



Month 6: Inclusive and Fair Behaviors

Inclusive and fair behaviors involve treating others with respect, dignity, and empathy, fostering a sense of belonging that is crucial for healthy, kind relationships. Behaviors such as ensuring equal access to opportunities, celebrating diversity, creating safe spaces for open communication, actively addressing bias, using inclusive language, and making accommodations for individual needs ensure people feel included, accepted, and valued.¹

Week 1: Ready for Kindness

Belonging: Humans experience the world as social creatures and rely on each other to survive and thrive. Knowing we're part of a larger community gives us a sense of belonging that in turn provides motivation to actively participate in behavior and activities that benefit the group, and therefore ourselves. Need-to-belong theory claims that the motivation to form and sustain at least a minimum amount of social connections is one of the most powerful, universal, and influential human drives. It shapes emotion, cognition, and behavior.² The more that we consider these needs in everything we do, the more we feel motivated to share, learn, and practice intentional kindness. Our sense of belonging helps us receive kindness from others, practice kindness towards ourselves, and share kindness every day. Making your campus a kind space means ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty feel recognized and included.



Week 2: Kindness Influencers

Kindness and Social Media: Young adults spend an average of one–two hours online daily on multiple social media platforms,³ and the content they view and share has a strong influence on themselves and their peers. Just like in other areas of our lives, social media is rife with opportunities for kind—and

unkind—behavior. Students can call upon their kindness skills to mitigate the negative effects of social media. In fact, simply limiting screen time to one hour per day total (for all social media platforms) actually improves mental well-being, while more time decreases the positive impacts of connecting online.⁴ [Be Kind Online: Youth Voices](#) and the [Be Kind Online Guide](#) feature advice from older adolescents to their younger peers, tips for developing awareness around social media, ideas for being kind online, and Kindness Dilemmas specific to social media. For younger students who don't use social media, discuss why limiting screen time is kind, and how, when used responsibly, the internet can help us to stay connected to family/friends and local organizations/resources.



Kindness and Social Media: How Do They Connect?

What's your daily screen time? How often do you check social media? TikTok has more than 100 million accounts in the U.S. and, according to 2021 Pew Research Center data, more than half of social media users visit sites like Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook (which has over 2.7 billion accounts) every day.⁴ Paired with the popularity of virtual reality and immersive platforms, we spend more and more of our lives online.

While social media originally began as a way to connect with people we already know, the experience is now centered around connections, entertainment, and escapism. However, despite distance and time, these platforms also give us the ability to interact with the people and causes that we care about and, increasingly, people we wouldn't otherwise meet. The same norms and the same kindness skills we would use offline, should guide our actions online.

Because social media has an array of uses, and can in some cases be problematic and harmful, it's important to talk about our own relationship to social media use. Practices and skills developed as part of a Kind Campus can help us navigate the difficulties of social media and respond to challenges with kindness. Let's begin by asking ourselves some questions:

Developing Awareness:

- Do you catch yourself not being able to log off? Try working, sleeping, or doing any other activity in silence. Do you feel bored? Stressed? Think about how that lack of stimulation affects you.
- Ask yourself why you're posting. Is it for them? Are you finding value in sharing that?
- Be intentional about what you consume. Is it making you happier? Is it enjoyable? Is it adding value to your day? Unfollow, block, or mute people/accounts that are unkind or don't add joy to your life.
- Be mindful of who you interact with online. Do you know them in real life? Be careful about talking to strangers online, even if they seem legitimate.
- Try to keep big feelings (emotional attachment) out of others' social media. Most people don't consider the impact of what they post, so try not to give them too much power.
- Ask for support and support others in times of need. Vulnerability is a transformative quality that deepens our sense of love and belonging, inside and outside of social media spaces.⁵
- The internet can be a place for criticism. Try not to interact with social media during times when you're sad (though you can't handle reading or posting hate).
- Information online can be seen by anyone, so be careful about posting identifiable information about yourself such as where you live, your full name, or your school.
- If you see an emergency situation online, contact someone you trust for help (a parent, teacher, etc.).

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Week 3: Skills for Kindness

Modeling Inclusion: Demonstrate the value of inclusive behaviors with an activity that allows students to tell their own stories. Verbally or through a drawing activity, have students share their name and any history or story it has for them. They might share the meaning of their name, who they were named for, why they were given that name, or why they chose the name for themselves. The goals are to help remember one another's names and pronunciation through personal connections, and to give a sense of the variety of cultures and histories that students bring to your campus.⁵ Consider continuing to build a kind environment by setting a goal for your class to learn about staff members' names, such as the librarian, bus driver, or support staff. Being able to greet and recognize each person by name builds community connection and contributes to people's sense of feeling included, accepted, and valued.



Week 4: Self-Kindness

Kind Self-advocacy: Self-advocacy, the ability to identify your needs, communicate them clearly, and help others understand how they can support you,⁶ can play an important role in students' well-being. An inclusive and fair environment supports students in actively speaking up for their own needs, concerns, and learning preferences while knowing their rights and responsibilities.⁷ Effective self-advocacy involves kindness skills such as being respectful, communicating effectively, and being able to compromise when necessary. Explore this topic by giving students two learning options and asking them to share which they think is best for them, for example discussing a topic or reading about it? Writing a Kind Note or drawing a Kind Note? Including and engaging students in their own learning is a kind way to develop their independence, motivation, and sense-of-self.

Inclusive and Fair Behaviors:

- People advocate for fairness
- There's collaboration across the hierarchy of positions
- Leaders provide teams with needed resources
- People from all roles are free to speak up
- People share information transparently
- People welcome and value diversity



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