

# Discussion Questions: Social and Emotional Success

Use the questions to guide in-class discussion, or post them to the Collaboration Corner.

## Unit 1: Important Life Skills

### Choosing Purpose

#### Make Powerful Decisions

1. Can you think of any specific situations that tend to make you act more reactive or impulsively? How can you work on being less reactive and more responsive in these situations?
2. What would it look like for you to “be the you that you want to be?”
3. How can you be more disciplined and less impulsive in your life?

#### Manage Stress

1. What is the best way for you to manage your stress and workload commitments?
2. What are activities that recharge and de-stress you?
3. Why is it important to learn how to say “no” in order to manage your stress? Do you have a hard time saying “no” to opportunities or people? Why or why not?

#### Living Self-Disciplined & Self-Motivated

1. What can you do to motivate yourself when you’re down or sad? Why is self-discipline and self-motivation so important to success in your life?
2. Do you live in the moment, or are you always living for the future? How can you be more present with people in the moment?
3. What is something you could do with your life that would help you fulfill your purpose, and make it easier for you to be self-disciplined or self-motivated?

#### Life-Changing Goals

1. Do you write down your goals? Where is a good place to write your goals down so that you can see them often?
2. What does the acronym SMART stand for?
3. What are some good categories in which you can start creating goals?

#### Organizational Skills

1. What are organization skills? Why are they important?
2. Share some examples of good organizational skills.
3. How do organizational skills help you achieve goals?

### Social Skills

#### Social Awareness

1. How can you become more aware of others around you? What changes can you make to become more aware of others?
2. What are some ways you can celebrate people who are different from you?
3. How is being aware of others important for you personally?

#### Perspective Is Everything

1. Why is having multiple or different perspectives important?
2. What are some ways to gain new or different perspectives?
3. Define “perspective.”

#### Dynamic Empathy

1. What does *empathy* mean to you?
2. How would empathy change your life? How would it change your school?
3. Do you feel like you have empathy for others? What are some examples of ways you can show empathy to others?

Diversity Expansion

1. How do you think learning new and different things will positively affect your life?
2. What are some ways you can learn new things about others around you or around the world?
3. What are some ways you can appreciate the diversity and differences of those around you?

Respect Creates Connection

1. What does it mean to respect others? How can you show those around you that you respect them?
2. Is respect expected or earned? How do you earn respect?
3. Do you understand and agree with everything? How do you show respect when you disagree?

Healthy RelationshipsRelationship Skills

1. Why do we need healthy relationships?
2. Name a few good healthy relationship skills.
3. What are relationship skills? Why are they important?

Communication Matters

1. Do you listen more than you talk, or do you talk more than you listen? How can you become a better listener?
2. Other than verbally, what are some ways you can communicate?
3. Should we listen more than we talk? How will listening benefit others as well as yourself?

Embracing Society

1. How do you engage others in your school, family, work, and in public? Are you friendly? Do you talk to people who aren't necessarily your best friends or even your friends?
2. Are all relationships equal? Does everyone have to be your friend?
3. Why does being friendly matter? What are some examples of how to engage people around you that aren't your friends?

Meaningful Relationships

1. How can you be present and attentive in the moment? How can you focus on the truth in your conversations?  
How can you be more present and intentional in your relationships?
2. What does being "present" mean? What does quality time mean?
3. How can you make your current relationships more meaningful?

The Dream Team

1. What are some ways you can be a good team player?
2. Is it easier working together or alone? Why?
3. Have you ever been in a group or on a team? What was it like working with others?

Successful Decision-MakingIdentifying Problems

1. Give an example of a decision you made in the past that has negatively affected you, then give an example of a decision you made that has had a positive impact on your life.
2. When you are faced with a decision, how do you process and come to the actual decision? Do you make a pros and cons list? Do you take a few days to think about it or ask others their opinion?
3. Do you have someone in your life whom you can ask to help you make good decisions? Who do you trust for this?

Critical Thinking

1. What is feedback? Have you ever asked for it?
2. What are some ways you can analyze your decisions critically before you make them?
3. Have you ever made a decision based solely on what others would think? How did that turn out?

Problem-Solving

1. Have you ever been faced with a difficult decision or problem? What did you do to solve it?
2. How do you take care of yourself and your overall well-being?
3. What are some techniques you can use to help solve a problem?

Evaluating & Reflecting

1. What are some ways that you can identify problems in your life?
2. When you are faced with a problem, how can you begin to solve it? Share an example of a time you had to solve a problem and how you chose to deal with it.
3. How often do you slow down and think about your life and possible problems in it? How do you create “me time”?

Choosing Humanity

1. Have you ever made a decision that hurt someone else? How did that make you feel? Did you do anything to try to make it right?
2. What are some ways you can evaluate yourself? How can you become a better version of yourself?
3. Have you ever blamed someone else for a decision that you made? Give an example if you have one.

## Unit 2: Mindfulness

### Engineering Consciousness

#### Philosophy in Life

1. Do you have a core belief system or philosophy that you rely upon to help you make decisions in life? What is it?
2. What inspires and motivates you?
3. What principles do you want to be known for by the people close to you?

#### The Idea of Self

1. How can you embrace others around you? How can you embrace yourself without needing to talk about yourself all the time?
2. What labels do you identify yourself with?
3. What are labels? Do you let labels define you?

#### Becoming Aware

1. Have you ever stopped to think about what you're thinking about? Have you ever examined your actions or why you are the way that you are?
2. How can you become more aware of yourself and your actions or reactions?
3. Are you aware that everything you do affects something or someone?

#### Mindfulness

1. Would you consider yourself a mindful person? Why or why not?
2. Are you mindful of how powerful your mind is? How amazing is your mind?
3. What does "mind over matter" or "mind over body" mean? Do you believe this is true?

#### Processing Adversity

1. When you come across adversity, obstacles or conflict what happens to your attitude? What do the thoughts that go through your head sound like?
2. What adversities do you have in your life?
3. What does being brave look like for you? Where or in what ways can you be braver?

### Mindfulness Practices and Principles

#### Meditation

1. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. How does that make you feel?
2. How would pausing, changing your pace, reflecting, and looking inward benefit you? How would this affect your day, your decisions, or your attitude?
3. What is meditation? Do you meditate? How can you begin to do this throughout your day?

#### Mantra and Verbal Reinforcements

1. Look at yourself and find the one word you want others to say about you. What is that word?
2. Words are powerful. Other than talking, what are some ways you can use words? Be creative.
3. What is a mantra? Do you have one?

#### Science & Neuroscience

1. Are you open to trying new things? What are some ways you can explore different experiences and activities?
2. Are there any qualities or characteristics that you strongly identify yourself with? What are they?
3. When was the last time you tried something new? What was it?

#### Inclusion

1. How can you try to understand people that are different than you or whom you don't agree with?
2. Does everyone have to be your friend? How can you include others who are not your friends?
3. Why is it important to get along with others around us, even the ones that aren't necessarily our friends?

Music & Mood

1. Other than food, what are you feeding your mind, soul, body and emotions?
2. What are the five senses we all have? How can we use these five senses to become more aware of what we are “eating” or putting into our bodies?
3. What does the statement “we are we what we eat” mean?

Healthy CommunicationListening

1. Do you think you are a good listener? Think of a friend or relative whom you would like to know more about and write down five questions you can ask him or her. Be sure to ask your questions later to see what you can learn.
2. What could you learn by listening and asking questions instead of always sharing your thoughts?
3. Why is listening so important?

Thinking & Speaking

1. Do you have a hard time verbalizing what you're feeling and thinking? How can you become better at communicating those things?
2. Do you think you sometimes talk more than you should or need to? Do you think you talk too fast? What are some ways that you could slow down?
3. Do you ever feel awkward or uncomfortable when there is silence?

Seeking to Understand

1. Is there someone in your life whom you have a conflict with? In what ways can you attempt to understand him or her better?
2. Does someone always have to be right or wrong? How can you seek to understand someone instead of resorting to disagreeing and becoming upset with them?
3. What are assumptions? Do you sometimes make assumptions about others without trying to understand them first?

Body Language and Voice Tone

1. How do you think other people experience you when you communicate?
2. What does your body language say about you? Do you slouch, drag your feet, move your hands, clap, jump, dance, etc.?
3. Give some examples of positive body language. Could you benefit from using these more to create better experiences with the people with whom you interact?

Facial Expressions

1. What are some positive facial expressions you would like to practice more often?
2. Are you aware of the facial expressions you make? How can you work on being more deliberate about your facial expressions?
3. Do you think you wear your emotions on your face? In what way?

Knowing YourselfFace Your Emotions

1. How often do your emotions change? Have you ever had a hard time figuring out why you were feeling a certain emotion? What did you do to help figure out why you are feeling a certain way?
2. How does sharing your emotions with others help you identify them better?
3. Why is identifying your emotions and what you're feeling so important?

See Yourself

1. Think about who you are and who you want to be. Write down three things you want others to know you by.
2. Have you ever done something that you knew was not being true to who you are or what you want to be? How can you work on staying true to yourself?
3. Do you compare yourself to people you see on social media or people in your school? How does that make you feel?

Identify Your Strengths

1. Share or write down three things that you think are your strengths. These could include things that you're good at, things you're proud of, or things that come naturally to you.
2. Why should you identify your strengths? How will knowing them benefit not only yourself but those around you?
3. What are you passionate about? What do you love doing?

Build Self-Confidence

1. How can you boost your self-confidence?
2. What makes you feel insecure?
3. What does being confident mean to you? Are you self-confident?

Believe in Yourself

1. What are some situations in which you generally believe in yourself? What are some situations in which you tend not to believe in yourself? Why do you think that is, and what might you do about it?
2. What does staying "true" to yourself mean to you? How do you do it?
3. How do your passions and your strengths work together?

### Unit 3: Barriers to Success

#### Making Powerful Decisions

##### Death of a Loved One

1. If you know someone who has lost a loved one what can you do to help them through their grieving process?
2. How can bottling up your emotions negatively affect you?
3. Have you ever lost a loved one? If so, are you letting yourself grieve?

##### Pornography and Guilt

1. Where does addiction thrive? How can you begin to break the cycle of addiction?
2. Explain what the “belt mentality” means.  
Explain what the “belt mentality” means.
3. How could pornography negatively impact you? Who can help if you are struggling with this addiction?

##### Successfully Returning to School

1. What are some things that you could see hindering you from having a successful school year and achieving your goals?
2. What is a personal goal that you would like to make for this school year within each category: leadership, academic, and social?
3. What are a few ways to stay engaged and successfully return to school?

##### Digital Citizenship and Safety

1. How can you keep yourself safe online?
2. What are some examples of not being a responsible digital citizen?
3. What does it mean to be a good digital citizen?

##### Overcoming Traumatic Memories

1. Do you or have you ever put up a front or façade that you were okay when really you weren't? How does that negatively impact you?
2. Do you know anyone who specializes in helping people through trauma or hard times? How can you contact them and get help?
3. What is the best way to deal with trauma? What is the worst way to deal with trauma?

#### Crisis Management

##### Gangs, Guns and Fighting

1. What are some of the negative impacts that weapons can bring into your life?
2. What is a possible negative outcome of fighting someone? Have you ever considered asking for forgiveness or forgiving someone who has fought you?
3. What are the possible negative consequences of being in a gang?

##### Suicide Prevention and Education

1. Do you know anyone who is or could be dealing with suicidal thoughts? How can you help them?
2. List a few people who you could go to if you were struggling with suicidal thoughts and why you'd trust and go to them.
3. List three signs of someone who could be battling suicidal thoughts.

##### Adrenaline and Aggression

1. What are some good practices explained in the video that can help keep you calm in challenging situations?
2. Explain what “fight or flight” means.
3. What is adrenaline? When have you ever felt the effects of adrenaline, and how did you deal with it?

Learned Helplessness

1. Do you ever feel helpless or stuck? What can you do to start feeling hopeful again?
2. How can you help yourself and those around you to become more full of hope?
3. What is learned helplessness? How can you find help if you are feeling helpless?

Mood and Behavior Management

1. When you are in a bad mood, how can you manage it and turn it into a good mood?
2. What puts you in a bad or good mood?
3. What is a positive way to release energy?

Pain to PurposeDealing with Divorce and Separation

1. How is it possible to stay positive when your family is going through something like divorce, separation, or parental problems?
2. What can you do if your family is going through a divorce to turn negative experiences into positive ones?
3. What are some structures and routines you can put into place that can help you if your family is going through a divorce?

Confusion, Pain & Identity

1. What does *identity* mean to you? How can you be yourself and fully embrace your identity?
2. How has your identity been shaped through good and bad experiences in life?
3. Why do you think identity is important? How can you help others with their identity?

Self-Harm and Staying Safe

1. Who is your safe person? Do you talk with them often?
2. How do you stay safe when you're in a "storm" or a painful situation?
3. Who can you go to and how can you find help if you need it?

The Consequences of Drugs

1. Do you feel like drugs are being normalized? How do you feel about that?
2. What are a few consequences of drugs and how can you make sure to keep yourself safe?
3. How can you protect yourself from the consequences of being around drugs?

Diversity and Inclusion

1. Why is diversity important for your growth and personal development?
2. Do you want more diversity or do you resist it? Explain.
3. How can you better embrace inclusion and diversity?

Dealing with TraumaIdentifying Trauma

1. Do you need to talk to someone about the trauma you have experienced or are currently going through? Why is talking to someone so important?
2. Think of a situation that has caused trauma in your life. How has that affected you?
3. What does trauma mean to you?

Trauma with Sexual Abuse and Molestation

1. What does *unconsented* mean?
2. Where can sexual abuse happen? How can you protect yourself from being in a situation in which sexual abuse is more likely to happen?
3. How can we help our bodies, minds and hearts recover from a sexual trauma?

Family Challenges Around Trauma

1. Have you ever felt like your pain has been normalized or unheard? How did that make you feel?
2. Have you ever rationalized your own pain and feelings as being normal or okay?

3. What are some of the reasons why you don't express your feelings more often? If you can't talk to your family, whom do you have that you can begin to talk to about your pain?

Emotional or Physical Trauma

1. Have you experienced emotional or physical trauma?
2. What are examples of emotional trauma?
3. What are examples of physical trauma?

Sexual Pressure

1. Have you set standards or boundaries you want to uphold for yourself when it comes to sex? Why is this important?
2. What beliefs do you carry about yourself and what you want from intimacy and sexual contact?
3. How can you be proactive about maintaining your security from sexual pressure or contact?

## Unit 4: Redirecting My Life

### Introduction to Substance Abuse

#### Drugs and the Body and Mind

1. How does using drugs and alcohol affect your mind and body?
2. If you had to pick the number one pro and the number one con of using drugs or alcohol, what would you say for each?
3. Have you struggled with drugs or alcohol, or do you know anyone who has? What can you do to get help or get help for your friends?

#### Marijuana, Nicotine, Tobacco and Cigarettes

1. How does addiction start? When should you begin breaking the habit?
2. What are positive activities you can use to replace the time previously used to participate in substance abuse?
3. How can you begin to redirect your life away from addiction?

#### Stimulants and Depressants

1. What ways can people get help for dealing with anxiety and depression?
2. Are there medications out there that can help you through the side effects such as anxiety and depression? Have you talked to a professional about medication that could help you through some of these things? Would you like to?
3. What are some negative effects drugs can have on your mind and body even after you're not using them anymore?

#### Vaping and JUULing

1. Are there things in your life that you rationalize because at the moment they don't really have a bad side effect? What are some things you do or don't do that years down the road could hold you back from living your best life?
2. Which do we tend to rationalize more: things we do that are good or things that we do that are bad for us?
3. Can you be addicted to vaping and JUULing without nicotine? How can vaping and JUULing without nicotine lead to bigger addictions?

#### The Impact of Drugs on your Relationships

1. What is trust? Why is it so important? How can the use of drugs and alcohol abuse break trust?
2. What are some boundaries that you have had to put up in your life so that people don't hurt or abuse you? What are some boundaries you have experienced by others?
3. Do drugs negatively impact your relationships? If so, how?

### Intervention Can Help You

#### Living Drug Free and Overcoming Drugs

1. Are there places and people in your life that you need to change in order to overcome bad habits and/or substance use?
2. Are you hanging out with the people who will lead your life in the direction that you want it to go?
3. What is the very beginning process of living drug free and overcoming drugs?

#### Coping with Grief, Loss and Shame

1. What is shame and how does shame hold you back from your full potential?
2. What can you do to better identify and process what you are feeling?
3. How do you process your emotions?

#### Truancy: Absenteeism and Missing School

1. "How you do one thing is how you do everything." What does this statement mean to you?
2. Do you have a hard time wanting to be engaged in school? Do you struggle with being absent? What can you do to begin to shift your perspective on the value of school?
3. Where do you want to be in five years? How will this goal help you stay engaged in school?

Swearing and Degrading Words

1. Which speaks louder: confidence or insecurities? Explain your answer.
2. Even when you make others laugh, do you think making people the butt of your jokes overall positively or negatively affects them?
3. Do you use your words to enhance others or to degrade them? Give an example of when you have participated in both.

Suspension and Expulsion

1. Have you ever been suspended or expelled? How did that make you feel? How has it affected your school life and academics?
2. Where do we get the idea that school doesn't matter? Does school matter? Why?
3. If you have a negative outlook on school, how will you begin to shift your perspective that is something you need for your future that will benefit you?

Social and Self Awareness SkillsCultural Implications Within Family and Learned Behavior

1. Why is changing our negative learned behavior so important? How can you start changing learned behavior that you don't want to engage in anymore?
2. Give an example of a negative and a positive learned behavior that you have picked up on from your upbringing.
3. What is learned behavior and how can it hurt or help you?

Primary and Secondary Impacts of Behavior

1. What needs haven't been met for you and how can you express them to someone in a helpful instead of harmful way?
2. Where do these behaviors come from and why do we typically experience them?
3. Explain what primary and secondary behaviors are.

Restoring Yourself and Others

1. What is one thing you can do to bring restoration to a relationship in your life?
2. What do you need to engage in or what has to happen in order to have full restoration?
3. What is restorative justice? Who does it involve and how are things solved?

Sex Safety, Education and Boundaries

1. Have you set boundaries for yourself? What kind of boundaries do you want to have so that when put in a situation you know what to do?
2. How can you protect yourself from boundaries being crossed?
3. What are red flags you can look for in someone before a sexual assault occurs?

Sexual Abuse

1. Where can you find freedom and healing from being on the giving or receiving end of a sexually abusive situation?
2. What signs can you look for to indicate a sexual abuser?
3. What are some forms of sexual abuse?

Coping StrategiesSuicide Prevention

1. What can you do to get help if you feel extremely sad and depressed to the point of not wanting to live?
2. Have you identified any of these signs in yourself or someone you know?
3. What are signs of depression?

Avoiding Exploitation (Human Trafficking)

1. What are some signs of someone who could be experiencing human trafficking?
2. What are some signs of someone who is going to exploit you?
3. What is exploitation?

Negative Thinking Patterns

1. What are negative thinking patterns or thoughts that you need to combat and get rid of? How can you get rid of and fight those thoughts?
2. Have you or can you notice any negative thinking patterns in your life?
3. What are negative thinking patterns? What are some examples of negative thinking patterns?

Coping with Loss and Separation

1. Have you experienced loss and separation? How so? Who is someone you can talk to who can help you through the grieving process?
2. How can you be there for your friends and family that are going through loss and separation?
3. What are some things you can do to help you through the grieving process?

Trauma and Behavior

1. How does knowing that the people around you have all gone through different situations that have shaped them change the way you view and treat people?
2. Can you identify any behaviors or things you do that could be coping mechanism because of things you have gone through?
3. Have you experience any trauma in your life? Could you possibly have gone through trauma and not even know it yet?