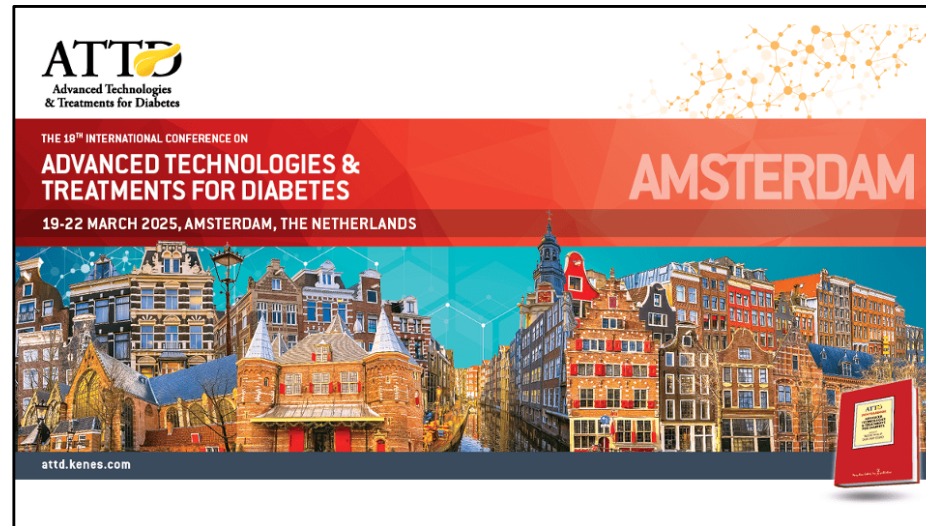**EMPATHY IN PRACTICE:**
**AI AS A TOOL FOR HEALTHCARE EDUCATION**

PRESENTED BY: NURIA FERNÁNDEZ

ATTD EDUCATION MANAGER, ONLINE LEARNING SPECIALIST AT KENES GROUP

Now, let's head north to Amsterdam, the home of the ATTD Congress—the International Conference on Advanced Technologies and Treatments for Diabetes for the 18th edition in 2025. Over the years, ATTD has become *the* global hub for innovative diabetes care and tech discussions.
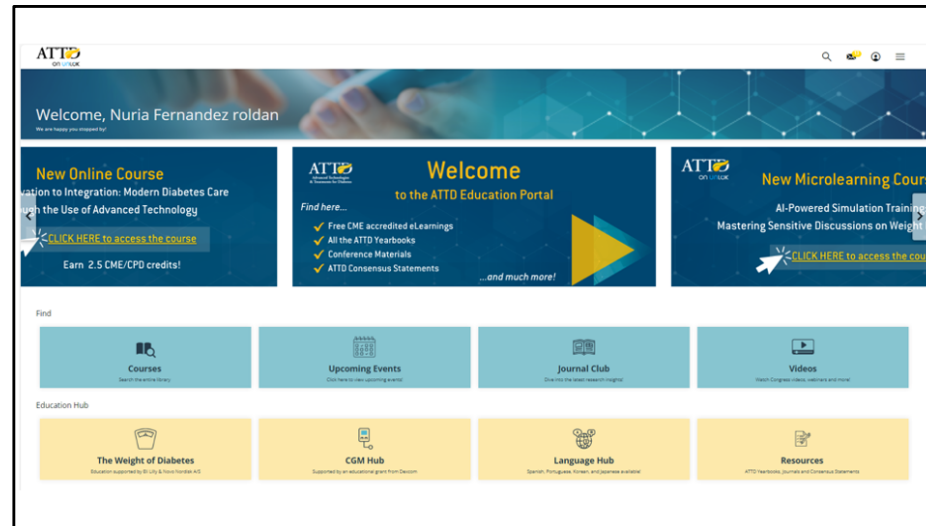
And in **2017, they created the ATTD Education Portal** to go beyond the congress, offering lifelong learning opportunities for healthcare professionals around the world for free.
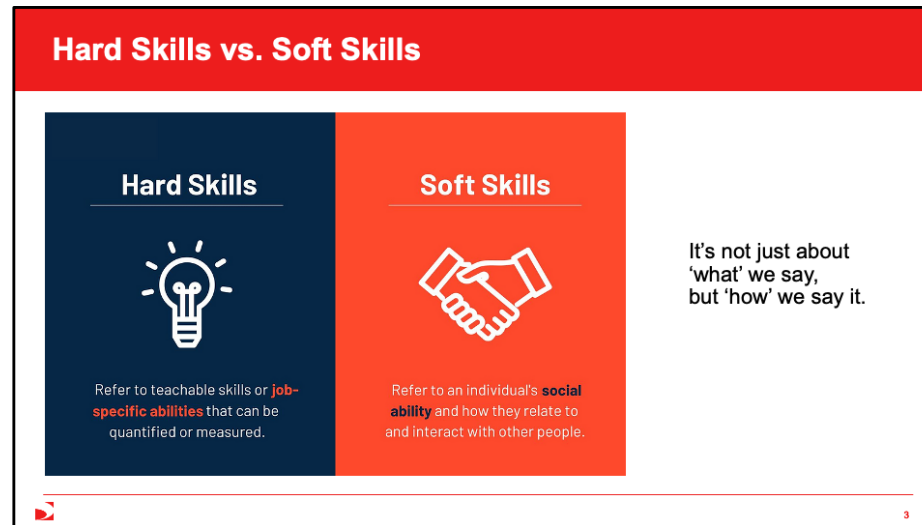
But here's the thing: we don't just want HCPs to focus on technical skills. We're equally invested in those **so-called 'soft skills,'** like communication, empathy, and compassion. That's why we developed an AI-based tool to help HCPs practice empathy with their patients. It's not just about **'what' they say, but 'how' they say it**. So, let's dive in!
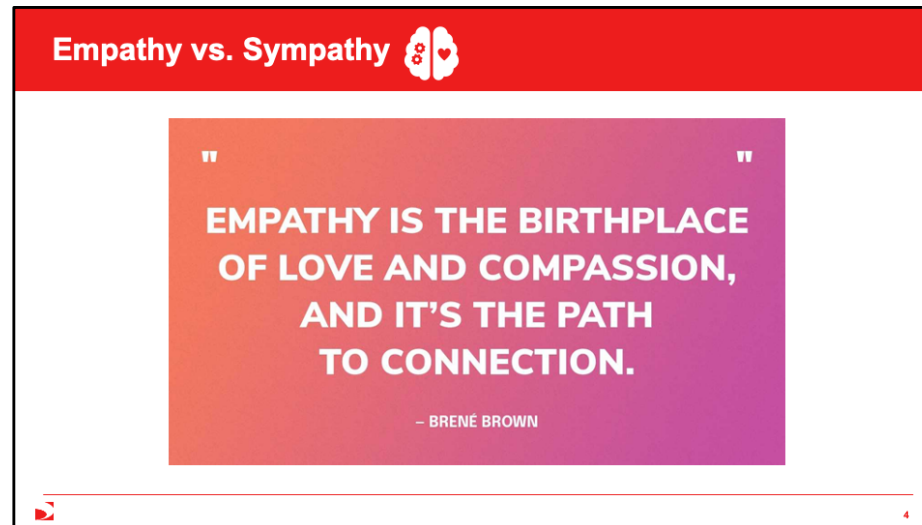
Quick show of hands—how many of you have seen Brené Brown's take on empathy vs. sympathy? Anyone? [Pause for hands] Alright, quite a few of you! For those who haven't, Brené Brown explains it beautifully: sympathy is feeling *for* someone, but empathy is feeling *with* them. Empathy is about connection—it's saying, 'I get it. I'm here with you.

Sympathy, on the other hand, is a bit like, 'Oh, that sounds tough! Good luck with that!' You see the difference? With empathy, you're in it together. And for healthcare practitioners, that connection can make all the difference in a patient's experience.

So, what is our goal here? Why do we work in medical education? At the end of the day, it's to improve patients' lives. That's the 'why' that drives us. With this project, our objective was clear: develop a tool that allows HCPs to practice empathetic, non-judgmental conversations. And we wanted to harness AI and emotional recognition to do it, creating a unique way to practice this skill that, as we know, is so critical in healthcare.

Now, let's talk about how we actually designed this tool. We started by bringing together a committee of experts who helped shape the project, reviewing data, setting learning goals, and defining the format.

Then, we created a virtual patient named Lucy—a mother managing diabetes while juggling mental health challenges. And Lucy isn't just text or an avatar on a screen; she's a real actress to make the experience as authentic as possible. As HCPs talk to her, AI tracks their responses and provides feedback focused on empathy, helping them understand how

they're coming across. If you try the activity, you might find yourself thinking, 'Lucy, I wish I could reach through the screen and give you a hug!' That's the power of empathy training.
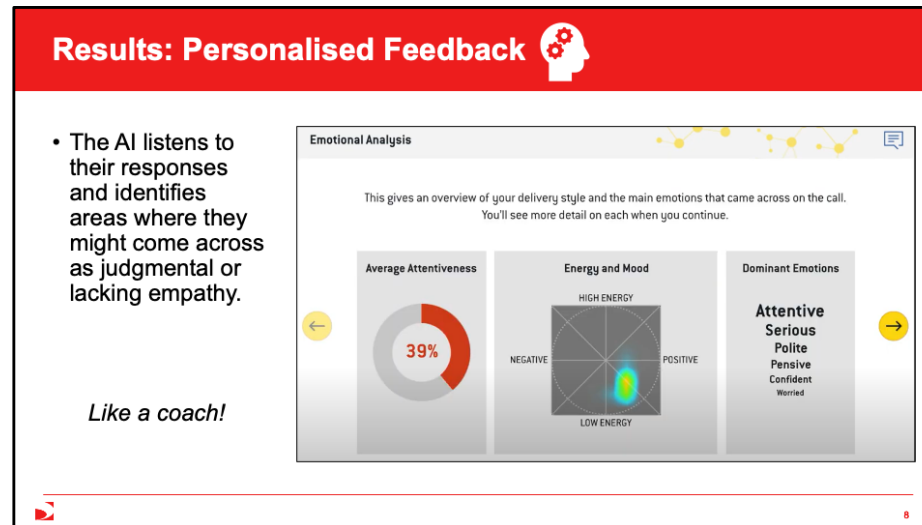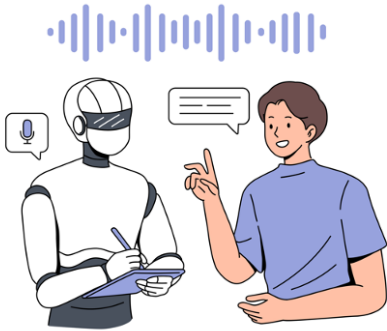
What's unique here is that the feedback is personalized. It's not just about saying the right words; it's about tone, word choice, and emotional cues. The AI listens to their responses and identifies areas where they might come across as judgmental or lacking empathy. It's like having a conversation coach, but one that's always available and doesn't need coffee breaks!

One of the great things about this tool is that it's designed as a reflective learning environment. The idea here is simple: the more you reflect, the more you learn. Practitioners aren't just given a score or a 'right or wrong' answer. Instead, they're encouraged to think, review, and improve. It's a safe space to practice, which is something we rarely get in real-life patient interactions.

So, what's the big impact here? Well, the AI doesn't just give feedback—it also analyzes language patterns and emotional cues to help HCPs build stronger, more empathetic communication skills. And the goal is for these skills to translate into better patient engagement.

When HCPs communicate with empathy, it reduces stigma, builds trust, and ultimately leads to better health outcomes for patients. Because when patients feel heard and respected, they're more likely to engage actively in their own care.

In the end, this project isn't just about AI, or even empathy. It's about connecting with people. And if HCPs can connect with patients on a deeper level, we're on our way to making a real impact in healthcare education.
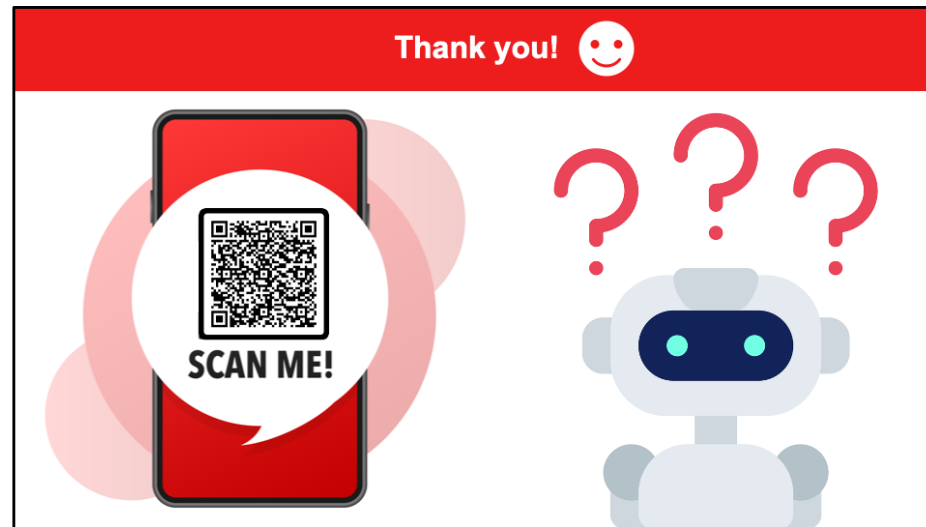
So, thank you all so much for your attention today! If you're curious to try the activity for yourself or just want to learn more, feel free to scan this cool QR code here.

And finally, I'd love to hear your thoughts or questions—let's make this an interactive experience, just like our tool! I promise not to analyze the emotional cues in your voice!