.

If the icon is not present, launch it from the desktop icon, or look in the Start Menu - Programs/Audio Impressions/AI Strings and launch AI Crypt. If it isn't there, it failed to load or the Wibu key is not connected so please make sure it's present on one of the computers, that they're all networked correctly together, etc.

If it's loaded, right-click on the icon and a context menu will come up. The first item will be Dismount if all loaded correctly. Don't select this. If the first item is "Mount" then select this (this mounts the library). If you Mount, you have to choose the image, and that's located on the sample drive and named "aisi" (Audio Impressions Symphonic Image). You select it and mount it to x (using the dropdown menu). No letter other than x will function correctly. Note: All this will occur automatically in the final release and even in beta you shouldn't have to do the mounting if the boot process works correctly.

- The text in which some letters are substituted with others (p<->b, d<->p, b<->d, e<->a) to simulate how the text see people with dyslexia.

Here is an example of text with dyslexia (following changes has been made b<->p and a<->e)

"Sinca ambethy involvas undarstending tha amotionel stetas of othar baobla, tha wey it is cherectarizad is darivad from tha wey amotions thamsalvas era cherectarizad. If, for axembla, amotions era tekan to ba cantrelly cherectarizad by bodily faalings, than gresbing tha bodily faalings of enothar will ba cantrel to ambethy. On tha othar hend, if amotions era mora cantrelly cherectarizad by e combination of baliafs end dasiras, than gresbing thasa baliafs end dasiras will

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ba mora assantiel to ambethy. Tha ebility to imegina onasalf es enothar barson is e sobhisticetad imeginetiva broccass. Howavar, tha besic cebecity to racogniza amotions is brobably inneta[15] end mey ba echiavad unconsciously. Yat it cen ba treinad[16] end echiavad with verious dagraas of intansity or eccurecy.”

If you have possibility to provide wheelchairs, you can used them too.

After you have all tools, you can make scenario how the workshop will be organized.

First you have to know who will be the public (teachers, children in the kindergarten, pupils from elementary school, high school students. You have to know how many people will participate in workshop and in which room it will organized.

You have to adapt programme to target public and taking in the account the facilities in which workshop will be organized (space, light, is there ny noise, et cetera)

Here is one possible **programme** for event:

1. Short introduction about empathy not more than 5 minutes
2. Invite participants to try to go in the shoes of other people. Ask then how they are feeling.
3. Ask some participants to try to go from one point in the room to other with closed eyes. Please them to comment their feeling.
4. Invite some participants to tie one's shoelaces using one hand. Be careful, usually not all people have the shoes with shoelaces.
5. Ask some people to complete the puzzle with closed eyes. Do not forget to ask them how where they feel during this action

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6. Invite some participants to put piece of cotton wool in the ears and listen text you are reading to them. Ask them to repeat the text and to comment their feeling during that activity
7. Select one participant, tell her/him one term and ask her/him to try to present that term acting without word. Invite all participant to try to find out which term did you select.

After those small exercises discuss with participants what they have learned, how they were feeling during the experiments, do they have some suggestions.

You can make short survey preparing questionnaires asking participants to fill them.

Here are some **questions** you can ask the participants:

1. Have you been in contact with people with disabilities?
2. Do you know what is empathy?
3. Did you think about putting yourself in the situation of other people?
4. Did you change your attitude to people with disabilities after participation in empathy workshop?
5. Do you think that realization of such and similar experiments will support the inclusion of people with disabilities in local community?
6. Do you want to learn more about empathy?
7. Do you want to work in non-governmental and non-profit organizations supporting people with disabilities?

Of course you can add some new questions and not to take all of them.

At the end of workshop (if there is time) you can for elder population describe some people with strong empathy.

We suggest to say few words about Irena Sendler. Here are some biographical data (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irena_Sendler).

Irena Sendler (Image 8), also referred to as Irena Sendlerowa in Poland, nom de guerre "Jolanta" (15 February 1910 - 12 May 2008), was a Polish nurse, humanitarian, and social worker who served in the Polish Underground during World War II in German-occupied Warsaw, and was head of the

Image 8.



By Unknown - Teresa Prekerowa "Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942-1945"(The underground Council to Aid Jews in Warsaw 1942-1945) Warszawa 1982 ISBN 83-06-00622-4. Immediate source: Irena Sendler 1943 (2) online., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6994698>

children's section of Żegota the Polish Council to Aid Jews (Polish: Rada Pomocy Żydom), which was active from 1942 to 1945.

Assisted by some two dozen other Żegota members, Sendler smuggled approximately 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto and then provided them with false identity documents and shelter, outside the Ghetto, saving those children from the Holocaust. With the exception of diplomats who issued visas to help Jews flee Nazi-occupied Europe, Sendler saved more Jews than any other individual during the Holocaust. On image 8 is Irena Sendler with some children she has saved.

Image 9.



Irena Sendler with some children she saved from the Warsaw Ghetto

By Mariusz Kubik, <http://www.mariuszkubik.pl> - own work,
<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Kmarius>, CC BY 3.0,
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After the war, Sendler was imprisoned from 1948 to 1949 and brutally interrogated by the communist secret police (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa) due to her connections with Poland's principal resistance organisation, the Home Army (AK), which was loyal to the wartime Polish government in exile. In 2007, and again in 2008, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize from Poland, with support from numerous prominent personalities along with IFSW associations, but she was not selected.

Her most popular quote was: **"Heroes do extraordinary things. What I did was not an extraordinary thing. It was normal."**

It is interesting that very few people knew for Irena Sendler until four students (Megan Stewart, Liz Cambers, Sabrina Coons and Jessica Shelton) began looking for information about Irena Sendler. Mr. Conard had given them a clipping he had found in a 1994 issue of U.S. News and World Report. The mention of Irena was in a story called "Other Schindlers." Only one web site on the Internet mentioned Irena, it was not until the students visited Poland in 2001 that Irena's story became known to the world. At last count, there were over 500,000 web sites on the Internet mentioning Irena.

3. HOW TO REALIZE EMPATHY WORKSHOP?

"Example isn't another way to teach, it is the only way to teach."

- Albert Einstein

We suggest that person who leads the workshop say few words about empathy taking in account the age of participants. This presentation has to be simple and easy to understand. It is good to give comparison empathy with shoes, something like Daniel Pink quote : " Empathy is about

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standing in someone else's shoes, feeling with his or her heart, seeing with his or her eyes."

After short introduction Image 9 you can start to realize experiments. First can be "Standing in shoes". The participants are trying different shoes you have prepared and explain how they feel.

Image 9.



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Next experiment is "Walking with closed eyes" (simulation of blindness).
Ask somebody to walk from one to another location in the room. You can cover her/his eyes as shown on image 10.

Image 10.



After this you can try experiment "Tie your shoelaces with one hand"(simulation of physical disability). Select person, who has shoes with shoelaces and invite her/him to try to tie her/his shoelaces using

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only on hand. You have to immobilize one arm so that participants has to try to do it with one hand as shown on image 12

Image 11.



Next experiment is "Listen with the plugs in the ears" (demonstration of deafness). Select couple of participants, give them plugs and ask them to put plugs in their ears. After they have done this, take a book and

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read for couple of minutes. Ask them did they here and how they were feeling.

You can continue with experiment "Complete the puzzles" (to demonstrate blindness). Ask participants to help each other covering eyes image 12 and supporting when puzzles are completing image 13, 14.

Image 12.



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Image 13.



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Image 14.



During the workshop you can give some additional explanations of experiment image 15.

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Image 15.



We have very positive experience with workshops. On images 17 and 18 is shown how active are participants

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Image 16.



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Image 17.



In final part of workshop you can discuss experiments, which were realized. You can ask participants to fill questionnaires you have prepared. Depending on level of analysis you can make questionnaires simpler or more complicated. For example you can use Lickart scale which is the sum of responses on several Likert items.

A Likert item is simply a statement that the respondent is asked to evaluate by giving it a quantitative value on any kind of subjective or objective dimension, with level of agreement/disagreement being the dimension most commonly used.

The format of a typical five-level Likert item, for example, could be:

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

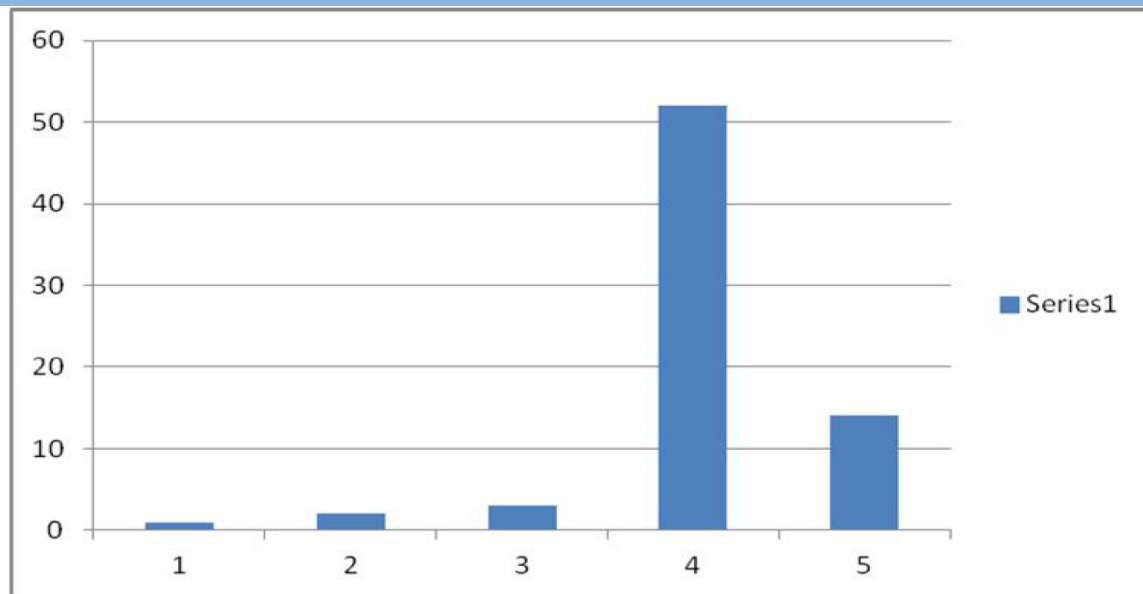
Strongly agree

For example at one workshop we gave the students the following statement:

"I will do voluntary work in non-profit organization supporting people with disabilities".

The answers are shown on image 18

Image 18.



You have to choose, which statements you will use and how you will present the results.

However, we think it is very important to do analysis of workshop, because it will help you to make necessary improvement, and you will see what the impact of the workshop was.

We wish you successful realization of workshop.

"I call him religious who understands the suffering of others."

Gandhi Mahatma