

Students should disregard negative influences from peers

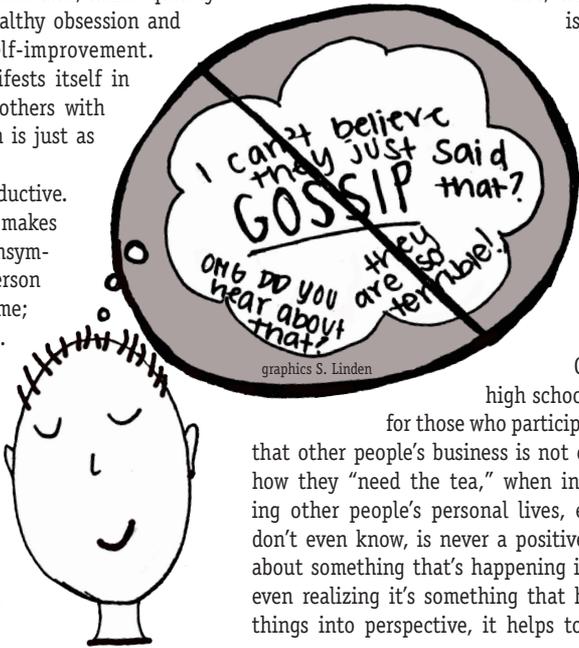
by Hayley Knowlton
People Editor



A very prominent aspect of the average high schooler's life involves worrying about what others are doing. Far too many teenagers focus their attention on the lives of others rather than their own, which quickly spirals into an unhealthy obsession and distraction from self-improvement.

This obsession manifests itself in many forms, including talking badly about others with friends, comparing, and gossiping. Each form is just as harmful as the next.

Insulting others with friends is never productive. It negatively impacts all parties involved; it makes those doing the talking look malicious and unsympathetic, and it hurts the reputation of the person being talked about. It is a complete waste of time; there are so many better things to talk about. Also, focusing on the faults of others disables us from focusing on ourselves and improving who we are. There will never be a good reason to support this behavior (no matter how tempting). Making excuses like "but I'm just venting" is only a form of denial, and saying "Okay, I love him/her, but..." does not make it okay. Take care of yourself and take care of others by refraining from talking badly about people behind their backs.



Most teens also compare themselves to others, especially those who represent what they strive to be. We look through photos of people on Instagram who have a "better" body or a more ideal life than we do and spend far too much time obsessing over their assets that we envy. This prevents us from focusing on ourselves and learning to love the people we are now. We will never be anyone

else; wishing we were someone else is a completely regressive way of thinking. A much more productive aspect of life to focus on is becoming comfortable in our own skin because this is the only life we will ever have. Having positive role models is healthy, as long as we do not become obsessed with wishing we could be them.

Gossip is another large part of high school that is extremely unhealthy for those who participate. We all need to understand that other people's business is not ours. Some people joke about how they "need the tea," when in reality, they don't. Discussing other people's personal lives, especially if it's someone we don't even know, is never a positive thing. We can casually talk about something that's happening in someone else's life without even realizing it's something that heavily impacts them. To put things into perspective, it helps to picture the hardest part of

our lives, and imagine others discussing it with their friends like it's a casual joke. It's extremely hurtful, and it can easily magnify and worsen someone's personal issues.

Insulting others behind their backs, comparing ourselves to other people, and gossiping about peers harms both other people and ourselves. Of course, I am not innocent in these areas; I have struggled with every single one of these regressive ways of acting. My intention is not to judge or tell people what to do; it is to share what I have learned after making a conscious effort to let go of these things. In distancing ourselves from living our lives obsessed with other people, we can better learn to love ourselves, be comfortable in our own lives, and love other people. It ultimately makes us happier and more free. Of course, doing so is far easier said than done. It would be extremely difficult to stop doing all these things at once. So, the best thing to do from the beginning is being mindful of what we say and focus our attention on, trying to be more careful with what we do and say. All we can do is put in our best effort. This way, we can move toward a much more progressive life of being kinder not only to others, but also to ourselves!



Openly discuss Holocaust

by Chloe Mendoza
Media Production Editor



I remember one day in middle school, my teacher said something along the lines of, "Raise your hand if you know what the Holocaust is." About half the hands in my

class lifted to the air. I was so confused. As someone raised Jewish from birth, the Holocaust had been something fundamentally integrated into my religious education, which I received at the Hebrew school I went to three times a week until I was bat mitzvahed at the age of thirteen. At the point in middle school when my teacher asked us that question, I was in the middle of the required year-long study at my Hebrew school where I learned every name and event associated with the Holocaust. Something I had never considered was that to some people, this huge, dark part of our history never even happened.

Yes, it's difficult teaching a bunch of kids about the mass execution of 6 million people. Textbooks and lesson plans can treat it like something to tiptoe around, a subject so sensitive it's best if we barely discuss it and then pretend like it never happened. That's not to say that's how all educators approach the subject, because I've had my fair share of teachers, particularly at LGHS, who have made sure our students are fully educated on their history. But not every school is LGHS. Sometimes textbooks and teachers fall short in teaching about the Holocaust by trying to keep it objective; no one wants to scare a bunch of kids, so they gloss over some of the most horrific (yet necessary) parts to make it the least awful it can be. But that's the thing. When you hear about the Holocaust, you're going to be scared and you're going to feel awful,

because it was scary and awful. Without that fear and horror, you're not really understanding what happened.

Our textbooks are old. I remember a teacher last year telling our class how our history books at school are from the late 80s, which was alright because it had the majority of the information that was absolutely necessary for us to know. But we need to take into account the minority of information cut out. A study of late 1970's textbooks by scholar Glen Pate revealed that the median amount of coverage of the Holocaust was twenty lines per text. Twenty lines. How can twenty lines encapsulate years of pain, oppression, death, and heartbreak? Can twenty lines give you a full understanding of tragedy? Did twenty lines teach you the names of the doctors who ran mutilation practices, did they teach you about the nights Jewish homes were broken into and ravaged by their country's own police, did they teach you about the different types of warfare the Jews created to protect themselves, about the children made into prisoners, the children made into soldiers?



Maybe those are all just details. Maybe you don't need to know everything about the Holocaust in order to understand. But when you start cutting away pieces of information to keep a concise narrative, and you just keep cutting and cutting, there's not much left to learn from.

When I hear about Holocaust deniers, it makes my blood boil. The thing is, some of these people are victims themselves, victims of an insufficient education. When you can't understand a tragedy, it's easier for false facts presented by someone else to sway you. There needs to be more information and awareness in our texts on this tragedy. No, not everyone needs the years-long education on the Holocaust that I received in Hebrew school. But they need more than twenty lines. (Source: T. Fallace)

Respect mental illnesses

by Sami Linden
Graphics Designer



The bell rings for tutorial; 10 seconds later, you're scrambling to finish that one assignment you forgot to do last night. Working against the clock, you finally finish and

catch up with your friends to head to third period. "Guys, I just had a panic attack trying to finish that paper, I can't believe I made it!" you exclaim, exasperated from all the stress. Your friends all nod in agreement, laugh it off, and move on with the conversation. The same situation repeats itself on any given day of the week.

Conversations like these, where a serious symptom of a mental health disorder is casually brought up and almost ignored completely, mitigate and invalidate the severity of these problems. On a daily basis, we casually claim we had an anxiety attack or hyperventilated even if we didn't. If we treat panic attacks and other symptoms as casual everyday experiences, how does that change the perception of anxiety disorders and serious mental health issues as a whole?

But isn't your stress still an issue? Yes it is, but it's also important to highlight the differences between everyday stress and a diagnosable anxiety disorder. Maybe you can't tell the difference, but that doesn't mean either of the issues deserve any less serious recognition. Everyone experiences some degree of stress or anxious feelings during their lives, even on a daily basis. However, these emotions are usually related to a specific event or situation and end at some point. And while it may not be a clear at the

time, average stress can alleviate itself with time. It may even push someone to work harder.

Anxiety disorders, on the other hand, may not have a simple solution. Those who suffer from these mental health disorders often deal with many different symptoms that manifest themselves in various ways. And more often than not, victims constantly experience symptoms such as nervousness, fear, and worry. Panic disorders lead to recurrent panic attacks or intense feelings of psychological and even physical distress. These symptoms can cause someone to avoid a circumstances that act as a triggers for them, severely impacting their daily routine.

While we should normalize serious and productive conversations about mental health, we shouldn't encourage jokes or casual comments about them.

Accepting it as a common issue can allow for peers to reach out to one another and find helpful resources. Treating it as a joke and making inaccurate exaggerations takes this possibility away. It changes mental health issues from something that needs to be taken seriously to something that is overlooked and forgotten about. We can't create a safe atmosphere if we do not accept these issues for what they actually are.

The reality of it is, any one of us could suffer from any kind of mental health disorder at some point in our lives. Serious mental health issues are more common than you think, and anyone's feelings towards their own mental health should be validated and accepted. We should not disregard anyone's concerns about their own mental health, or assume they are lying or making a false claim. But exaggerating a minor event and turning it into something that you know it isn't takes that ability away from someone else.

(Sources: Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Huffpost, HealthStatus)



White House nepotism undermines independent thought

by Lauren Sanders
Editor-in-Chief

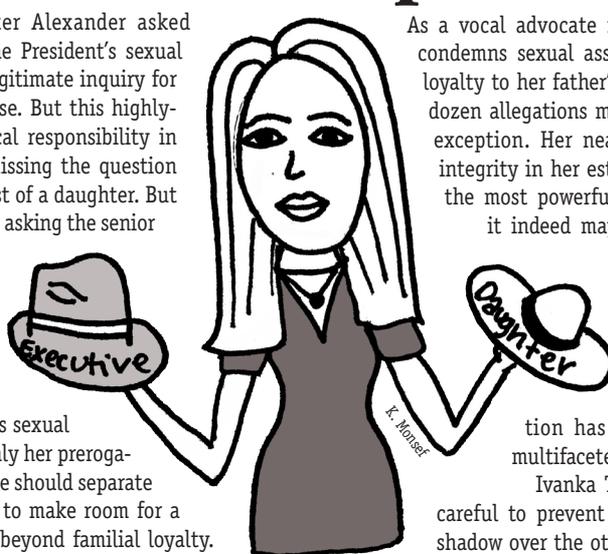


Most people wear two (or four, or five) different hats: a corporate manager who guides white water rafting trips, a literature teacher who instructs recreational Zumba classes on the weekends, or even a stay-at-home mother who toggles between caring for her children and drinking rosé with her book club. From maintaining multiple

jobs to dealing with disparate demographic groups, our behavior may change from one setting to the next; yet, an important part of maturation is finding a way to compartmentalize, shaping our expectations and actions to fit their respective situations. Ivanka Trump is no different. Among many other roles, she is most notably the president's daughter and a senior White House advisor. These two positions inherently brush up against one another, but there are certain situations where their coexistence serves as a dangerous scapegoat and their separation is imperative.

NBC News correspondent Peter Alexander asked Ms. Trump for her position on the President's sexual assault allegations – a perfectly legitimate inquiry for a senior advisor to the White House. But this highly-ranked official shirked her political responsibility in the name of her family ties, dismissing the question as "pretty inappropriate" to request of a daughter. But America isn't asking a daughter. It's asking the senior White House advisor who, under any other circumstance, would be expected to offer an objective answer.

Ms. Trump claims that she has a right "as a daughter" to believe the president's denial of his sexual misconduct allegations. It is certainly her prerogative to believe the President, but she should separate her conflicting identities in order to make room for a logical line of reasoning to do so beyond familial loyalty.



As a vocal advocate for the "Time's Up" movement which condemns sexual assault, Ms. Trump's blind and complete loyalty to her father's supposed innocence despite over one dozen allegations makes her stance appear to be a special exception. Her nearly baseless defense undermines her integrity in her esteemed position as a key role in one of the most powerful administrations on the globe. While it indeed may be difficult to balance the expectations that come with her two distinct duties, it is necessary for the precedent that will be set by this particular administration. The Trumps found a loophole in laws against nepotism, and this circumvention has the potential to indirectly condone multifaceted behaviors that bear ulterior motives. Ivanka Trump wears many hats – she must be careful to prevent the wide brim of one from casting a shadow over the other.