

Top tips for educators working with young people with SEND /ALN

- Before starting your Empathy Day Festival activities, use our short PowerPoint to introduce the concept of empathy to your learners. Talk about what empathy means and why it is important.
- Use visual aids, such as social stories or pictures from a chosen book to help explain what empathy is.
- Over the Festival make specific time each day for group reading and reflection. The Read for Empathy Collection has lots of great options – as you share the stories, explain why you like it and how it encourages empathy.
- When sharing empathy reads, use visual aids (e.g. empathy response cards or an emoji grid) for learners to match feelings in response to scenarios.
- Select stories that encourage and empower your learners to come up with positive solutions on behalf of the characters. There may be multiple different possible alternative outcomes – how many can the group come up with?
- Support families with suggestions of how they can continue the theme at home (e.g. keep an empathy journal to jot down everything they have learnt that day about the theme).
- Arrange an author visit to happen during the festival – let the author know you are participating in the Empathy Day Festival and ask them to focus their visit on empathy in their books.
- Plan a whole school activity where they watch the Empathy Day Assembly with Frank Cotterill-Boyce on 12 June.
- Consider planning a brief activity each day of the Festival – in a series of assemblies focus on a different Challenge activity, or choose a different story to be shared in each room which can then be delivered to the next classroom by Empathy Champions from each class, until everyone has heard all the chosen stories across the Festival.
- Get everyone together to create a 'jump' photo with their favourite books – encourage everyone to jump as they wish: up in the air, with their hand onto a story book, seated with their book raised up – we'd love to see all your ways to jump into stories!

Adapting the Empathy Challenge

You can adapt the nine suggested activities in the Empathy Challenge as you wish to best suit the needs of your learners, but here are some ideas to help your thinking:

Empathy Bookshelf

- Create your own empathy book wall with a collection of books or even drawings/paintings of books which promote empathy. Ask learners which books they would add to the bookshelf – which stories helped them understand others?
- Create mini film reviews of the books where the learner shares how the book makes them feel using an emoji grid.

Empathy Characters

- Create a social story for learners to talk about a character's emotions and discuss what could be done to make them feel better. Use stories from the Empathy Shorts, or a book the learners are already familiar with.
- Explore the characters feelings physically – how can you show anger, sadness, happiness, worry using your face and body?

Empathy Artists

- Select stories from the Empathy Shorts and encourage learners to write their own version of the story or explain the story in their own words, or create a storyboard or comic strip to help them understand the characters' feelings.
- In small groups, act out the story with a beginning, middle and end.
- Design a poster to educate others about the importance of empathy.

Empathy Emotions Maps

Use emojis or visual emotions cards to help the learner share how their feelings change over time. Focus on their feelings around a specific event, eg lunch time, their birthday, or a visit to the doctor or dentist. How do they feel before, during, and after?

Empathy chat

- In pairs or small groups, use visual prompt cards to share and learn about each other's feelings.
- Create an empathy bingo card to encourage learners to talk from other people around their school. Encourage them to get a 'full house' by chatting to some one from another class, a teacher they don't see every day, the head teacher, a lunch time supervisor, etc.

Empathy reflections

- Use our 5-point guide to practice empathy skills during all conversations across the Festival. Pick a different point each day to focus on. Ask learners to spot excellent examples of that point in action.

Empathy Glasses

Using the glasses as a starting point, create your own empathy superhero. What is your empathy superpower and how does it help other people?

Empathy Post

Create a template for learners to send a kind message to someone and post their messages in an empathy post box in school. Different classes can take turns being the empathy post people each day across the Festival.

Empathy Resolution

Become an empathy activist! Use our special bunting to write, draw or stick on pictures to show how you will put empathy into action. Learners can make resolutions from very small gestures, such as trying not to interrupt others, waiting their turn, or practicing sharing.