

MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

BIG TRANSITIONS



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SGLs

... for intentional conversations with students

Change is hard. And the transition from middle school to high school can be particularly hard for students. For most of the kids in your group, they're moving from a smaller school to a larger one. Last year, they were the big fish in school. But this year, they're the minnows! And as if the transition wasn't hard enough, during those first couple of school days, upperclassmen might be prowling around looking for some unsuspecting freshman who'll pay good money for a third-floor pool pass (to a pool that doesn't exist). All joking aside, this is your chance to affirm, encourage, and guide your few through one of the biggest transitions they'll face. We want to help you by giving you some words to say and not to say as you guide your students into this new phase. Remember, your goal during this phase is to:

MOBILIZE THEIR POTENTIAL.

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WHAT TO SAY:

- "I know there's a lot of change happening, and I want to do the best I can to help you through it. I'm here to listen as you process all of it."
- "As you adjust to all the new experiences coming up, I want you guys to feel like this is a safe place to talk about whatever you want to talk about."
- "What are some activities you'd like to get involved in or try out this coming year?"
- "What are you most nervous about going into this year? What are you most excited about?"
- "Finding new friends to hang out with is hard. And it's tempting to stick with the people you meet first. But keep the things that matter most to you in mind, and look for friends who have similar interests and values. You'll be in tons of situations to meet people, so don't worry about not finding a group of friends."
- "Every change takes some getting used to. It's okay if it takes some time for you to feel comfortable in a new routine and place."
- "If you'd rather talk with me one-on-one about something, that's totally fine! Just stick around for a few minutes after group."
- "So many awesome experiences and opportunities are going to happen to you in this new chapter!"

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- "This is not that big of a deal. People do this every year, and it's okay."
- "It's going to be fine." *(It's okay to say this, but preface it with a lot of empathetic words. Kids don't feel like they need a fixer right away. They need a feeler first—someone who is compassionate and makes the effort to walk in their shoes before trying to pump them up.)*
- "Just don't tell me when or if you do something stupid, okay? I don't want to have to tell your parents."
- After any misstep: "I told you so," "You should have listened to me," "I know what I'm talking about."

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