



## CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TALK ABOUT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

**Discussion questions from WKCD, for teachers and students (45-90 min.)**

### *Quick take*

What strikes you about these students and what they say? What theme(s) run through their comments?

*Here are some themes that strike us—and questions they raise. We encourage you to discuss these questions in small groups and then share out.*

### **Student-teacher relationships**

All five students talk about the power of teacher-student relationships (“one-on-ones” as Lisa calls it). Why is this personal connection so important? What has been your own experience of this? How do teachers benefit, along with students, from good relationships? What gets in the way of building strong and positive teacher-student relationships?

### **Standing out**

Jaquarius talks about how all students want to stand out--some for the “right” reasons, some for the “wrong.” What’s your experience? What responses most help students who use “being bad” as a means of standing out?

### **Being invisible**

Jack says he prefers being “invisible” in school. In your experience, how do students try to make themselves invisible? How do they try to make themselves visible? What relation do those efforts bear to their academic, social, and emotional development?

### **Stereotyping**

All these students raise the issue of stereotyping: e.g., the “good” or “bad” student, the “slacker,” the “poor black girl who won’t amount to anything,” the student who seems to have everything under control. Jaquarius also describes how a school’s bad reputation can stigmatize its students in the community.

What’s your experience with these stereotypes? Describe a few examples. What can teachers and students do about our human tendency to judge quickly and label people (or schools)?

Teachers, too, can feel stereotyped by students or other teachers. If you are a teacher, have you had this experience? Can you describe it?

If you are a student, how might you have stereotyped one or another of your teachers? What would help turn around the stereotype?