

COMPASSION



The following activities will help the participants show tolerance and acceptance for all human beings. Participants will challenge their attitudes, ways of thinking and behavior and learn to see beyond differences, prejudices and stereotypes. It will strengthen their capacity to empathize and they will develop an appreciation for diversity and the richness that it brings.

Reflection Points

- Tolerance is a virtue that makes peace possible.
- Peace is the goal, tolerance is the method.
- The seeds of intolerance are fear and ignorance.
- To be tolerant it is necessary to understand and respect other people. In order to be united with our family, friends, and our community, we need to be tolerant to understand and learn from our differences.

Activity 4.1 – Understanding Compassion

Hold a discussion to explore compassion, ask:

- Can anyone give an example of a time they received compassion or showed compassion to someone?
- Why is compassion important?
- Do you think everyone has compassion? Why or why not?
- Would it be a different world if everyone showed compassion to each other all the time?

Explain that compassion begins with feeling empathy towards how another is feeling. Empathy is the ability to understand how another person feels. You don't need to become like them, instead learn to be sensitive to how they are feeling, and to care about them.



Remember – In order to learn how to practice a value, it is not enough to be told what a value is; people need to experience what it feels like to express that value and come up with their own understanding. Guide participants with questions but allow them to do most of the talking. That way they will reach a deeper understanding!

Activity 4.2 – Feeling Compassion

Select some photos from a newspaper or the Internet which show disaster areas or places where there is poverty, famine or other problems. Show the photos to the group. In small groups have the participants discuss their reactions to the photos. Then hold a large group discussion. Ask:

- What thoughts and feelings did you have when looking at these images?
- What is compassion?
- Did you feel compassion when you saw these images?

Activity 4.3 – What could you do?

Read this story to the group:

Harshan is new in the community – he just moved to the area. When he needs to go shopping, he walks to the marketplace in bare feet. Every day he is miserable. On the way to the marketplace, there are always some young men that follow him and tease him. They tell him that he looks stupid. They tease him about his hair and his clothing. One day, Manura, the leader of the young men that have been teasing Harshan, begins to push Harshan as he walks out of the marketplace with a box of food. Manura is pushing Harshan so hard that he is about to drop his box of food in a puddle. There are other participants around, bystanders, they do not do or saying anything to help, they only watch. This happens almost every time Harshan goes to the marketplace. Harshan feels so upset and wants to cry, but he doesn't. He worries that if he shows that he is upset this will make it worse.

Ask participants to imagine what it might be like to be Harshan:

- How do you think he is feeling?
 - Help the participants name the feelings that Harshan might be having.
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Ask participants to imagine what it might be like to be one of the bystanders.

- How do you think the other kids who are watching might be feeling?
- Help the participants name the feelings that the bystanders might be having.

Join participants into groups of four. Instruct them to talk about the story and in two or three sentences describe what the bystanders might do to help Harshan.

Back in the large group, have a representative from each small group read out the two or three sentences explaining what the bystanders could do.

Activity 4.4 – Mind Mapping Values and their Opposites

Refresh your memory on [mind mapping](#). In this activity participants will form groups. Half the groups will create mind maps on a) If everyone in Sri Lanka showed compassion to each other. And the other groups on b) If there was no compassion in Sri Lanka.

Each group can then explain their mind-maps through presentations.

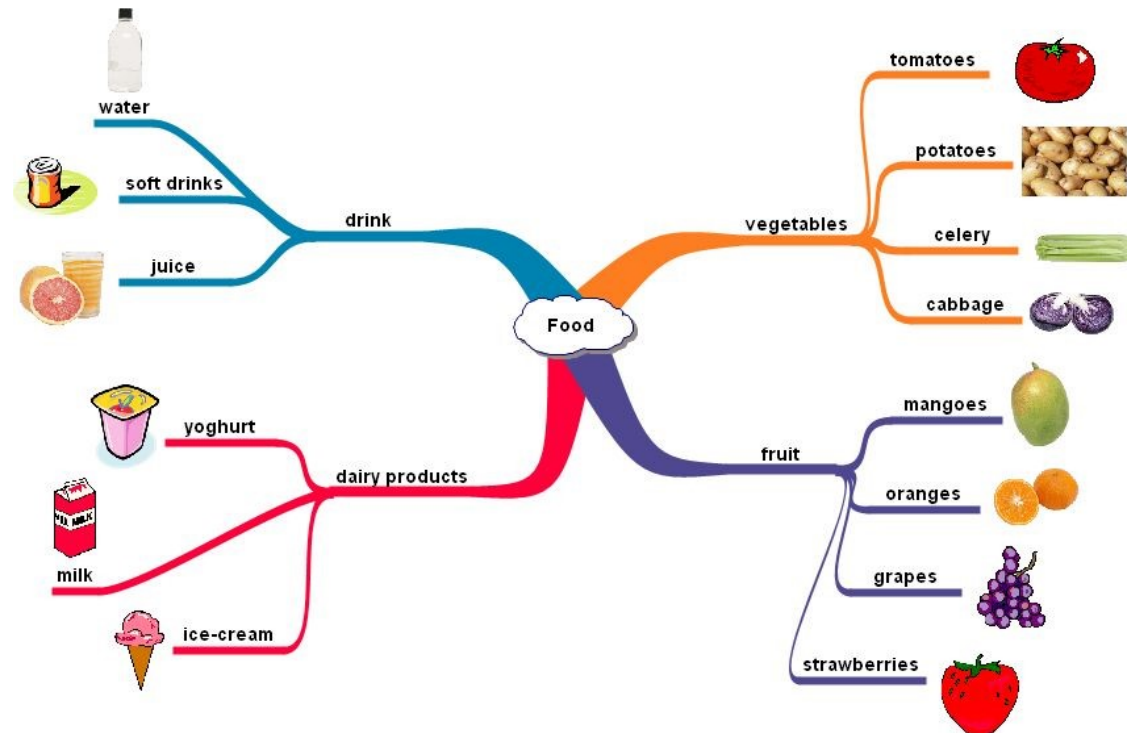
Mind Map

A mind map is a diagram used to visually represent concepts and ideas. Mind mapping is a way of linking key concepts using images, lines and links. In a mind map a central concept is linked via lines to other concepts which in turn are linked with other associated ideas. In a mind map, you begin with one central idea and then other thoughts radiate from that idea.

Steps to mind mapping:

- 01 Draw the central idea in the center of the page
- 02 Attached to the central idea are several lines with images or words that represent different important aspects of the central idea (this is the first branch of thinking). These lines help to order your thinking about the central idea.
- 03 Attached to these main lines are smaller lines that represent aspects of the first branch of thinking (this is the second branch of thinking).
- 04 If you have further thoughts you can draw lines attached to the second branch of thinking and so on.
- 05 Some mind maps can have several branches.

The following is an example of a simple mind map:



Activity 4.5 – Listening with Compassion

Say: there are many ways to show compassion; really listening to people is one of them.

Instruct participants to find a partner; tell them to try and partner with someone who they do not know so well. In partners, one person is to tell their partner about something important to them. The other person is to listen. Then they swap roles.

Back in the large group each person can share with the group the story that their partner shared with them.

For homework, ask the participants to listen to someone in their family or their community. Ask them to practice feeling compassion while they are listening.

Activity 4.6 – Newspaper stories of compassionate people

Instruct the participants to find a story about a person who showed compassion. Give some examples of people whom you have heard have been guided by the value of compassion in making contributions to the community or the country. They can find suitable stories in newspapers, or they can ask family members or neighbors about a compassionate person. They should bring the newspaper clipping (or their story) to the session and discuss either in small groups or each person can present to the group. Encourage participants to point out the following:

- Why was it important for the person in the article to show compassion?
- How did they show compassion, what things did they do or say to show compassion?
- What was the consequence of showing compassion in this case?
- What would have happened had the person not shown compassion?
- What did you admire the most about the person in the story or article?



Remember to use the language of values. If you see a participant demonstrating a value, name it. For example, 'Thank-you everyone for respecting each other's opinions during this session' Or 'It feels very peaceful in here today, it makes me happy to see everyone being so kind to each other'