



EMPATHY MAPPING WORKSHOP: SLD PERSPECTIVE

ACTIVITY SPECIFICS:

Tool type: Reflective group exercise

Our inspiration: Design Thinking methodology

Format: Indoor activity; small group work

Time needed: 45 - 60 min

SET-UP

- Flipcharts or large paper sheets;
- Markers and sticky notes;
- Printed empathy map templates (sections: Feels, Thinks, Does, Needs);
- Pre-prepared fictional profiles of young people with different SLDs;
- Optional (online): tools like [Miro](#), [Mural](#), [FigJam](#).

Number of participants: 10 - 30

Focus (SLD topic)

Emotional and social impact;
Self-esteem and motivation;
Learning barriers and support needs;
Perspective-taking and empathy building.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Empathy Mapping Workshop: SLD Perspective is a reflective activity that helps participants step into the shoes of a young person with a Specific Learning Disorder (SLD). By analyzing a fictional profile and completing an empathy map, participants explore the learner's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and needs.

This activity shifts the focus from academic difficulties to the human experience behind SLD, fostering deeper empathy and promoting more inclusive attitudes and practices.

INSTRUCTIONS / STEPS

1. Introduction

- Briefly introduce the concept of empathy and why it is important in inclusive education;
- Explain the empathy map structure (Feels, Thinks, Does, Needs);
- Divide participants into small groups.





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2. Assign Profiles (2–3 minutes)

- Provide each group with a fictional profile of a young person with an SLD (e.g., a student with dyslexia struggling with reading aloud, or ADHD facing attention challenges);
- Ask participants to carefully read and understand the profile.

3. Empathy Mapping (20–25 minutes)

Each group fills in the empathy map by discussing and noting:

- **Feels:** emotions the person might experience (e.g., frustration, anxiety);
- **Thinks:** internal thoughts (e.g., “I’m not good enough”);
- **Does:** observable behaviors (e.g., avoids reading tasks);
- **Needs:** support mechanisms (e.g., more time, encouragement, assistive tools).

Encourage participants to think beyond academics and include social and emotional aspects.

4. Group Presentations (10–15 minutes)

- Each group presents their empathy map;
- Encourage others to ask questions or add insights.

5. Debrief & Reflection (10–15 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion using questions such as:

- What surprised you about this perspective?
- How do emotions influence learning?
- What kind of support would make the biggest difference?
- How can we apply this understanding in real life (schools, youth work)?

6. Optional Extension

Ask participants to propose concrete inclusive actions (e.g., adapting teaching methods, peer support strategies).

