



Digital Empathy and Kindness

Peer-led Group Activity

Thematic Area

Digital Empathy and Kindness

Activity Title

Emoji Switch: Walk in Their Chat

Type of resource

Peer-led Group Activity



Duration of Activity (*in minutes*)

45–60 minutes

Learning Outcome

- Understand how online messages can be interpreted differently depending on tone and context.
- Practice empathy by viewing digital conversations from others' perspectives.
- Learn how to promote kindness and emotional awareness in digital communication.
- Recognise the importance of digital etiquette ("*netiquette*") in maintaining respectful online interactions.
- Explore concepts from cyberpsychology, such as empathy gaps and the socio-emotional dynamics of online communities.

Preparation for the Peer Leaders

This activity directly supports the Learning Outcome Matrix (LOM) by helping participants reflect on the emotional impact of online messages and the dynamics of digital communities. Through roleplay and guided discussion, participants practise interpreting tone in digital communication, develop empathy, and strengthen their understanding of kindness and respectful online behaviour (*“netiquette”*). The activity is interactive and engaging while reinforcing key LOM competencies related to digital citizenship, socio-emotional awareness, and effective online communication.

Materials Required for Activity

- Sticky notes or index cards
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Pens or markers
- Detox Planning template (optional handout)
- Timer or phone with stopwatch

Step-by-step instructions

Step 1 – Checking the Tone Icebreaker (5–10 mins):

Warm up the group and prompt them to think about how they read and interpret online messages.

- Welcome the group and introduce the activity: *“Today we’re going to explore how messages can sound different online and how to make our communication kinder and clearer.”*
- Ask the group: *“How often do you re-read your messages before sending them to check the tone?”*
- Conduct a quick poll (hands up or digital):
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
- Invite 2–3 volunteers to briefly explain their choice.
 - Summarise: *“It’s easy for messages to be misunderstood because we can’t hear tone or see expressions.”*

Step 2 – Conversation Cards Activity “How Does It Sound?” (15–20 mins):

Explore how short messages can be interpreted differently based on tone and emotional context.

- Divide participants into small groups of 3–4.
- Provide each group with a conversation card (e.g., *“Fine. Whatever.”*, *“You never reply.”*).
- Give each group emoji flashcards representing different emotions.
- Ask each group to:
 - Choose an emoji that represents the sender’s possible feelings.
 - Discuss how the receiver might interpret or feel about the message.
 - Record key words describing both perspectives.
- After 10 minutes, invite groups to share their examples.
- If discussion slows, prompt with questions such as: *“What could make this message sound friendly or rude?”* or *“What if the sender used an emoji or added more words?”*

Step 3 – Role-Reversal & Conflict Resolution Game “Rewriting with Kindness” (15 mins):

Practise transforming unclear or tense messages into empathetic, positive communication.

- Ask each group to switch roles and rewrite their original message to sound more caring, kind, and empathetic.
- Provide an example:
 - **Original:** “You never reply.”
 - **Rewritten:** “Hey, is everything okay? I’ve missed our chats.”
- Encourage creativity participants may add emojis, adjust wording, or create a short conversation.
- Walk around to guide groups in making meaningful tone improvements.
- Remind participants: “There’s no perfect answer just aim to make the message feel more understanding and less accusatory.”

Step 4 – Sharing & Discussion (10 mins):

Reflect on how small changes in tone and wording affect digital relationships.

- Invite each group to share their “before” and “after” messages.
- Record examples on a flipchart under two columns: Before vs. After.
- Ask discussion questions such as:
 - “What differences do you notice?”
 - “How did the revised version make you feel?”
- Write key takeaways on flipchart, such as:
 - Small word changes = big emotional differences
 - Adding empathy makes communication feel safer
 - Read messages as if you’re the person receiving them

Reflection

Self-Reflection Questions:

- Have I ever misunderstood or misread a message?
- Do I think before I reply online?
- How can I show empathy with just a few words?
- How do I keep communication respectful even if I disagree?

Group Discussion Questions:

- Why do emotions get lost online (empathy gaps)?
- How can we fix misunderstandings in digital conversations?
- What’s one way you can show kindness online today?
- What strategies help resolve conflicts respectfully in group chats or online communities?

Wrap-up

Words carry weight, even online. When we pause, reflect, and choose empathy, kindness, and respect, we make the digital world a safer and more positive place.



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