



Relationship Skills

Communication Circle

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

Understanding healthy communication is an important part of development for all of us, but adolescents are at a critical time in their lives to learn and develop these skills. Students who feel comfortable in their classrooms and school environments have less stress and a greater ability to spend more of their energy focusing on their academic studies. Comfort starts with creating meaningful and genuine relationships. To create and then maintain these relationships, starting small is key!

Students should see themselves on an equal playing field as the rest of their classmates regarding their “social hierarchy” in their learning environment. This can be established by using simple activities that take the pressure off students to be “right”. Allowing students to take turns answering questions that have no right or wrong answers can start to build connections between students and relieve stress for both students and teachers.

Key Takeaways:

- Students will increase their self-confidence around sharing with their classmates.
- Students will increase their social bonds with their classmates.
- Students will increase their comfort in sharing with their teachers.
- Students will continue to grow and maintain personal connections with teachers and classmates throughout the school year (or semester).

Duration + Materials:

- 20 Minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Genuine-** Truly what something is said to be, authentic.
- **Hierarchy-** A system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority.
- **Pressure-** The use of persuasion, influence, or intimidation to make someone do something.
- **Connections-** A relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else.



Activity:

1. Have students arrange themselves (as best as possible) in a circle around the classroom.
 - a. Allow students to feel comfortable with how they are sitting whether they are in chairs, on the floor, or on cushions if your classroom has them.
2. Introduce the activity and the frequency of which you will continue to do the activity.
 - a. For example, “Today we are going to take a few moments to get to know each other better. We will be engaging in this type of activity the first Monday of every month.”
3. Tell students that there are no right or wrong answers. You will go around the entire circle so everyone will have a chance to share. Remind students not to interrupt their peers.
4. Ask a question from the list, or one of your choosing. Allow each student to answer, saving any discussion for the end after all students have answered. Remember - you should also answer as well!
5. Once each student has answered, allow 5 minutes for students to share their overall thoughts and feelings.
 - a. Prompt student discussion by simply asking the group “What was something interesting you learned from your classmates?”

Discussion Questions:

Questions for the first few sessions should be light and fun. Once students begin to feel more comfortable and open up more, you can add in deeper or more meaningful questions.

1. What is your favorite animal and why?
2. What is your dream vacation and why?
3. What is your fondest memory?
4. What is your favorite subject and why?
5. What is your favorite thing about yourself?
6. What do you wish you knew more about?
7. What do you want to be when you grow up?
8. What do you wish more people knew about you?
9. What do you think we can all do together to make school more fun?
10. What do you wish you could change about school?

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Continue to engage in communication circles as often as your schedule allows, but try and maintain at least once a month to allow students to grow familiar with the activity and enhance their social bonds.