**ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY(AIU)**

**DEPARTMENT: SOCIAL WORK**

**COURSE CODE**:

**COURSE TITLE**: **Empathy is the Key to Success**

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**Introduction**

Making life better requires impacts and imparts on others for a better society which helps in putting one in another person’s situations or conditions. The feeling of seeing others as ourselves turns the society to a better place to live in and encourages unity and love amongst people.

The word, [*Empathy*](https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-be-more-empathetic-6455878) according to Kendra (2022), is considered as, the ability that shows how to emotionally understand what other people feel, the perspective they see things from their point of view, and imagine seeing you in their place. It is basically about putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they are feeling.

It means that what someone else’s feels when they experience loss of loved ones, it makes one to instantly feel what they are going through. This speaks what empathy is about!

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022), it defines empathy, in part, as "the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another."

Empathy helps to make people to be well-attuned to their own situation, feelings and emotions, getting into someone else's head can be a bit more difficult. The ability of being empathized, allows people to experience walking a mile in another's shoes. It permits people and gives clear way to understand the emotions that others are feeling (Kendra, 2022).

Through my career, I have learnt to turn my ability to empathize to its maximum with those whom I serve and attend to.  It is all about listening and putting yourself in their shoes and then applying their experience to your business.  If you come at people with empathy you will succeed because most people appreciate the effort because it comes with experience of others in you.

Ordinarily known, our customers and members are the greatest people in the world and that is how I approach them.  Just like my found family, I come at them from empathy assuming that their concerns are what motivate them and their motives are always genuine.

Another benefit is if you listen and empathize you can normally get more revenue as a bonus.  No one likes to be taken for granted and if you generally empathize with people they will invest in your business.

**Values of Empathy as the Key** **Factor for Organizational Development**

In businesses and every organizational setting, most event professionals spend their time worrying about the nuts and bolts. They concern is that how will my customers be satisfied and sustain their patronage. The answer is to listen and build your event from empathy and watch your business grow.  As a great event mentor of mine Derek Dickens once said it is always about them that is the key to success, empathy is the secret to real event success (Derek Dickens, 2022)

Kenwood (2022). Kenwood Management Company, a service company; in its core functions considers the use of empathy as a factor to grow business healthy. The company experience revealed that, utilizing the tool of empathy will effectively help the growth of business and good customers’ relations. In the account of the company, it services nearly 200 tenants and over 1000 people in its commercial real estate portfolio outfits daily which ranges from medical to financial services to tech companies, and they all have specific needs and expectations. Putting in place the empathetic principles, something occurs that impacts them, and they keep contact for company for services patronage.  Whenever issues present themselves, Kenwood sees everyone as an opportunity to let each tenant know they are heard, understood, and important to it.  To be effective in our responses, the most important emotion we utilize is empathy. In the company’s policy, empathy enables the organization to establish a connection with its customers. But, more importantly, it understand that when used sincerely and genuinely, it can take a difficult situation and create an opportunity to turn it around and transform the unhappy employee or customer into a promoter of their business. So, whether you work in customer service or are a leader supervising staff members, your ability to be empathic can be the key to success. (Kenwood, 2022).

**Signs of Empathy**

Kendra (2022), considered signs and symbols that occur at which empathy is noticed. It explained how many sees another person in pain and responding with indifference or even outright hostility seems utterly incomprehensible. Showing apt concerns about others depicts, having feeling of others. In some cases, some people do respond with no concern for others and, in such a way clearly demonstrates that empathy is not necessarily a [universal response](https://www.verywellmind.com/the-expression-of-emotion-2795180) to the suffering of others.

Individuals either at leadership or ordinary levels can if they are empathetic persons or not with the following signs that show that you have this tendency:

1. Paying rapt attention and be a good at listener to what others have to say.
2. People often tell you about their problems.
3. You are good at picking up on how other people are feeling.
4. You often think about how other people feel.
5. Other people come to you for advice.
6. You often feel overwhelmed by tragic events.
7. Lending helping hand to others who are suffering.
8. Interested in people to be honest and easily discovers dishonest in other people.
9. You sometimes feel drained or overwhelmed in social situations.
10. You care deeply about other people.
11. You find it difficult to [set boundaries](https://www.verywellhealth.com/setting-boundaries-5208802) in your relationships, and so on.

**Beneficial Factors of Empathy**

Stress as a serious effect to individuals, customers, clients and staff of any organization, it was affirmed by Kenwood (2022), that; when people begin to experience high-stress levels, issues that are not of serious importance become more pronounced. The indication this shows is that, anyone who supervises employees or supports a customer must be well trained to cope with unhappy staff or customers and address the concerns raised in those interactions. In regard to this, empathy is the solution to address the issue. This makes empathy to be very significant in all dealings.

With the outcomes of Kenwood (2022) survey, what makes Empathy cogent to produce significant positive benefits for employees are as follows:

1. Innovation – is a driving factor for sustainability in any organization. The survey shows that, when leaders are empathetic, 61% of employees report that they are more innovative than only 13% of employees with unempathetic leaders.
2. Engagement – More empathic leaders have more engaged staff than less empathic leaders do – 76% versus 32%.
3. Retention – When staff members feel like their leaders are more empathic, they are significantly more likely to stay with their current company. It encourages retention rate of employees in an organization and provides trust in leadership.
4. Balancing work/life demands – 86% of employees who work for empathic leaders reported they were better able to handle their work demands and life obligations.

**Key Traits of Empathy to Embrace**

Empathy becomes the key to understanding an employee’s struggles. It invokes a feeling of appreciation for another person’s point of view and can help develop better solutions for a company’s human resource programs.

The key traits of an empathic leader or customer service are as follows:

1. Good listening quality. This is a quality a good leader must possess for impacts.
2. They are concerned with their interactions through thought-provoking questions (rather than just stating their own opinion).
3. They think about what is being said from the perspective of “if I were in this person’s shoes” or “if I had experienced the same thing, would I feel the same way?” (Rather than just giving advice).
4. Mandatory Evaluation of the candidate’s ability to listen as opposed to “waiting” to respond. Although this does not directly evaluate someone’s empathy skills, it provides insight into how they connect with others. In addition, it focuses on their ability to adjust from a prepared response.
5. Regular study the body language. People give off so many clues about what they are feeling through body language. Visual clues can be more truthful than actual words. Unfortunately for those who rely on Zoom to interview remote candidates, people don’t give off the same body language in this format as they do “in person.”

## Types of Empathy

According to Heartmanity (2022), there are several types of empathy that may be experienced by individual. The three types of empathy are:

* **Affective empathy** involves the ability to understand another person's [al](https://www.verywellmind.com/an-overview-of-the-types-of-emotions-4163976) feelings, condition or situation and respond appropriately. Such emotional understanding may lead to someone feeling concerned for another person's well-being, or it may lead to feelings of personal distress.
* **Somatic empathy** involves having a physical reaction in response to what someone else is experiencing. People sometimes physically experience what another person is feeling. When you see someone else feeling embarrassed, for example, you might start to blush or have an upset stomach.
* **Cognitive empathy** involves being able to understand another person's mental state and what they might be thinking in response to the situation. This is related to what psychologists refer to as the [theory of mind](https://www.verywellmind.com/theory-of-mind-4176826) or thinking about what other people are thinking.

**Need for Training Staff to be More Empathetic**

Melissa (2022), remarked that cultivating training for employees in effective ways to deliver empathy can be invaluable. Major companies utilize empathy training, including role-playing, as part of their curriculum. Employers can generate various customer service scenarios and have staff members act in each role, that is; the customer and company and have other staff members evaluate each outcome. This training programme also can help identify and teach visual clue skills.

Surveying the existing customers for their reactions to staff’s interactions and responses can be another valuable tool that can then be utilized to generate helpful training courses.

In today’s environment, company’s employees and customers have had to adjust to new concepts and pressures, such as hybrid working environments, remote learning for their kids, as well as new health and safety concerns. These issues compound stress levels and require business leaders and customer service staff to enhance their skills to be effective. When a company effectively delivers higher levels of service, they can be rewarded by transforming unhappy staff or customers into promoters for their businesses and highlighting their experience on social media. Empathy is the key to that success (Kenwood, 2022).

## Uses for Empathy

According to Kendra (2022), being able to experience empathy has many beneficial uses.

* **Empathy allows you to build social connections with others**. By understanding what people are thinking and feeling, you are able to respond appropriately in social situations. Research has shown that having [social connections](https://www.verywellmind.com/social-support-for-psychological-health-4119970) is important for both physical and psychological well-being.
* **Empathizing with others helps you learn to regulate your own emotions**. [Emotional regulation](https://www.verywellmind.com/how-you-can-practice-self-regulation-4163536) is important in that it allows you to manage what you are feeling, even in times of great stress, without becoming overwhelmed.
* **Empathy promotes helping behaviors**. Not only are you more likely to engage in helpful behaviors when you feel empathy for other people, but other people are also more likely to help you when they experience empathy.

Having a great deal of empathy makes you concerned for the well-being and happiness of others. It also means, however, that you can sometimes get overwhelmed, [burned out](https://www.verywellmind.com/what-to-do-if-you-are-experiencing-burnout-5216152), or even overstimulated from always thinking about other people's emotions. This can lead to empathy fatigue.

Empathy fatigue refers to the exhaustion you might feel both emotionally and physically after repeatedly being exposed to stressful or [traumatic events](https://www.verywellmind.com/common-symptoms-after-a-traumatic-event-2797496). You might also feel numb or powerless, isolate yourself, and have a lack of energy.3

Empathy fatigue is a concern in certain situations, such as when [acting as a caregiver](https://www.verywellmind.com/common-causes-of-caregiver-stress-3144519). Studies also show that if healthcare workers can't balance their feelings of empathy (affective empathy, in particular), it can result in compassion fatigue as well.

Other research has linked higher levels of empathy with a tendency toward [emotional negativity](https://www.verywellmind.com/embrace-negative-emotions-4158317), potentially increasing your risk of empathic distress.5 It can even affect your judgment, causing you to go against your morals based on the empathy you feel for someone else.

## Impact of Empathy and the Outcomes

Balogun (2019), maintained that the ability to experience empathy can impact someone’s relationships and build lasting understanding. With effects of empathy in families, society and situation, studies involving siblings have found that when empathy is high, siblings have less misunderstanding and less conflict to contend with.

It was revealed by Balogun (2019), that, it is not every individual that experiences empathy in every situation. Some people may be more naturally empathetic in general, but people also tend to feel more empathetic toward some people and less so toward others. Some of the factors that play a role in this tendency include:

1. One’s perception towards the other person
2. One’s judgment towards others [attribute](https://www.verywellmind.com/attribution-social-psychology-2795898) and their behaviours
3. Casting of blames for the other person's predicament
4. One’s past experiences and expectations

Outcomes of research has found it that, there are gender differences in the experience and expression of empathy, although these findings are somewhat mixed. It has been revealed that, women score higher on empathy tests than men, and studies suggest that women tend to feel more cognitive empathy than men.

At the most basic level, there appear to be two main factors that contribute to the ability to experience empathy: genetics and socialization. Essentially, it boils down to the age-old relative contributions of nature and nurture.

Parents pass down genes that contribute to overall personality, including the propensity toward sympathy, empathy, and compassion. On the other hand, people are also socialized by their parents, peers, communities, and society. How people treat others, as well as how they feel about others, is often a reflection of the beliefs and values that were instilled at a very young age.

## Barriers to Empathy

Some people lack empathy as agreed by Afolabi and Akinola (2021), Balogun (2019) and Melissa (2022), and therefore; are not able to understand what another person may be experiencing or feeling. This can result in behaviours that seem uncaring or sometimes even hurtful.

Balogun (2019), emphasized that, a lack of empathy is also one of the defining characteristics of [narcissistic personality disorder](https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-narcissistic-personality-disorder-2795446). Though, it is unclear whether this is due to a person with this disorder having no empathy at all or having more of a dysfunctional response to others.

## Putting Empathy into Practice

Fortunately, empathy is a skill that you can learn and strengthen. If you would like to build your empathy skills, there are a few things that you can do:

1. Work on listening to people without interrupting
2. Pay attention to body language and other types of nonverbal communication
3. Try to understand people, even when you don't agree with them
4. Ask people questions to learn more about them and their lives
5. Imagine yourself in another person's shoes
6. Strengthen your connection with others to learn more about how they feel
7. Seek to identify [biases you may have](https://www.verywellmind.com/cognitive-biases-distort-thinking-2794763) and how they affect your empathy for others
8. Look for ways in which you are similar to others versus focusing on differences
9. Be willing to be vulnerable, opening up about how you feel
10. Engage in new experiences, giving you better insight into how others in that situation may feel
11. Get involved in organizations that push for social change

**Conclusion**

It has been definitive that empathy is the key to success. To be successful in business, carrier and academics, effective implementation of empathy principles helps to put one in the conditions of others and feel their pains and improve the values of organizations.

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