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## Enhance Your Social Skills

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You may be wondering what interpersonal skills have to do with depression. People who struggle with depression, may often find themselves in isolation.

When it comes to interpersonal skills, practice makes perfect, which is why we strongly encourage you to interact with others, as often as possible. However good your social skills may be, there is always room for improvement and you can try the following 3 simple techniques.

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text "Quiz Time!" in a white, handwritten-style font. Below this, there are three quiz cards arranged horizontally. Each card has a small image at the top and a title below it. The first card shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the title "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The second card shows a fan of colorful pens, also with the title "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The third card shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the title "Quiz: Flags in Europe". To the right of the cards is a white button with the text "See all quizzes =>" in orange.

## Empathy

Empathy means to put yourself in another's place, while being able to understand their emotions. It's a concept different from mere sympathy, and even more so from feeling sorry for someone.

Without this valuable skill, we wouldn't know how to properly respond to other people's feelings.

### Be Genuine

Most importantly, empathy must always be authentic – others can always tell if you are being honest. However, your skill of empathy can also be developed and enhanced, so don't worry if

it is currently difficult for you.

## **Active Listening**

One of the ways to boost your empathy, is to listen to others to understand, not just to respond. Engage in empathetic listening, by doing the following, while listening to someone else:

- Look the person in the eye.
- Nod and use encouragement, by saying “I see”, “I understand”, “Yes”.
- Ask for clarifications.
- Make sure you’ve understood what the other person is saying, by summarizing their account

## **Refrain from Judgment**

Another great way to improve your empathetic skills, is to observe yourself – what are your prejudices, and the stereotypes to which you have fallen prey? It may be very difficult at first, but when you talk to someone or meet someone, try to refrain from judgment, and put yourself in their shoes instead.

## **Assertiveness**

Assertiveness is the ability to express our thoughts, ideas and opinions, without insulting others or making people feel uncomfortable.

### **Phrasing Matters**

Every time you want to express your personal opinions, it’s crucial that you begin the sentence with “In my opinion...” or “From my point of view...” This way, you let others know that what you say is simply a personal opinion, not a universal truth and you are not disregarding their beliefs.

### **Pick Your Words**

Being assertive also means choosing the right words, with which to voice to your idea. Words with negative connotations, or phrases that pass judgment on others, are off-putting and counteract assertiveness.

### **Don’t Be Afraid**

Unfortunately, being assertive doesn’t guarantee that others won’t be offended by what you say. Communication is a two-way street and people will interpret a message, based on their

personal beliefs.

However, as long as you make it abundantly clear that a certain opinion is strictly personal, you have absolutely no reason to feel guilty or ashamed.

## **Conflict resolution**

Conflict is an inevitable part of daily life. Since we can't always share the same opinions with other, its' important to find way to live together, and that is where conflict resolution comes into play.

### **Rules of Mediation**

The golden rule of conflict resolution is to separate the person you are arguing with, from the problem you are arguing about. Using statements that may offend the other person, on an intimate level, is counterproductive.

Another key strategy of conflict resolution is to find alternative solutions. This means putting aside your personal beliefs for a moment, in hopes of finding a solution that will meet everyone's needs, to some extent.

### **Why Is It Important?**

Improving your interpersonal skills would allow you to better connect with others and build a stronger support system. This is crucial, when you want to achieve mental health and stability, because social interactions are one of the strongest predictors of mental health.

Furthermore, as you improve your social skills and establish better connections with others, they would do the same for you. Gradually, you will likely start to feel more included, better loved and accepted.

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