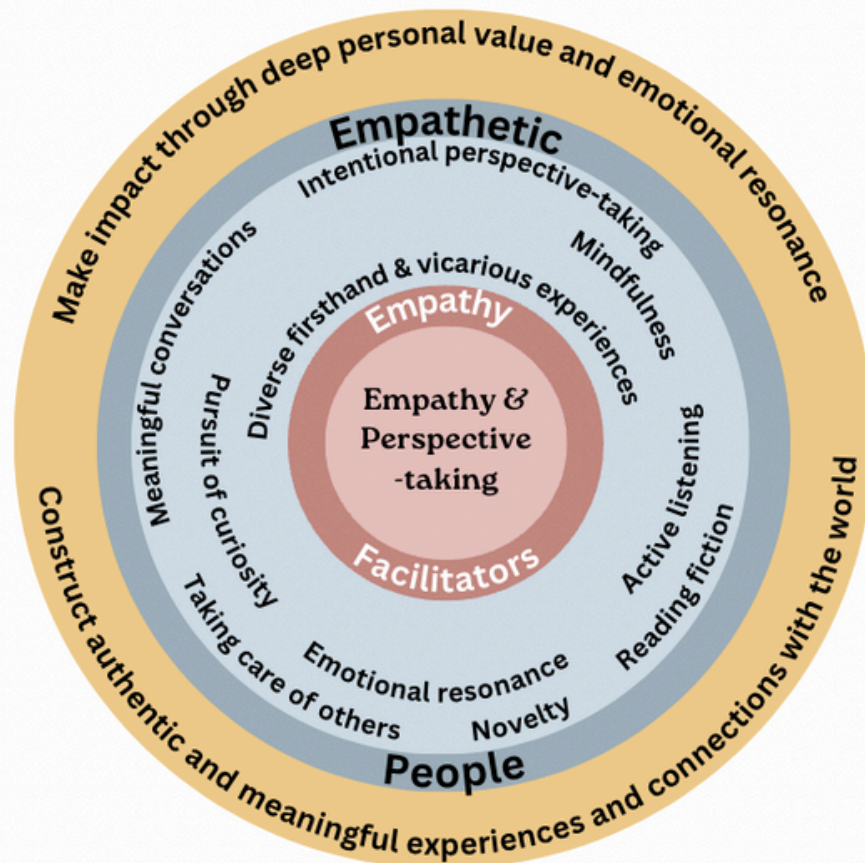


EMPATHY & PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

OVERVIEW

Empathy refers to the ability to put yourself in the shoes of others. Similarly, perspective-taking refers to the ability to perceive a situation or understand a concept from an alternative point of view. Empathy is defined as the capacity to grasp another person's experience cognitively and emotionally.¹

The figure below identifies factors facilitating empathy as well as characteristics of empathetic people.^{1,2}



BROADER SIGNIFICANCE & IMPACT

Arts creation and arts consumption are associated with prosocial traits and behaviors, with arts consumption having large effects on prosocial traits.

Arts creation and consumption are correlated with prosocial behaviors – donating, volunteering, and informal helping. Arts consumption, including museum visits, is bidirectionally associated with all these prosocial behaviors when measured 7 years later.³

Empathy nourished by arts engagement promotes tolerance in adolescents.

In adolescents, an arts-based program focused on social and emotional skill building increases social awareness, empathic concern, and perspective-taking components of empathic development.⁴ In young adults, an arts-based intervention designed to nurture empathy via visual literacy activities has a positive effect on cognitive aspects of empathy, with increased attention, tolerance of others' feelings and perspectives, and creativity.⁵

General and interpersonal empathy promotes higher-quality artistic experiences.

In adults, high ability to “feel into” paintings is associated with more intense bodily reactions and aesthetic evaluations (being moved, higher valence, and interest), as well as with greater appreciation of art.⁶ Empathy enables people to take the perspective of others in terms of aesthetic judgments and inferences and also to adopt the perspective of an artwork's content and form.⁷

Arts engagement promotes empathy by offering a glimpse into others' perspectives.

In older adults, the arts provide narratives to connect and visual structure to improve social understanding.⁸ As for empathy towards older adults, young adults participating in a digital storytelling program (where older adults share emotional experiences) report positive improvement in attitudes based on empathy and challenging their perspectives.⁹

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