

How to use this 'Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes' Activity

Having empathy enables us to build social connections. This is hugely important for our optimal wellbeing as it allows us to feel connected to others. It is the very basis of human relationships and helps us to feel a sense of belonging as well as valued, loved, and cared for. Being connected to others is good for our mental wellbeing.

This 'Put Yourself In Someone Else's Shoes' activity allows us to start the conversation about what it means to empathise with others.

Children are more open to discussion while they are doing something fun. Ask them to think of a friend and design shoes that their friend would love to wear. Have them draw legs going into the shoes, with some socks. All in the design that their friend would enjoy. This will start to get them thinking from another person's perspective.

As they complete this drawing ask them what they think it means to put yourself in someone else's shoes. Try the following examples:

- If your friend lost their favorite teddy, how do you think they would feel? Once they answer explain that in order to get to that conclusion they would have had to put themselves in their friend's shoes. Ask how they would help their friend feel better.
- If your friend's mom shouted at them before they came into school, how would they feel? Again, once they answer explain that in order to get to that conclusion, they would have had to put themselves in their friend's shoes. Ask how they would help their friend feel better.

Continue along these lines until you see your child has grasped the concept.

You can continue to bring awareness to emotions felt by others while watching tv, ask your children what emotions various characters are feeling, this will help them build their feelings vocabulary.

Get them to draw and engage with you on this important skill. If your child is open to it, I would love for you to share your child's shoe designs with me and/or your experience of doing the activity. Tag me on social media @natashafreemantle or email me on natashafreemantle@gmail.com

— EMPATHY —

Put yourself in someone else's shoes

