

## Different is Not a Dirty Word: Encouraging Youth to Develop Empathy and Create Connections To Those Who are Different From Them

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Bullying, harassment, tribalism and isolation are challenges shared by schools and communities everywhere. Youth often stay within their “those like me” circles, which can lead to a lack of understanding and tolerance for those in their “unlike me” circle. So how can we empower youth to develop a more empathetic understanding of the diversity within our schools and communities, and become more accepting of those differences? Harvard’s Graduate School of Education through their “Making Caring Common” Project has endeavored to answer that question by creating a series of resources for educators and agency staff. This workshop will look at how to build empathy and empower youth to move beyond their “those like me” social circles. We will also:

- Review the current research addressing youth and empathy, tolerance and social connectedness;
- How to build empathy in youth and improve school climate;
- Look at how to build “circles of concern” among youth;
- Examine resources that can be utilized in schools and agencies in the development and promotion of empathy and inclusion.