

COOL CAFE NEWSLETTER:

Week #3: Mealtime Manners and Conversations

THEME:

Students learn how to have positive mealtime conversations and how to be a good listener. Cafeteria supervisors model positive communication skills.

CONSIDER THIS!

- Due to higher level thinking, students are able to have more complex conversations.
- This is a critical time to practice conversation skills such as active listening.
- Lunchtime conversations provide an opportunity to help students talk about challenges and solutions.
- Supervisors can help teach and reinforce mealtime manners.

Let's Chat About Mental Health:

- Engaging in meaningful conversations with others is a life skill that is critical for developing positive relationships and friends.
- It is important to talk about positive mental health and mental health challenges in everyday ways to reduce stigma and gain support.

TIPS

Conversations and Listening:

- Take turns talking during conversation. Don't interrupt others or be quick to change the topic.
- Nod if you understand or ask for clarification if you do not.
- Maintain eye contact throughout conversation.
- Avoid "nonverbal turn-offs" such as looking at your cell phone when someone is talking to you, crossing your arms, and negative facial expressions.
- Allow personal space, don't stand or sit too close.
- Tone of voice is important; how you say it is just as important as what you say.
- Show interest in what others have to say. Ask follow-up questions.
- Include everyone in the conversation, especially those who might struggle to make friends.

Mealtime Manners:

- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Try not to talk with your mouth full.
- Keep your phone away and silenced during mealtime conversations.
- Respect preferences of others. Everyone has their own opinions, likes, and dislikes. Say, “It’s OK to be different. That’s what makes the world interesting!”
- Use respectful language. Avoid insulting names and put downs.
- Clean up after yourself.

Suggested Activities:

- **Supervisor:** Consider having high school students who are positive role models come in and sit at each lunch table. Students are encouraged to practice conversation skills and mealtime manners. Provide conversation prompts related to transition to high school such as, ‘What is the thing you like most about high school? What advice would you give students new to high school? What has been your biggest challenge socially?’
- **Students:** Have students talk about the questions below at their tables (pick written questions from a bag) or with the visiting high school student.
 - **Let’s talk about mental health**
 - What does mental health mean to you?
 - When do you feel mentally healthy?
 - **Dating/relationships**
 - What’s an appropriate way to express feelings towards someone you like?
 - Describe a healthy vs unhealthy relationship.
 - Getting rejected is hard. Some people will like us and some people won’t and that’s okay—we need to focus our energies on the people who appreciate us. What is an appropriate way to handle rejection?
 - You have the right to choose a partner. What characteristics do you look for in a partner?
 - **Social Media**
 - What are the negatives of communicating virtually and over social media?
 - What makes communicating in person more meaningful?

Developed for Every Moment Counts (www.everymomentcounts.org)

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