

Sharing experiences of empathy and resilience

Listening to other people's stories is important for developing empathy and can help us to see the world from different perspectives. By listening to others stories we can imagine what it is feels like to be them. Understanding people can help us to support them better.

Use comic book stories made at home by some unaccompanied young refugees in the UK and tips on how to draw from an artist to grow your understanding and empathy for other's experiences.

Learning Objectives

Learners will:

- Focus on storytelling as a way to build understanding and empathy
- Explore other people's stories
- Learn how to tell your own stories through comic books and drawing
- Reflect on how people adapt to changes and how stories can help us understand other people's experiences.

Primary activities (ages 7-11)

For resources introducing the concept of empathy to children and more activities on sharing stories to build empathy [look at the refugee week: imagine a kinder world resource](#).

Reading activity: Comic book stories

During lockdown a group of young refugees living in the UK have been learning how to tell their stories they would like to share with others through comic books with an artist.

[Read Gabrilla's story here.](#)

[Read Rahatullah's story here.](#)

[Read Maryam's story here.](#)

Think about:

- > What story did they decide to tell?
- > Why do you think they told this story?
- > Who is the story about?
- > Have you felt or experienced anything like this?
- > Can you imagine how they felt or what they were thinking in this situation?
- > Are there any questions you would like to ask them now that you have read their story?

Discussion activity: Resilient refugees

Refugees are people who have had to flee their home and go to another country where it is safer. When they first leave, they are called asylum seekers which means they are 'seeking' (looking for) 'asylum' (a safe place). When they arrive in the UK, they ask the government if they can stay. If they are allowed to stay, they are called refugees. Refuge is also another word for a safe place.

Think about how it might feel leaving an unsafe place to find a safer place to live. Think about how this shows 'resilience' - being able to cope with challenges.

For more information about refugees and asylum seekers and their journeys [look at the refugee week: imagine a kinder world resource](#).

Write down all the ways a refugee who leaves their home might need to be resilient. You can draw a line map of their journey, from leaving home to being told they can stay in their new country as a refugee. What challenges might they have to overcome? Can you imagine how it might feel to overcome these challenges?

Video activity: How to draw faces

Dan the artist has made some videos to show us all how we can draw stories like him. [Watch the first video about how to draw faces](#).

After you have watched the video you can do this activity. Think about part two of the video and how we can show emotions in our face. Find a mirror in your home and pull different kinds of expressions, like the drawings Dan did. How does your face change?

Think about how people show emotions on their face. Can you understand how people feel from their faces?

Think about how you show people how you feel. What can we do to help us understand how people feel better?

Video activity: How to draw people

[Watch the second video about how to draw people's bodies and different movements](#). Move around the house with your family and watch at how your bodies move. Think about how your body also changes to show your emotions. Think about or look at a picture of a sad person's body and a happy person's body.

- > What do they look like?
- > How do they look different?
- > How does your body and face change when you feel different emotions?
- > How can understanding how the face and body changes help us to understand how people feel and how we might be able to help them to feel better?

Video and creative activity: Make your own stories

[Watch the final video about adding words to your stories](#). Then use your skills to tell your own story. Telling our own stories is important to help others understand our experiences and how they might feel for us. Think about a story you would like to tell. Maybe you have a story similar to the refugee stories or something that happened during lockdown? Think about these things:

- > Who is the story about?
- > What do you want the reader to learn or hear?
- > What do you want the reader to feel?

It can be a real-life story, or it can be made up. It is up to you what story you want to tell and how you want to tell it.

Reflect on the whole activity. How does listening to other people's stories help you understand their experiences better? Does it help you to share your own experiences too?

Adults can send us your finished stories at reduction@redcross.org.uk to share with Dan and our team.

Secondary activities (ages 11-18)

For resources introducing the concept of empathy to young people and more activities on sharing stories to build empathy look at our [refugee week: imagine a kinder world resource](#).

Reading activity: Comic book stories

During lockdown a group of young refugees living in the UK have been learning how to tell their stories through comic books with an artist. They have been telling the stories they want to share with other people.

[Read Mimi's story here.](#)

[Read Maryam's story here.](#)

[Read Gabrilla's story here.](#)

[Read Rahatullah's story here.](#)

Think about:

- > What story did they decide to tell?
- > Why do you think they told this story?
- > Who is the story about?
- > Have you felt or experienced anything like this?
- > Can you imagine how they felt or what they were thinking in this situation?
- > Are there any questions you would like to ask them now that you have read their story?

Reflective activity: Telling stories

There are many ways people can tell their stories. Think about all the different methods people can use and write them down.

Discuss comic books specifically.

- > Why might someone want to use a comic to tell a story?
- > Do you find it easier to express yourself through words or drawings?
- > Do you find it easier to understand a story through words or pictures?

[Read this anonymous story](#) that one of the young refugee's submitted about their journey. Use the questions above to explore the meaning of this story. Remember that they are telling this story in a second language.

- > How challenging do you think that must be?
- > Have you ever had to use or tell a story in a second language?
- > How might it feel to tell a story like this?

Discussion activity: Resilient refugees

Think about the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker'. What do these words mean – think about the words themselves, not just the term. What is a "seeker"? What is "asylum" or "refuge"?

Refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants have to make a lot of choices when they leave home. Think about how it might feel leaving an unsafe place to find a safer place to live. Think about how this shows 'resilience' – the ability to cope with challenges.

For more information about refugees and asylum seekers and their journeys [look at the refugee week: imagine a kinder world resource](#).

Write down all the ways a migrant who leaves their home must be resilient. You can draw a line map of their journey, from leaving home to being told they can stay in their new country as a refugee. Think about all parts of their journey and the challenges they overcome in their new country too. What challenges might they have to overcome? Can you imagine how it feels to overcome these challenges?

Video activity: How to draw faces

Dan the graphic artist has made some videos to show us all how we can draw stories like him. [Watch the first video about how to draw faces.](#) Think about what Dan says at the start of the video.

- > Why does he tell stories using comics?
- > What does he say about empathy?

After you have watched the video you can do this activity. Think about part two of the video and how we can show emotions in our face. Find a mirror in your home and pull different kinds of expressions, like the drawings Dan did. How does your face change? Take photos of your face and use them to help you draw.

Think about how people show emotions on their face. Can you understand how people feel from their faces?

Think about how you show people how you feel. What can we do to help us understand how people feel better?

Video activity: How to draw people

[Watch the second video about how to draw people's bodies and different movements.](#) Move around the house with your family and watch at how your bodies move. Think about how your body also changes to show your emotions. Think about or look at a picture of a sad person's body and a happy person's body.

- > What do they look like?
- > How do they look different?
- > How does your body change when you feel different emotions?
- > How can understanding how the face and body changes help us to understand how people feel and help them feel better?

Video and creative activity: Make your own stories

[Watch the final video about adding words to your stories.](#) Then use your skills to tell your own story. Telling our own stories is important too as it allows others to see what it feels like to be us. Think about a story you would like to tell. Maybe you have a story similar to the refugee stories or something that happened during lockdown?

Think about these things:

- > Who is the story about?
- > What do you want the reader to learn or hear?
- > What do you want the reader to feel?

It can be a real-life story, or it can be made up. It is up to you what story you want to tell and how you want to tell it. You can start by creating a plan for your story. Think about the characters and the events and write them down in note form.

You can send us your finished stories at reduction@redcross.org.uk to share with Dan and our team.

Reflect on the whole activity. How does listening to other people's stories help you understand their experiences better? Does it help you to share your own experiences too?