

## ACTIVITY 3

# What Is Advisory?

**Purpose:** Identify common experiences in school—the good and bad. Understand the role that advisory plays in helping advisees navigate these experiences.

**APPROXIMATE TIME:**

20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** NONE**ADVISOR NOTES:****Choose an Opening Routine that Encourages Community Building**

The first part of this activity can be done as an opening routine. You can read about each strategy in more detail in **Opening Routines for Advisory Meetings** on page 12.

- **Cross the Line:** Everyone stands in a row, imagining a line in front of them. Or you can place a long piece of masking tape on the floor to serve as the line. You will read a prompt, and anyone who thinks that prompt relates to them should step over the line for a couple of seconds and then step back.
- **Stand Up/Sit Down:** Everyone starts in a seated position. You will read a prompt, and anyone who thinks that prompt relates to them should stand up for a couple of seconds and then sit back down.

**PROCEDURE:****1. Stand Up/Sit Down or Cross the Line**

- Tell advisees that they will be responding to a series of prompts by either crossing a line or standing up and sitting back down (choose the strategy before the advisory meeting begins).
- Establish the following guidelines:
  - Everyone decides for themselves whether to cross the line (or stand up); there's no pointing or commenting, "Hey, you're confused every day; cross the line!"
  - For each prompt, notice briefly who has had the experience, who has not, and what experiences are especially common for your group.
  - Explain that you, the advisor, will step over or stand up for every prompt because you've experienced all the prompts and you want everyone to know that nobody will ever be crossing over or standing up by themselves. (Remember, you're still building a sense of safety in the group, which is accomplished with lots of little steps like this one.)

- Ask advisees to cross the line (or stand up) if they have had any of the following experiences. Cross the line (stand up) if . . .
  - You've ever felt confused about something at school and didn't know who to ask.
  - You've ever felt like kids at school really don't know you.
  - You've ever felt like adults at school don't really know you.
  - You've felt like school is overwhelming and stressful.
  - You've felt like there are skills or tricks that some kids know how to do to be successful at school.
  - You wish that there were a place at school to talk about things that matter to you.
  - You think kids put each other down at school.
  - You wish kids treated each other better at school.
  - You wish there was an adult at school you could talk to.

## 2. Debrief the Activity

- Move into a circle to debrief the activity. Explain to the group that advisory is a place to get help with all those experiences. When advisories work well, advisees have an adult and peers who know them well, support them, problem-solve together, improve the school culture, support everyone's success, and talk about issues.
- Explain your role as the advisor: "So, I'll do my best to be a good listener, help you problem-solve, and occasionally I will nag—so you can feel safe, do well in school, and think about who you are and want to become. To foster the best group environment, I'll ask for your input and for your help running some group advisory meetings, and I'll encourage all of us to reflect on how we are doing as a group."
- Let the group know how often and for how long they will be meeting over the course of the year, and provide an overview of some of the big questions (see below) that they will be exploring together through activities and conversation. Also let them know that they will be meeting one-on-one with you in short mini-conferences to set and revisit goals and get support. They will learn more about mini-conferences in the upcoming weeks.
  - Who am I? What factors shape my identity?
  - How do peer pressure, conformity, and fear affect the decisions we make about how we treat others?
  - What factors can divide a community or break it apart? How can members of a community help it rebuild and become stronger?