



EMPATHY DIAL VISUALISATION

Put simply, empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. For many years, it was believed that Autistic individuals lacked empathy, a viewpoint that is beginning to change thanks to the work of Autistic self-advocates. What we are now realising is that many Autistic people have quite a lot of empathy and, while empathy is an important aspect of forming and maintaining relationships, having too much empathy can leave us feeling depleted and overwhelmed.

The following exercise is intended to help you regulate your empathy so that it feels more manageable - in a way that enables you to connect with others while maintaining your own emotional boundaries and keeping yourself safe.





So, first and foremost, find a position that is comfortable for you and soften your gaze.

I want you to take a few settling breaths, noticing the sensation of the air moving in and out of your lungs. Good, now I want you to tap into how empathetic you're feeling just now

Imagine a stereo with a volume dial numbered 1-10.

Now set the dial to whatever number you feel your empathy is currently at.

I want to invite you now to turn the volume down 1 notch. How does that feel? What emotions come up for you as you turn the dial down? What senses are you feeling in your body just now?

Consider what it might feel like to turn the volume back up, with the knowledge that you can turn it down again at any time.

Remember that you can imagine this dial anytime and adjust it as you need.

I want to encourage you to consider what level would be most of service to those around you just now but most importantly yourself. Consider your own emotional capacity just now and the amount of empathy you feel able to extend to others in this moment. At what level can you set the dial so that you feel emotionally connected but also able to keep yourself safe? In what instances might you need to dial down your empathy? In what instances might it be useful to dial up?

Feel free to open your eyes and reorient yourself to your surroundings in your own time.