

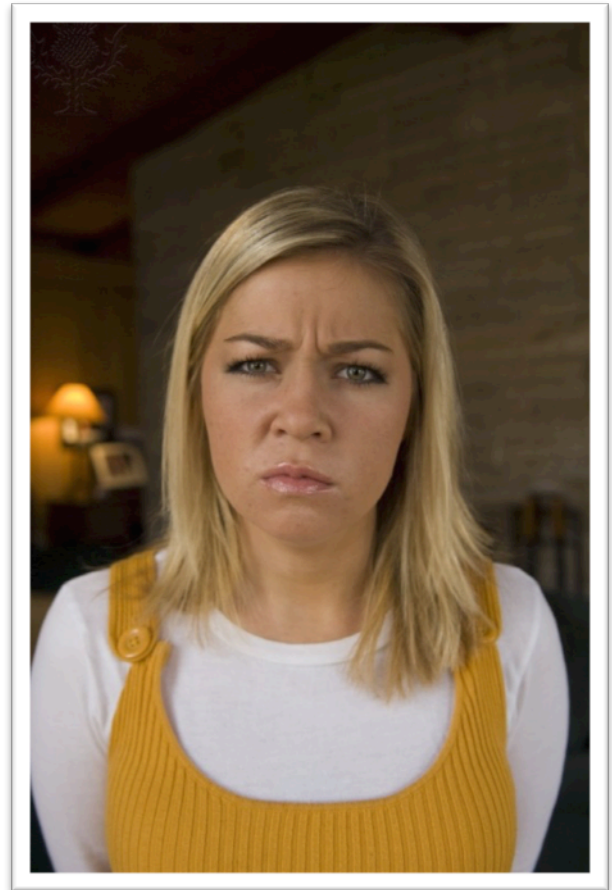


MODULE TWO

Relationships

Module Outline

- I. Relationships
 - a. Drama
 - b. Confidentiality
- II. Boundaries
 - a. Self-Awareness
 - b. Setting Boundaries
 - c. Keeping Boundaries
- III. Social Skills
 - a. General Skills
 - b. Preparing Etiquette for the Professional World
 - c. Involvement
 - d. Personalities
 - e. Social Media



Lincoln, Nebraska, United States of America. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 7 Apr 2015.
http://quest.eb.com/search/137_3319884/1/137_3319884/cite

Relationships

Relationships play a pivotal role in a student's high school career. As a guidance counselor, you have the opportunity to provide advice, support, and a tissue through the ups and downs with friends and significant others.

Drama

Drama impacts almost every student who passes through the trauma of teenage life. While it is not always possible to completely avoid drama, students can be encouraged with several basic suggestions that can protect them from the negative effects of drama on their own lives. Students should always tell the truth and be honest; often, drama results when falsehoods or inaccurate information are spread about someone. Living by the basic principle of honesty can go a long way towards keeping a student's life drama free.

Drama is never limited to the physical realm; it has a way of showing up all over social networks, which makes information (both good and bad) far more accessible to a large number of people; students should avoid posting comments that stir up drama or react to it online. This is not a healthy way to deal with frustrations or rumors; the best method is to always maintain the confidentiality of the situation and to deal with it quietly with the only person (or people) that it involves.



Being positive rather than the negative keeps many students away from involvement in drama; focusing on the positive in life goes a long way towards keeping the focus on good rather than bad about people.

If a student hears or sees information that does not involve them, they should not spread it to those who really do not need access to that information. Also, drama is often started when someone becomes offended by a comment, glance, or sour relationship; if comments are made that are true (even if they are painful), students should learn to accept fault when it is their own and not to pass the blame for something they actually did or said. If students have a problem or concern with someone, they should not solve it via text message or by talking behind their back; issues and misunderstandings are always easier to solve by going directly to them in person and figuring out how to work through issues.

Drama is also easy to become involved in for students who tend to play the role of “counselor” to their friends. It is always nice to lend a listening ear and comfort to friends, but if the issues are deep and potential harmful to the student or another person, these helpful students need to be reminded that they will always do the best for their friends when they can tell an adult when something really difficult or bad is happening. School staff also need to understand that all adults are mandated reporters by law, and if a student mentions something about struggles they are having or bad situations they are experiencing or witnessing, staff must report that within a set time frame as determined by the state.

General ways to be a good friend include being real (not fake) and never neglecting friends (esp. when they have a significant other as friends can provide a good support network). As Christians, students need to learn to always include others and practice the golden rule.

Learning how to be a good friend who is consistent and focused on positivity can make a huge impact on friends, the school, and the mastering of life skills.

Confidentiality

Students need to understand that if someone trusts them with deep or important information, they should never spread it to others. If they see or hear something that seems scary, wrong, or confusing, they should talk with a trustworthy adult who can help them process whatever they

are dealing with; spreading confidential information around to those it does not concern is never good. Keeping other people’s struggles quiet is common courtesy. If students feel the need to talk about their issues, encourage them to talk to a responsible adult who can keep it quiet. If it is hurting someone else, an adult can find help for students.



Young People. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 7 Apr 2015.
http://quest.eb.com/search/158_2467831/1/158_2467831/cite



Boundaries

There are several types of boundaries: material boundaries, physical boundaries, mental boundaries, emotional boundaries, sexual boundaries, and spiritual boundaries. It is up to each person to set and keep healthy boundaries that can protect them. Material boundaries deal with what people have/lend to others (money, clothes, electronics, food, etc.). Physical boundaries address personal space and what is appropriate to someone regarding their privacy and body. Mental boundaries protect people from where their brain and temptations may attempt to take them.



Line drawn in sand. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 7 Apr 2015. http://quest.eb.com/search/132_1253016/1/132_1253016/cite

Students should be encouraged to decide what they value as far as thought, speech, opinions, and values. In addition to types of boundaries, God has created each person to be unique, and each person also comes from different backgrounds; backgrounds play important roles in creating value systems, beliefs, and preferences.

Self-Awareness

Practicing self-awareness is essential to learning and being able to set strong boundaries. In order to become or stay aware, students should analyze how people make them feel. If someone leaves them feeling totally drained and aggravated, maybe they need more boundaries in place in order to be able to handle their own issues and stay positive in life. It is ok to listen to people, but it is not ok to take on other people's problems; students need to focus on their own success and encourage others to keep up their own success. Other people's problems should never drag someone else down; at that point, they are over-invested in that relationship.

Setting Boundaries

Setting boundaries can be very stressful and frustrating, especially for students who have never set their own boundaries before. There are some general tips that can help students set boundaries and survive the initial stress involved. Students should always know that they can get support from an adult (pastor, teacher, counselor, etc.) who can encourage them as they set boundaries. Students also need to understand that it will always help to be direct and firm when they are setting boundaries; they do not need to explain why they need boundaries, and if people are frustrated with them, students should just repeat their stance firmly and calmly. Remember, boundaries are not to punish someone; they are to protect the student. They should never feel bad for developing and enforcing their own boundaries. This



process takes time and adjustment for everyone involved, but the benefits are huge. Students can also set internal boundaries that set how they will handle certain areas of their own life, like how much sleep they will get, what they will do in order to pass a class, etc. This is manifested as commitment, determination, and self-discipline.

Keeping Your Boundaries (even when dealing with confrontation and anger)

The process of setting boundaries will inevitably make someone upset; however, students should be encouraged to always stand up for themselves and their boundaries, even if that means confrontation. Avoiding confrontation (by neglecting to stand for boundaries) will only weaken the student’s resolve, especially since they set those boundaries for a reason and need to defend them. Enforcing them on others with anger and harshness will not make a smooth transition; but not enforcing them will just show others that the student is not serious about the boundaries they created. Boundaries not set in place and maintained are not boundaries at all.

More Resources on Boundaries:

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/what-are-personal-boundaries-how-do-i-get-some/00016100>

Social Skills

There are many benefits to students learning good social skills. We all know that students come to our schools with varying levels of learned social skills, and social skills are equally as important to develop during high school as academic and physical skills. Some benefits to developing these skills include: building more/better relationships which helps develop charisma, reduce stress, and boost a positive self-esteem; better communication by learning how to communicate in small and large groups; greater efficiency by learning ways to manage social fears and/or navigate potentially awkward situations; career advancement prospects as most employers are looking for people who will interact well within a given environment; and increased happiness, because relating well to people opens doors and boosts confidence.

Of course, these benefits come from hard work honing social skills at a young age. One of the most basic categories of social skills that should be developed during high school is communication. Communication involves two things: talking and listening. To be an effective communicator, students must learn to speak effectively and to practice “active listening” in conversations. They also need to learn verbal and non-verbal communication skills in order to catch clues that are provided during conversations.



Education. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 7 Apr 2015. http://quest.eb.com/search/158_2446988/1/158_2446988/cite



Talking plays an important role in communication; from word choice to tone, the dynamics of speech convey a lot to whomever someone is speaking. Students wanting to learn these communication skills should learn to speak slowly if people have a hard time following them, and they should make sure their word choices are appropriate to whomever they are speaking; for example, no one would address a three-year-old like the President of the United States. Likewise, talking to a teacher as if he or she were a student's BFF would also be seen as unacceptable. When speaking to others, a good communicator will make sure to speak loud enough that they are easy to hear in a conversation (not too loudly or too quietly); they will also make sure people can understand what they are saying by speaking clearly and with good enunciation. Speaking in monotone is never a great way to add thrill and variety to a conversation; practicing variance in tone will keep people listening carefully.

Speaking is half of the equation, but the other side is equally important: listening. Students can practice active listening by focusing carefully and completely on what other people are saying. Common courtesy demands that people never attempt to jump into a conversation in the middle of the person's talk; active listeners will always give people time to talk and will listen to what they are trying to say. Students can encourage the conversation in a polite manner by responding to the speaker with non-verbal (nodding) and verbal cues ("go on"). Being an active listener goes beyond just hearing the words; good listeners will focus on the emotion behind the conversation and try to empathize with whatever the person is telling them. Patience goes a long way to having a good conversation; just because the speaker takes a breath does not signal that it is someone else's turn to jump in and monopolize the conversation. People should also always try to give the speaker a fair chance; if someone pre-determines that they will disagree with whatever is said, it will be much harder to empathize and think clearly. Additional rules of courtesy in conversation encourage that the listener pay attention to non-verbal cues; body movements, posture, eye contact, proximity, and facial expression all play an important role in letting both listener and speaker know how the other person is feeling. If a person is backing away and avoiding eye contact, they could be feeling very uncomfortable or threatened. If they are crying hysterically, they are obviously not experiencing a pleasant situation and do not need someone to crack a "dumb blonde" joke or to start yelling at them. Using common sense to respond appropriately depending on the other person's non-verbal cues is an important skill to be mastered in order to become a better conversationalist.

Other skills learned in school

Other social skills are also learned in high school, and students may need a reminder that even though some of these skills seem unimportant, they are actually very significant to becoming a better socialist. Students in high school classrooms are often encouraged to not use cell phones; however, they may not realize that constant use of



Teenage boy text messaging with cell phone. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 1 Apr 2015. http://quest.eb.com/search/154_2883969/1/154_2883969/cite



a cell phone can send a signal that someone is unwilling to contribute to a conversation. Also, cell phones tend to distract people, which may lead to lagging conversations that are awkward. Using cell phones in the middle of a conversation is also considered by most people to be very rude. Of course, there are obvious social rules like learning to always say “please” and “thank you,” avoiding topics that may make others feel uncomfortable (gossip, politics, inappropriate jokes, etc.), and avoiding statements that may agitate or annoy people. Students can practice all of these social skills early in high school so they are more prepared for future social situations.

Preparing for the Professional World

Students who master business etiquette in high school are able to gain priceless experience that will open many doors to opportunity in their future. Even though opportunities for practicing this etiquette in the real world may be limited in high school, learning these tips is essential. In the professional realm, it is important for students to always respond to invitations in an appropriate and timely manner. They should always make an effort to know about dress codes for any events to which they respond “yes” and should strive to know any important information like location, cost, and other useful pieces of information. Professionals also always thank the host or hostess of whatever event they attend. Being on time plays an important role not only in high school and college, but it is also extremely vital in the world of work; students who learn to manage their time and be consistent have already learned a fundamental part of success. Other ways to begin practicing business etiquette are by learning to use formal titles whenever addressing someone, learning names of new people immediately upon meeting them, making eye contact, shaking hands from a standing position, and smiling.

More Resources on Social Skills:

http://career.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/career/socialskills.aspx?

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/anger-management.html>

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/social-skills.html>

Involvement

Students may struggle with the onslaught of social opportunities in high school, especially when they are faced with having to balance work, study, and play. It is important for students to self-evaluate how much time they have each day and how much study and work they have that will subject from their “free time” bank. Students usually either withdraw from social activities to devote all of their time to studying/being alone, or they commit to every social activity option available and end up falling behind in classes. Balance is an important concept to teach students



Group of students in hallway. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 1 Apr 2015.
http://quest.eb.com/search/154_2887137/1/154_2887137/cite



from the first year they arrive on your campus; being alone all the time can increase depression, but being involved in every group and activity on campus can negatively impact academic performance.

Personalities

Most educators and guidance counselors have benefitted from the knowledge of the four temperament types (sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic) as well as the Briggs Myers’ 16 personality types (based on introvert/extrovert and other basic personality traits). Students may benefit from understanding their own personality type as well as their temperament type as they navigate their world in high school and as they learn to deal with others in a socially correct way. Sometimes, understanding the differences between personality types can make all the difference in a situation full of potential for drama and overreaction. For example, a young and emotional freshman may become sincerely offended if an older junior or senior is very choleric, task-oriented, and so focused that they give blunt answers or seem not to care about emotional situations. Knowing about the differences between people can help students learn how to navigate the social world in which they live.

Social Media

Social media can play an important role in high school and college admissions, as well as employment. Students may not understand that the content they post online now can impact their futures. Many employers are moving towards “background checking” potential employees by researching their names on Google, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media avenues. Students also may be unaware that content posted joins a vast pool of information that is never deleted. Privacy settings may be changed on some social media sites to limit information that is shared with other people, but information posted on the internet is never protected.

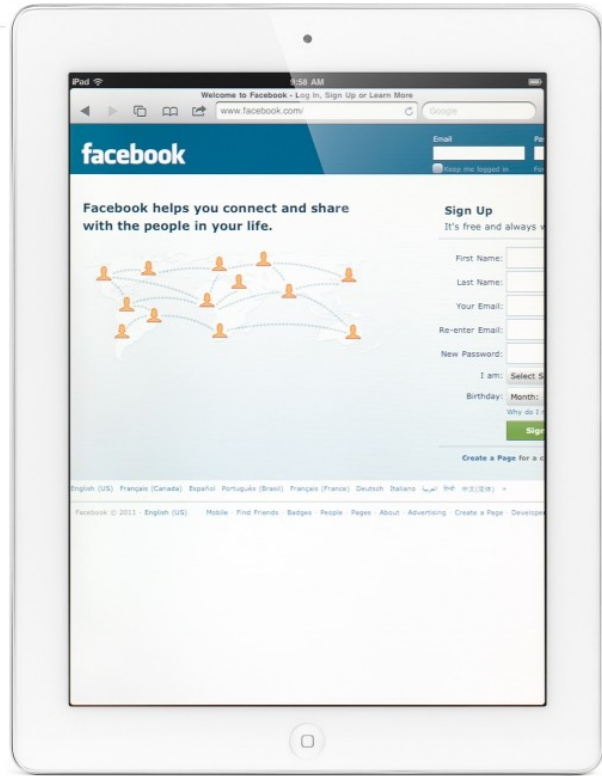


Facebook's Influence In Consumer Consumption Of News Growing. Photography. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest. Web. 1 Apr 2015. http://quest.eb.com/search/115_3849067/1/115_3849067/cite

In order to make a better online presence, students should understand that, in the end, they should want whatever is posted to reflect their best as they are examples for their schools, churches, friends, communities, and God. By posting crude or inappropriate material or pictures, they are damaging their own image and should protect themselves by being very careful about what is shared in public, especially via the internet.



However, online presence does not only hinder employment or admissions processes; a strong social presence can show future employers (or college recruiters) that you are a serious candidate who is involved in the areas in which you show interest. View this presence as an addendum to the resume and cover letter, and this can pay off in a huge way. Students can publish their work if they have created presentations, blogs, or posted other work online. They can also join groups that they identify with, like future profession groups; this will allow them to view feedback and advice from active professionals in those fields. The most important aspect of social media is that employers should see the student’s genuine personality/nature when they start to research them; if it can be taken inappropriately, don’t post it!



White Apple iPad 2 tablet computer with Facebook home page on its display.
 Photo. *Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest*. Web. 1 Apr 2015.
http://quest.eb.com/search/167_4037818/1/167_4037818/cite

Students should always try to be positive, to use social media as a way to network with previous employers or instructors (a ready supply of recommendations), and also to manage connections made with friends, co-workers, and business contacts.

More Resources on Social Media:

http://career.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/career/socialmedia.aspx?

If you have students who show concern about cleaning up their online presence, there are a couple resources online that can point them in the right direction. Forbes.com as well as several colleges and magazines offer online articles that give pointers to students on how to get ready for employers to look at their online presence.