



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module – Empathy and resilience

Method – Personal Story

Class activities



Module 6 – Empathy & Resilience

Class activity 1. - Circle of Stories

Related method

Personal Story

Target group

Age: Adults 20–55

Gender: Mixed

Level of studies: Secondary education and above

Status: Employed, unemployed, or job-seeking

Fewer opportunities: Especially beneficial for participants from migrant backgrounds, long-term unemployed, or those experiencing social isolation and low confidence.

The activity is designed for learners who may lack supportive environments to express themselves. Sitting in a circle reinforces equality, safety, and trust, helping participants connect through shared experiences of resilience.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Share personal experiences using prompts in a structured, respectful way.
- Practise active listening without interruption.
- Identify at least one resilience strategy from a peer's story.
- Strengthen empathy and foster mutual trust in a group setting.

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials and resources

Story prompt cards (examples: “A challenge I overcame,” “A moment I felt proud of myself”), Talking object (ball, stick, or token for turn-taking), Timer to ensure equal speaking time, Flipchart to capture common resilience themes (optional)

Activity description

This activity creates a storytelling circle, where each participant shares a personal experience prompted by guiding cards. Others listen without interruption, focusing on empathy rather than judgment. The shared reflection highlights resilience, coping, and the value of empathy in diverse life situations.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction



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Facilitator welcomes participants and explains the goal: sharing personal experiences to build empathy and resilience.

Establishes ground rules with the group: confidentiality, respect, no interruptions, voluntary participation.

Demonstrates the use of the “talking object” (only the person holding it may speak).

Facilitator shares a short, personal example story (2–3 minutes) to model openness and vulnerability.

Main Activity

Facilitator introduces the first story prompt (e.g., “A time I overcame a challenge”).

Participants are given 2 minutes to reflect silently or jot notes.

The first learner holds the talking object and shares their story (max 3 minutes).

Group members listen in silence, focusing on empathy rather than judgment. After each story, the group offers supportive comments only (e.g., “Thank you for sharing,” “I could relate to that”). No advice or corrections are allowed.

The talking object passes clockwise until everyone who wishes has shared.

If time permits, a second round with a new prompt can be added.

Conclusion and Reflection

Facilitator leads a debriefing discussion:

- What common themes or emotions emerged?
- What strategies of resilience did you hear from your peers?

Learners write down one personal insight: something they learned from another story or a strategy they want to apply in their own life.

Group closes with a brief check-out round: each person shares one word about how they are feeling.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Observation of listening and respectful behaviour.

Reflection round at the end: participants express one new strategy or perspective gained.

Optional feedback sheets with self-evaluation: “*I felt heard today*,” “*I practised listening*.”

Adaptation Tips

Use simple prompts with images for low-literacy groups.

Allow bilingual sharing for migrants, with summaries in the common language.

For online groups, use breakout rooms and digital prompts.



Module 6 – Empathy & Resilience

Class activity 2 – Story Pair Exchange

Related method

Personal Story

Target group

Age: Adults 20–55

Gender: Mixed

Level of studies: Secondary education and above

Status: Employed, unemployed, or job-seeking

Fewer opportunities: Especially beneficial for participants from migrant backgrounds, long-term unemployed, or those experiencing social isolation and low confidence.

By working in pairs, participants gain confidence in sharing and develop deeper empathy through personal conversations. The more intimate setting allows learners to practise both telling and asking reflective questions to demonstrate active listening.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Share personal stories in one-to-one settings.
- Use reflective questions to show empathy and deepen dialogue.
- Recognise emotional triggers and resilience strategies in peers' narratives.
- Build interpersonal trust through authentic storytelling.

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Materials and resources

Story prompt cards (e.g., “A time I felt supported,” “A challenge I faced and overcame with help”), Chairs set in pairs, Timer, Reflection sheets for partner feedback

Activity description

This activity creates a safe space for paired storytelling and active listening. Each participant shares a short personal story, while their partner listens and responds with reflective, non-judgmental questions. The activity builds empathy, trust, and dialogue skills.

Detailed Implementation Steps

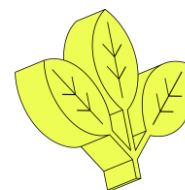
Introduction

Facilitator explains that the activity focuses on deep listening and empathy through paired storytelling.



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Introduces story prompts (e.g., “A time I felt supported by others,” “How I managed stress in a difficult period”).

Models the process with a volunteer: one person tells a story while the other listens attentively and asks 1–2 reflective questions (“*How did that experience make you feel?*” or “*What helped you overcome the challenge?*”).

Main Activity

Participants are paired up and seated facing each other.

Partner A shares their story for 3–4 minutes while Partner B listens silently, maintaining eye contact and open body language.

After Partner A finishes, Partner B asks one or two reflective questions to show understanding. Partner A responds briefly.

Roles switch: Partner B shares their story, Partner A listens and asks reflective questions. After both stories, pairs take 2–3 minutes to reflect together: *What did I learn from my partner’s story? What surprised me?*

Facilitator circulates during the activity to observe and offer gentle guidance if needed.

Conclusion and Reflection

Group reconvenes in plenary. Facilitator invites volunteers to share insights:

- How did it feel to be deeply listened to?
- What did you notice about yourself when listening?
- What resilience strategies came up in the stories?

Learners write down one concrete action: how they will practise empathy or resilience in their daily life.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Partner feedback on listening quality.

Facilitator observes listening and questioning skills.

Self-reflection notes: “*One new perspective I gained today is...*”

Adaptation Tips

Give extra prep time for shy learners.

Simplify prompts for low-literacy groups.

For multicultural groups, ensure prompts respect cultural sensitivities.



Module 6 – Empathy & Resilience

Class activity 3 – Story of Overcoming a Challenge

Related method

Personal Story

Target group

Age: Adults 20–55

Gender: Mixed

Level of studies: Secondary education and above

Status: Employed, unemployed, or job-seeking

Fewer opportunities: Especially beneficial for participants from migrant backgrounds, long-term unemployed, or those experiencing social isolation and low confidence.

This activity invites learners to share a personal story of overcoming a challenge. By narrating and listening, participants build empathy, recognise resilience in themselves and others, and practise supportive communication in a group setting.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Express a personal story in a safe and structured environment.
- Reflect on their own coping strategies and resilience.
- Practise active listening and empathy when hearing peers' stories.
- Strengthen group trust and emotional awareness

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials and resources

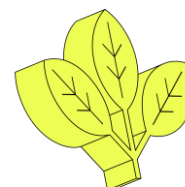
Prompt cards or guiding questions (e.g., “Describe a challenge you faced and how you overcame it”, “What gave you strength during that moment?”), Chairs arranged in a circle, Flipchart/whiteboard for facilitator notes (optional)

Activity description

Learners share short stories of challenges they have faced and how they managed to overcome them. The process emphasises strength, resilience, and empathy, while also encouraging peer support and reflection on coping strategies.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction



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The facilitator explains that sharing stories of challenges can build connection and resilience. Learners are reassured that they may share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with. Respect, confidentiality, and empathy are emphasised as group values.

Main Activity

The facilitator models the process by sharing a short personal story of overcoming a challenge, highlighting resilience and growth.

Each learner is invited to share their story in turn, while the group listens attentively without interrupting.

After each story, the group briefly reflects on strengths they noticed in the storyteller (e.g., persistence, creativity, emotional balance).

Learners are encouraged to note common themes, such as support from others, problem-solving strategies, or inner determination.

Conclusion and Reflection

The facilitator closes with a group discussion:

- *“What helped you feel stronger in difficult moments?”*
- *“What did you learn from listening to others’ experiences?”*

Learners write down one coping strategy they heard that they could apply in their own life.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Observation of participation and respect during storytelling.

Group reflection showing awareness of resilience and empathy.

Learner self-reflection on personal coping strategies.

Adaptation Tips

For shy learners, allow sharing in pairs before moving to the larger group.

For groups with trauma sensitivity, facilitators may allow fictional or symbolic stories instead of strictly personal ones.

For online sessions, breakout rooms can be used for small-group sharing.