

Name of Program: Learning to be Selfish

Target Audience: All Grade Levels

Strategy for Implementation: Group Discussion & Activity.

Time of Year to Implement: End of the 1st Quarter

Relevant Learning Goal: Intrapersonal Intelligence

- Students will identify ways to support their emotional wellness
- Students will set health and wellness goals that are reasonable, achievable, and sustainable.

Specific Lesson Outcomes:

- Students better able to articulate their needs in terms of mental health
- Able to realize when they might have too many things on their plate
- Recognize the value in selfishness

Purpose:

- To start a conversation about the importance of selfishness. Talking with students about the idea that it can be ok to be selfish at times.

Planning and Preparation:

- This might be a difficult idea for students to understand. As much of their lives they are taught to be unselfish and how selfishness is viewed to be an undesirable trait.
- Check out these videos that can be used to help explain the importance of selfishness:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHF3icXefRo> (added bonus presenter is IMSA alumnus)
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSGPHm_xpOI
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEH9yvhwfVg>

Introduction:

Have you ever felt/been told you are being selfish? I want you to take a moment and think about how that made you feel. How did those words impact your actions in the future? Now I want you to think about what action you were doing that led to you being called/feeling selfish. Who was the person that was benefiting from the action. I want you to keep this in mind as we go through this program/conversation. Reevaluating if possibly the selfishness was something that was beneficial and in fact necessary.

-Body of Program- (This is a discussion program so move at your own pace)

- At a young age we are taught about the dangers of selfishness. With words such as, “If you’re selfish no one is going to want to be around you” or “You’ll never make friends by being selfish.” Which is often the advice that is taken to heart. So much so that as we grow up we tend to try to give more and more of ourselves to those around us. This can be problematic as this might lead to a person becoming overdrawn and spread thin which can cause mental and physical reactions to happen.
- Webster Defines selfishness as:
 - The quality or state of being selfish : a concern for one's own welfare or advantage at the expense of or in disregard of others : excessive interest in oneself.
- Now I want to take two key points out of that definition to talk about which are the phrases: at the expense of and excessive interest.
 - As many people usually emphasize on the part of it being at the expense of others. Where’s if you aren't selfish at times you are doing it at an expense of yourself.
 - Also talking about the idea of excessive interest. Which can be a hard thing for people to judge and self monitor on. As what is considered as excessive. This is often something that is fluid and needs to be evaluated on a person to person basis.
 - As you wouldn’t consider someone going to rehab to seek help selfish would you?
 - Or a person who is seeking out counseling in order to work through an experience?
- That’s the thing that is often the hardest for people to do is putting themselves first. Many people are often shamed or guilted over how they might be viewed if

you have a yourself first type of attitude. Which can be especially hard when you start examining all of the obligations and responsibilities that you as a person might have. However, I want to remind you of something that we are often told when we go on a plane. You are instructed that you must first take care of your oxygen mask before assisting others. As if we can't breathe we are limiting the number of people that we will be able to assist. By only focusing on the immediate needs of someone.

- Being selfish can be a similar experience. As by being selfish at times and taking time to do something that we enjoy we are better able to assist those around us. This is extremely important to practice selfishness as a teenager. As it can help lessen the stresses that might be building up around them from such things as:
 - School demands and frustrations
 - Negative thoughts or feelings about themselves
 - Changes in their bodies
 - Problems with friends and/or peers at school
 - Moving or changing schools
 - Taking on too many activities or having too high expectations
 - Applying for colleges
- All things that IMSA students struggle throughout their time here at IMSA.
- So selfishness does not have to mean that we are letting our ego take over and only worrying about ourselves. Instead I would encourage people to start viewing selfishness as prioritization. As while viewing it as prioritization. We are able to say that we are going to be selfish and put our own well being first and foremost when going about our lives. It is not saying that we aren't also listening and helping others. We just have come to realize that without being selfish at times we are going to hurt and affect the other priorities further down on the list.
- Now some people might want a list of what is an acceptable form of selfishness, but I am not going to give you one. As selfishness will look different from person to person. So it is up to the individual to reflect and explore what they need in order to best take care of themselves. (If they really press for answers, suggest them to google stress relievers. Like yoga, meditation, nature walks, and intentional alone time). As in this instance

selfishness might be more easily related to self-care and wellbeing of self. Rather than be viewed as ignoring those around you.

Further Consideration:

- To wrap up the program you might have students consider revisiting the previous instance of selfishness that they thought of in the beginning. Having them reevaluate it under the new structure of what selfishness can mean.
- Might be a good idea to partner with the program of "Who I Am: Developing Self-Esteem and Self-Worth " to get students thinking about their own ideals and further away from getting hung up on others opinions/judgments.

Assessment: How do you know that they have learned from this program?

1. What is one benefit to selfishness?
2. What was selfishness encouraged to be viewed as?
3. Why were there no forms of selfishness suggested? (Usable if you didn't have to provide examples).
 - a. Otherwise ask: What are some forms of selfishness that you are able to practice?

References & additional tools:

- <https://www.nerdycreator.com/blog/put-yourself-first/>
- <https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/learning-to-be-more-selfish/>
- https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Helping-Teenagers-With-Stress-066.aspx
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHF3icXefRo>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSGPHm_xpOI
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEH9yvhwfVg>