**Healthy Reality - lesson 2**

**The Scoop…**

Respecting others

**Getting Real**

Respect for other people is always important. If you don’t respect others, they likely won’t respect you either. This is where the Golden Rule is important: *“Treat others as you wish to be treated.”* Respect allows people to work together and get along. When you respect someone, you are trusting that they will also respect you. It is extremely important in making and maintaining friendships, getting along with others, and many other things.

**Lesson Goals**

* Discussion of the following points:
  + Bullying/cyberbullying
  + Acceptance
  + Everyone goes through something, and everyone has a story
  + Peer pressure (+/-)
  + Don’t do stupid things to prove yourself
  + Respect for the other gender
  + Cliques

**The Lesson**

* (Note: Items bulleted with the dot are instructions and generalized points we want you to bring up, and can be put into your own words. Items indicated with the arrow are specific questions or comments we need you to make.)
* Make sure to emphasize the points and quotes in red.

Start by recalling some of the main points from the first lesson, such as:

* Respect for yourself
* Accepting and appreciating your individuality
* Engaging in behaviors that support your individuality
* Maintaining a positive attitude
* Tell the students that junior high can be somewhat “brutal” at times, but it’s understandable. Explain that at this stage of their life, young people are trying to develop their own identities, and that can be a tough process. It is especially tough because of the way the adolescent brain develops. The area of the brain that considers risk and consequences isn’t fully developed and is often overpowered by the part of the brain that responds to peer influence, which IS fully developed. This can lead to problems! It is important to realize that this is a perfectly normal part of life, but it is smart to be aware of it and realize that their value isn’t going to be determined by how the others in this classroom feel about them today. Also, that their actions toward others can have more impact than they can imagine.
* Ask the students for some examples of positive peer pressure.
* How about negative peer pressure?
* How does social media impact positive and negative peer pressure? (Try to get a good conversation going about this topic, because it is hugely important. Feel free to come up with some of your own follow-up questions on this, because you know your school climate.)
* Can social media influence how you feel about yourself? Why?
* Can social media influence how you treat others? (like cyberbullying) Is it easier to “trash talk” others over social media than it is in person? Does that make it right?
* It’s important to remember that in all forms of bullying, the person who does it is likely to be doing so because he or she feels insecure in some way. They do it to make themselves feel more powerful. What is the best way to make the person doing the bullying stop doing it? (There are many possible answers here. The point is to get them thinking about it and discussing it, hopefully coming to a consensus on how they, as a class, feel about it and will react to it when it happens.)
* Everyone has been or knows someone who has been affected by bullying or cyberbullying. What are some things we can do to help people being bullied?
  + Be a friend to them.
  + Tell a trusted adult.
  + Don’t give bullying an audience.
* How is respect for others related to respect for yourself? (The answer, in short, is that you can’t properly have respect for others unless you respect yourself.)
* The author Alex Elle said, “The respect you show to others (or lack thereof) is an immediate reflection on your self-respect.”
* Another quote found online says, “The way you treat yourself sets the standard for others on how you demand to be treated. Don’t settle for anything other than respect.”
* Why is it important to respect your peers?
* Everyone is different, and it’s important to accept each other for who we are. What are some ways we can accept each other?
  + Put yourself in their shoes.
  + Know that we are all different.
  + Think before you speak.
  + Look for the positives.
* Another way we can accept each other is to realize that everyone has a story and everyone has been through things that they haven’t told anyone about.

“Everyone has their own story, a reason why they are the way they are. You have no right to judge someone you don’t know. For all you know, today could be their last day alive.”

“Don’t be ashamed of your story. It has the power to inspire others.”

Motivational speaker Ed Gerety likes to share a story of a young man in high school who was being teased terribly because he wore the same clothes to school for a few days in a row. It turns out that all of his hours before and after school were being spent visiting his mom in the hospital, as she was undergoing treatment for cancer.

Don’t assume you know everything going on in the lives of those around you. Respect and support them for who they are. Always.

* Peer pressure is a very real thing, and all people are affected by it at some point in their life. There are two main dangers peer pressure can cause: mental and physical.
  + Mental: Low self-esteem can result from trying too hard to fit in.
  + Physical: Drugs, alcohol, sex, and even dares can put your life at risk. Always evaluate the risks before doing something just because “everyone else is doing it.”
  + Don’t do stupid things to prove yourself
  + Remember that at this point in your life, the area of the brain that responds to peer influence is more developed than the area that controls rational judgement! Think about the consequences of your actions, thoughts or words.
* It is important to surround yourself with friends who support you and your decisions, and don’t lead you down a negative path. You and your friends should also step out of your normal group to include other people. Tight-knit groups of people, sometimes called “cliques” can be found on every level of the social ladder, and there are many ways in which they can be harmful. Cliques tend to discourage outside friendships and have one person that makes most of the decisions for the group.
  + “Don’t confine yourself to a select group of friends, often known as a clique. Cliques by definition leave people out. Lock yourself into one, and you’ll never know how many terrific friendships you may be missing.” -Jerry Spinelli, author of *Crash* and *Loser*

End the lesson by thanking the students for their participation, and to remember these key points:

* Respect yourself
* Respect others and support them whenever you can
* Use social media responsibly and positively
* Don’t be a bystander when it comes to bullying in any form. Don’t be afraid to do something

To illustrate this last point, ask the students to raise their hand if they give permission for others in the room to say something to them if they think they are treating someone else unfairly and want them to stop.