

Building Relationships with Students

Guideline	Example
Ask the student questions about their interests, hobbies, and life.	“Tell me about your favorite hobbies.”
Follow up about something they shared and remember details.	“Did you end up watching a movie this weekend? How was it?”
Make sure that students feel supported and encouraged by you.	“You’re remembering to turn your homework in on time! That’s such a big accomplishment!”
Consistency builds trust.	Let CIS Staff know beforehand if you’re unable to make your volunteer session that week.
Model behavior, language, active listening skills, and a positive attitude.	Students pick up cues on how to act and what to expect based on your body language, nonverbal communication, as well as what you say.
Approach students from a strength-based approach	Students are sensitive to your opinions of them, and look to you for clues about your reactions to them. It’s vulnerable!
Encourage students to use their own voices	“Would you like to read the next question out loud to me?”

Tips for Making Conversations Work

Keep it going. It's one thing to ask a question and then sit back and wait for an answer. It is another thing to really engage in a conversation. Asking follow-up questions or providing open-ended responses are great ways to keep the conversation going. For example:

- "That's cool. Tell me more"
- "You've really thought about this, haven't you?"
- "Are you saying..." , " As I hear it, you..." , "It sounds (to me) like..." , "As I understand it, you..." , " It appears (seems) that..."
- "Interesting. Have you thought about..."
- "How do you feel about..."
- "What are the reasons"
- "Explain to me", "Share with me"
- "Give me an example", "Describe for me"
- "What is your perspective"
- "If you had to choose"

Conversations don't have to be "heavy". It's important to have conversations about subjects that matter deeply, but it's also important to listen to why a young person likes a certain trend, YouTuber, or artist.

Balance is important. Conversations should combine a mix of relational topics (casual conversations, family, and friends) and goal directed topics (school, behavior and future).

Be prepared for the unexpected answer. You may ask a question and get an answer you did not want or expect. If an answer bothers you, simply listen and ask more questions about why the young person thinks and feels that way.

Listening is the most important. Through careful listening we tell them we care about their thoughts and we care about them.

Be prepared to give your own answer. This is a good time to model thoughtful, honest responses.

Effective Listening

Listening is one of the most important things you can do as a volunteer. Actively listening shows that you care about your student and what they have to say, and creates a more comfortable and inviting space for them to share.

Ineffective		Effective
	<u>Non-Verbal Behavior</u>	
Listener looks bored, uninterested, or judgmental; avoids eye contact; displays distracting mannerisms (doodles, plays with a paper clip, etc.)		Listener maintains positive posture; avoids distracting mannerisms; keeps attention focused on speaker; maintains eye contact; nods and smiles when appropriate
	<u>Focus of Attention</u>	
Listener shifts focus of attention to himself: "When something like that happened to me, I . . ."		Listener keeps focus of her comments on the speaker: "When that happened what did you do?"
	<u>Acceptance</u>	
Listener fails to accept speaker's ideas and feelings: "I think it would have been better to . . ."		Listener accepts ideas and feelings: "That's an interesting idea; can you say more about it?"
	<u>Empathy</u>	
Listener fails to empathize: "I don't see why you felt that . . ."		Listener empathizes: "So when that happened, you felt angry."
	<u>Probing</u>	
Listener fails to probe into an area, to follow up on an idea or feeling		Listener probes in a helpful way (but does not cross examine): "Could you tell me more about that? Why did you feel that way? Listener follows up: "A few minutes ago you said that . . ."
	<u>Paraphrasing</u>	
Listener fails to check the accuracy of communication by restating in his own words important statements made by the speaker		Listener paraphrases to guarantee that she has understood correctly and to assure speaker that this is so
	<u>Summarizing</u>	
Listener fails to summarize		Listener summarizes the progress of the conversation from time to time
	<u>Advice</u>	
Listener narrows the range of alternatives by suggesting one "correct" course of action		Listener broadens the range of ideas by suggesting (or asking the speaker for) a number of alternatives