



MODULE 16. DE-ESCALATION COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Empathy Scripted Role Play

Scenario Version # 1:

Role Player 1 should be instructed to read the lines of the script as written. Role Player 2 should be encouraged to read their lines and to be irritable and short-tempered in their reading. Once they complete the scenario – ask Role Player 1 whether they feel like Role Player 2 understood how they were feeling. The answer should be “no.”

Ask the class to rate how empathic Role Player 2 seemed on a scale from 1–10. Often, you’ll get negative ratings or zero.

Role-Player 1: I had the worst day ever.

Role-Player 2: So? My day was no picnic either.

Role-Player 1: First, I ran out of gas on the way to work...

Role-Player 2: I told you last night the car needed gas!

Role-Player 1: Then, the Sergeant asked me for that report I’ve been working on, but I left it at home.

Role-Player 2: That’s happened before. Maybe if you put stuff like that by the door, that wouldn’t happen.

Role-Player 1: Later, I backed the cruiser into a pole and broke the taillight...

Role-Player 2: Are they going to dock your pay *again*?!?

Role-Player 1: And then, as I was leaving to come home, I tripped and fell going out of the precinct and about 10 teenagers saw me and laughed.

Role-Player 2: You really can be a klutz sometimes.



Scenario Version # 2:

Use the same role players. Role Player 1 will have the same lines. Role Player 2 will have different lines and should be encouraged to use a nicer tone. Following the scenario, ask Role Player 1 how they are feeling and then ask the audience to rate Role Player 2 on the level of empathy they demonstrated.

Role-Player 1: I had the worst day ever.

Role-Player 2: That sounds awful.

Role-Player 1: First, I ran out of gas on the way to work...

Role-Player 2: What a way to start the day!

Role-Player 1: Then, the Sergeant asked me for that report I've been working on, but I left it at home.

Role-Player 2: You must have felt terrible when that happened.

Role-Player 1: Later, I backed the cruiser into a pole and broke the taillight...

Role-Player 2: Bad things just keep happening to you!

Role-Player 1: And then, as I was leaving to come home, I tripped and fell going out of the precinct and about 10 teenagers saw me and laughed.

Role-Player 2: By then I bet you were wishing you just stayed home today.



Ask the class why the responses given in the first scenario aren't effective for developing rapport. What differences did they notice in the responses provided in the second reading of the scenario? If needed, point out that the initial responses were critical and attempted to problem-solve immediately. In contrast, the responses in the second scenario were all versions of empathic statements.