

Seek to Understand Perspectives (Secondary)

Have you and your friend ever had completely different opinions about something? Maybe you don't like to play sports, and she doesn't understand why you like to read so much. We all feel different about things because we have different perspectives, which can sometimes lead to conflict. It's important to talk with the person.

During a disagreement, everyone has their own unique way of perceiving things based on experiences they have had. ***Seeking to understand perspectives*** helps you consider someone else's background and experiences and discuss how they perceived the situation. You can use the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** when you have a disagreement with someone and don't understand their actions or feelings. When you seek to understand perspectives, you ask them questions like "Can you tell me how you are feeling?" or "Is there something I don't understand?" to help you understand their point of view. ***Seeking to understand perspectives*** helps you understand why a conflict has occurred and what you could do to resolve the issue.

I used the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** with my friend Madison. I had posted a picture of myself with some other friends at a barbecue. Madison posted a comment that said, "When your best friend gets a better offer on Saturday night." When I saw it, I was so hurt. I couldn't understand why she would be mean. It took me a few hours to cool off and feel like I could talk to her without getting angry. When I finally talked to her, I said, "Is there something I don't understand? Why did you imply that I didn't want to spend time with you?" She explained that she didn't play well in the basketball game and they had lost the game. When she got home, she wanted to spend time with me because she knew I would help her feel better. When I didn't answer her text, she looked on Instagram and saw the picture of me at the barbecue. It hurt her feelings that I was out having a good time without her and not answering her texts, so she tried to hurt me back.

I explained that I knew she was at the basketball game and would be home late. I went to my other friend's house and didn't see her texts until after she had posted the comment.

I wanted to resolve the issue with Madison, so I tried to understand her perspective. I imagined being disappointed about a game you wanted to win and being disappointed about your best friend not texting you back. But I needed to know more about why she was upset, so I asked her to explain her feelings and the reason she had posted the comment on Instagram. She explained that she was having a bad day and didn't really mean what she had posted. Then I explained, "I understand that you felt disappointed about the game and disappointed about me not texting you back, but your comment really hurt my feelings." She apologized and said she would take it down. We agreed that putting negative things about each other on social media was crossing the line, and we promised each other we wouldn't ever do that again. By using the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives***, I was able to understand how my friend felt.

You can use the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** when it's hard for you to understand someone's thoughts or feelings.