Empathy and Perspective-Taking
Graduate and Postdoctoral Professional Development Seminar

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Why care about empathy?

– Teams require diverse viewpoints to achieve innovation and creativity (Hurtado, 2001; Valantine & Collins, 2015)
– Inclusive Excellence principles (Clayton-Pedersen & McTighe, 2005)
– Ability to meet the needs of a diverse society
– Aligned with the university mission
The mission of the Wayne State University Graduate School is to provide leadership in advancing academic excellence in graduate and postdoctoral education and cultivate a supportive environment for research, scholarly activities and other creative endeavors that are integral to the success of a diverse body of master’s students, doctoral students, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate faculty members across Ph.D. and master’s programs in all schools and colleges at Wayne State.
Teamwork and Collaboration
Empathy

• Cognitive domain: perspective-taking

• Affective domain: empathic feelings
The problem of empathy

Is sympathy the same as empathy? And doesn’t empathizing with someone make them feel worse?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObYLeYbztS
Challenges

• How does one practice empathy even when you disagree with the other person?
• How does one get any work done if all you’re doing is empathizing all the time?
Empathy requirements

• Imagination
• Genuineness
• Attentive listening/paying attention (not interrupting)
• Showing you hear and respect the other
  – Reflections
  – Stay with their emotion or thought
  – Ask what you can do to help
Role plays

• Your dissertation or thesis advisor just told you that you need to trim your manuscript by 25% within 2 days.

• Your team leader disagreed with your approach to increase diversity and inclusion in your unit.

• Your collaborator on a project left you out of an important pitch meeting to funders.
For role players

• Discloser:
  – Fill in the details especially how you are feeling—angry, anxious, upset, disappointed?

• Empathizer:
  – Listen attentively
  – Reflect and ask questions to understand what the person is feeling
  – Ask what you can do to be of help
AGEP/KCP learning community

• Monthly 2-hour meetings
• Food and fellowship
• Topics of interest to underrepresented doctoral students
• Next meeting April 19, 2018 at 3pm in Conference Room A, 6th Floor, 5057 Woodward
Recent topics

• Microaggression management
• Gender and racial bias in the academy
• KCP pedagogy: LTU KCP teaching workshop
• Postdoctoral opportunities
• Diversity statements
• Serving as “public voices”
• Teaching challenges
• Networking and mentoring
Thank You

You will receive an email from gradschool@wayne.edu regarding how to complete an assessment to earn this microcredential