

Sensibility

Syllables
sen•si•bil•i•ty

Pronunciation
sen-suh-bil-i-tee

Definition

Being aware of and responsive to someone else's feelings.
(Anna's **sensibilities** made her a caring, thoughtful person.)

Simply put: "I feel your pain."

Related Terms

Awareness: Being conscious of or alert to something.

Emotional responsiveness: Being open to feelings.

Empathy: Having understanding and compassion.

Fundamental Question:

How does sensibility help us understand and treat each other better?

Students will investigate the idea that developing sensibility can help prevent or combat negative social behaviors such as bullying and alienation.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Practice good listening skills to strengthen awareness.
2. Identify nonverbal behavioral clues associated with different feelings.
3. Demonstrate sensibility in a real-life situation.

Before you begin

- Gather colored pencils, crayons, or markers; drawing paper; paper slips; and a shoebox.
- Print out a copy of *Just Write* for each student.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Sensibility (Discussion Idea)

How is it possible to care about people we don't even know?

How can sensibility help prevent bullying and other negative behaviors?

Taking It to the Next Level

Sometimes, "little things," like really listening to someone and finding value in his or her ideas and words, can boost that person's self-respect. Today, do something to show someone that (s)he is valuable.

Sensibility

Procedure

Session One

1. Give each student a piece of paper and something with which to draw in color (colored pencils, crayons, or markers).
2. Ask the children not to look at each other's papers as you give specific, step-by-step directions about how to draw a simple animal, plant, or building. (e.g., "Place a medium-size circle in a warm color in the center of your paper.") The students should draw as you give each instruction.
3. Say, "Everyone heard the same directions; the exact same words. Did everyone interpret the words in the same way? If so, the pictures in this room should be identical." Have the students share their drawings and make observations about the differences in the drawings.
4. Guide the children in speculation about how each person interpreted the words differently. What does that say about listening to what other people are trying to tell us? Do we always understand exactly what someone is trying to get across to us?

Session One

5. Have the children generate a list of emotions. (Be sure that the list represents a wide range of feelings.) Record their suggestions on chart paper, an overhead projector, or the board.
6. Ask the children to choose (but not announce) one of the emotions and to think of a situation when they actually experienced that emotion.
7. Distribute a strip of paper to each child. Have each write a very brief description of the chosen experience without naming the emotion or identifying themselves. (For example: "I was walking home when a barking dog came charging out from the bushes at me" rather than "I was walking home when a barking dog darted out from the bushes and scared me. Luis.") Note: Warn the children in advance that their descriptions will be read aloud to the group later in the activity. They should not write down anything that they don't want to share.
8. Collect the papers and place them in a shoebox. Then, with the children sitting in a large circle on the floor, pass the box around the room, having the children choose paper slips randomly.
9. One at a time, have the children read the chosen slips silently to themselves and, going around the circle in turn, pantomime a nonverbal clue (such as a facial expression or posture) to how the child who wrote the scenario might have felt.
10. When another child correctly guesses what the interpreter was trying to get across nonverbally, that interpreter will read the slip aloud.
11. Immediately, the child who originally wrote the scenario will identify him- or herself and tell how (s)he actually felt during the experience. Was it the same as what the interpreter had surmised?

Name _____

Reminder: Sensibility means being aware of and responsive to someone else's feelings.

Just Write

Below is the ending of a story. Write your own, meaningful beginning and middle to go with it.

Title: _____

"I'm sorry I made you miss the race," the elderly woman told Cassie. "I didn't really think that anyone would even notice me way over here."

Cassie put her arm across the woman's shoulders. "You are so much more Important than any race. Besides, there's always next year!" she said, smiling warmly, knowing all the while that next year she'd be too old to compete.

Today's thought: *The man who has lived the longest is not he who has spent the greatest num-ber of years, but he who has had the greatest sensibility of life.* — **Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher and writer**