

Building empathy

What is empathy?

In order to solve problems for people in communities, the first step is to deeply understand the problem – and to understand it, one must speak with the people who are closest to the problem.

Empathy is a critical skill in understanding the experience someone is going through. Empathy requires putting yourself into someone else's shoes, to see where they are coming from and to understand their thoughts and ideas. Being empathetic to what they are saying or feeling creates a connection with the person and gives you insight into what they are going through as opposed to assuming.

Developing empathy requires an understanding of the whole story - this includes the more tangible aspects, as well as the hidden aspects – motivations, perceptions and impacts.

Principles of building empathy

