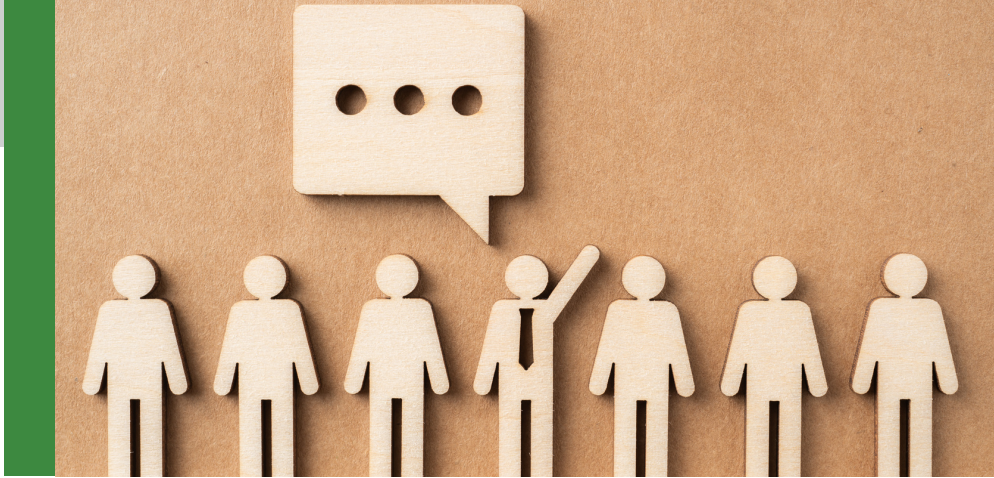


FEB | 2024

In the Office

Robert Brunelle | School Counselor



INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

We often hear that 'communication is key' but the conversation tends to stop there. Why is it important? How does it work? How do we learn to communicate? What influences communication?

These are all questions the students will be exploring. In the Middle School and Upper School advisory programs we students will begin to dive into the depth of communication; specifically, interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is communication between two people.

It is important to first note the communication principles:

1. Communication is learned: Communication is not innate but something we learn. It is symbolic and dependent on culture and context of where it takes place. These symbols, perceptions, culture, and context can be learned both formally and informally through family, social interactions, and school.
2. Communication is Continuous: Humans are always communicating, even if it is not with our words. We have intentional communication through words, gestures and actions and unintentional communication through body language, inaction, posture, and behavior too.
3. Communication is Unrepeatable: Since communication is context dependent it is always changing. We do not have the capability to control the context of the conversation so it will always be different. Major influences include location, time, and the individual's mood during the conversations.
4. Communication is irreversible: Once we communicate something it is out into the world for people to receive and interpret. This is now seen both in person and online with the increase of communication technology.

Throughout the next couple months of dissecting communication, students will be challenged to explore their self-concept, understand where their beliefs come from, look at varying perspectives, understand relationship maintenance, understand the climate of conversations, and practice not just blindly communicating but taking an active role in understanding the messages and feedback being processed and choosing the meaning and our response that we can be proud of.

OJAI
VALLEY
SCHOOL

Newsletter Highlights

Interpersonal Communication

Office Themes

Journal Styles

Recommended Resources





“ALLOW YOURSELF TO FEEL WHATEVER YOU ARE FEELING. NOTICE ANY LABELS YOU ATTACH TO CRYING OR FEELING VULNERABLE. LET GO OF THE LABELS. JUST FEEL WHAT YOU ARE FEELING, ALL THE WHILE CULTIVATING MOMENT-TO-MOMENT AWARENESS.”

-JON KABAT-ZINN

COMMON OFFICE REFLECTIONS:

A lot of topics and themes have begun to flow through the Counselor Office. The following are some themes and things to think about:

Fear: Many of us fear a lot of things. This fear begins to tell us something is wrong with us and/or dictates our thoughts and behaviors to avoid that fear from coming true. Most often that fear is an expression of a need. An unmet need that we believe would expose something about us that is vulnerable and possibly personal. That fear is simply a messenger. Listen to what the need of the fear is and talk to it. Tell it how you may already be addressing it or will address it.

Example: I fear being alone and that fear has influenced me thinking that maybe I am not enough for someone to want to stay. The fear is telling me that I value company/relationships and that I need to give myself more appreciation. I would suggest expressing to the people I love my appreciation for them while also starting self-affirmations to remind myself of the worth I have to help mitigate the thoughts of not being enough. I would start honoring what people would benefit from me and try to be proud of those strengths.

Vulnerability: It is common that people choose not to communicate needs because they do not want to be vulnerable to a friend or family member. They may believe that it seems weak, that their vulnerability may be used against them, or it is too uncomfortable not knowing what could happen.

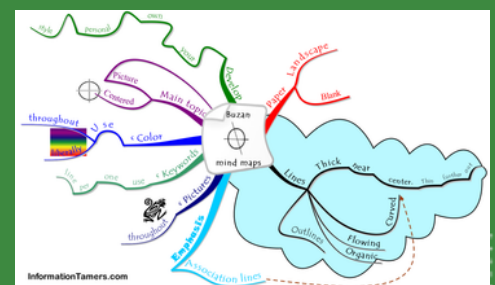
Vulnerability is critical as it invites someone into our world to provide information on how to interact with us and our needs. If we leave out important information then we are not allowing others to use their communication skills to interact with us effectively. When individuals are nervous to share or open up I challenge them to do it in levels. Invite them into your mind by sharing the theme of the need without too much detail. Test how vulnerability with that individual feels.

Example: A friend continues to take sides with another friend and always shuts down your ideas. You feel sad about this but you don't want to say how it truly impacts you. You don't want them to get upset and give them a reason to not be friends. I would suggest sharing the emotion and not the detail. You can share that you have been feeling sad lately. This allows you to get possible support from them. The vulnerability of letting them know your mood will allow them to communicate back with you. If we don't provide them with information then we can't expect them to be helpful.

These two major themes are often discussed with counselors as they exist within our thoughts first. It is not something friends tend to ask about but if we struggle with vulnerability or certain fears it may impact our relationships and goals. One of the most important things in overcoming fears and being vulnerable is to understand who you are. Most students who are facing these challenges will be prompted to journal in order to understand how the themes are being manifested. It involves spending time with the challenge to learn what heightens them, what calms them, what brings comfort, and what we still need to learn or understand. The next section breaks down a couple ways individuals can journal to begin this process.

Journaling Styles:

- **Bunzan Style:** journaling that involves words in a pictorial fashion to help access both right and left brain processing.
- **Stream of Conscious Journaling:** writing without a goal or prompt in mind in order to free write and see what the conscious contributes.
- **Gratitude Journal:** reflecting and/or jotting down the things you are grateful for that day
- **Reflective Journaling:** journaling to think and process a variety of topics or daily life. Reflective Journaling is often done with prompts that can be found with a simple google search.
- **Worse Case Scenario Journaling:** write about the worse case scenario for a fear or worry and write to yourself about the probability, how you would handle it, and how often your fears/worries come true.



Bunzan Technique

SOME NEW REFLECTION SONGS

MUSIC CAN HELP US COMMUNICATE
AND INITIATE REFLECTION IN A FUN
WAY!

“2 Days Into College” by Aimee Carty

A reflection into the feelings of being young
and going through the new things.



“Love Me For Me” by Clara Wehbe: We all have
challenges. Its who we are. Own your strengths
and share those gifts with those who accept all
of you.



Additional Resource

101 Essays to Change
the Way You Think

Brianna Weist

101
ESSAYS
that will
CHANGE
the way
YOU
THINK

BRIANNA WIEST

There is a podcast
version on Spotify!