

## PARENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

**RELIVING YOUR OWN MEMORIES.** The book starts with this line: “Mention the words ‘middle school’ and most adults groan.” What memories do you bring to the table, and how have they impacted how you feel about your child going through middle school?

**DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE.** Do you think you’ll give your child specific advice or parent them differently because of your personal experience?

**ANTICIPATING THE PHASE.** What are your biggest hopes and fears for your child?

### CHAPTER 1: WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL?

**FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND CONFIDENCE.** Kids’ confidence can start to plummet in middle school. Why do you think that happens? What do you think parents can do to prevent that nosedive?

**THINKING ABOUT THE TEN KEY SKILLS.** Which of the ten skills do you think your child lacks? Which strengths do they already possess? Which skills do you think have been most essential in your own life? Is there a specific skill on this list that you wish you had developed when you were your child’s age?

## PART I: Values and Integrity

### CHAPTER 2: MAKING RESPONSIBLE, HEALTHY, AND ETHICAL DECISIONS

**PROBLEM-SOLVING.** Research shows that critical thinking more strongly predicts life events than intelligence. Why do you think critical thinking is so important? How can you teach your child to solve problems on their own?

**DEALING WITH TRICKY SITUATIONS.** Middle schoolers (and teens in general) are wired to seek novelty. How can you provide your child with fun, safe opportunities to stretch, experiment, and grow?

**STARTING WITH TRUST.** How can you balance your child's desire for privacy with their need for teaching, coaching, and support? How can you know when to pull back and when to increase your involvement? When your middle schooler breaches your trust, how can you get them back on the right path without damaging your relationship?

**INSTILLING PURPOSE.** Kids who engage in personally meaningful activities are less likely to make unhealthy or unsafe choices. How can you help your child identify pursuits that matter to them? What gave you purpose as a tween and teen?

**SLOWING DOWN.** How can you set your child up for success so they're less likely to make impulsive choices? What elements do you think need to be in place to set the stage for good decision-making?

### CHAPTER 3: FOSTERING HONESTY

**STAYING CALM.** Why is it so challenging to stay calm and nonreactive when your child lies? What makes dishonesty such a button pusher?

**DETERMINING THE ROOT CAUSE.** What are some of the reasons kids lie? Why does the root cause matter? How can you figure out what's going on with your child?

**PROVIDING A RUNWAY.** How can you make it easier for your child to admit the truth? How can you model honesty? What's the difference

between an offensive lie and a defensive lie? Do you remember lying to your parents when you were your child's age?

**HAVING IT OUT.** It's counterintuitive, but arguing is communicative. What do you think kids are trying to accomplish when they fight with you? Why is it so important to them to know what you're thinking?

**TREATING THE LIE & THE TRANSGRESSION SEPARATELY.** Experts advise imposing different consequences for a lie and the problematic behavior. Why is it important to separate the two?

#### **CHAPTER 4: ENCOURAGING KINDNESS AND EMPATHY**

**PRIORITIZING COMPASSION.** How can you reinforce your child's image as someone strong enough to do the right thing?

**KEEPING IT REAL.** How can you underscore the importance of kindness, yet still acknowledge that your child won't like everyone? Why is it so important to be authentic when having these conversations?

**ROLE MODELING.** How can you model kindness in your own life? What can you do as a family to instill this value? Can you identify any growth areas for yourself? Sometimes your child has strengths that you don't have. What do you admire about how your child treats others?

**IDENTIFYING THE CAUSE.** What are some of the reasons that kids lash out at peers? What are some strategies to help them cope with negative feelings—such as jealousy or anger—that may be preventing them from being their best selves?

**SETTING EXPECTATIONS AROUND BEHAVIOR.** You can't legislate feelings, but you can be firm about behavior. Why is shaming a child ineffective? Why is it important that they view themselves as a good person?

#### **CHAPTER 5: EMBRACING DIFFERENCE IN SELF AND OTHERS**

**ENCOURAGING AUTHENTIC INCLUSION.** What's the difference between true social engagement and acts of charity? How can you model inclusion in your own life? What can you do to help kids move beyond fear to understanding?

**PROVIDING WINDOWS AND MIRRORS.** Why is it important for kids to see visual representations of themselves? How can you expand their worldview?

**EXAMINING BIAS.** No one is immune from bias. Do you think it's important for parents to acknowledge their own attitudes and associations? If so, why? How can you help your child put themselves in other people's shoes?

**EXPLORING IDENTITY.** Why is it important to talk about your family's traditions and their identity? How does building your child's sense of self help them accept their own and others' uniqueness? What is most significant to you about your own identity?

## **CHAPTER 6: MANAGING SHIFTING FRIENDSHIPS**

**CHASING POPULARITY.** When your child desperately wants to be popular, how can you redirect their energy elsewhere? What's the downside to chasing "likes" and "follows" on social media? What questions can you ask your child to get them thinking about the difference between ephemeral popularity and enduring friendship? Was popularity important to you in middle school? How has your attitude toward friendship evolved over the years?

**CULTIVATING GOOD MATCHES.** How can you leverage your child's strengths and interests to help them find right-fit friends? Why is it protective to have friends from settings other than school? How can you give your kid an assist if they're struggling to make friends? Can you recall a time in middle school when you felt insecure about your place in the pecking order?

**GIVING THEM A PATH FORWARD.** If your child is acting mean, how can you break that pattern? Why is it important to criticize their behavior as opposed to their character?

**TAMPING DOWN MELODRAMA.** It can be tough for kids to extract themselves from social drama. How can you teach them to disengage when they're not a core player?

## **CHAPTER 7: DEALING WITH BULLYING**

**STAYING SAFE.** How can you help your child stay safe and stand up for themselves? How can you gather information about what’s happening at school? When should you betray your child’s confidence, and how can you explain your reasoning to them?

**REGAINING FOOTING.** How can you help your child recover emotionally when they’ve been bullied? How can you change the narrative so they don’t let the bullying experience define them? How can you help your child stop intrusive thoughts from getting in their way? When should you seek outside professional help for them?

**DEFINING BULLYING.** What’s the difference between a kid who’s acting mean and a kid who’s bullying someone? Why is that distinction important? What could happen if a parent moves too fast to demand consequences? Why should schools tread carefully before bringing a bullied child and their aggressor together?

**HELPING THE CHILD DOING THE BULLYING.** What are the potential long-term negative consequences for the aggressive child? How do you think you’d react if the school told you your child was targeting a classmate?

**BEING AN UPSTANDER.** Not every child feels comfortable standing up to a bully. What are some other steps they can take to support a classmate who’s been wounded? Why do you think it’s so hard for kids to simply say, “That’s wrong,” or, “That’s mean?”

## **CHAPTER 8: COPING WITH GOSSIP AND SOCIAL TURMOIL**

**CONTAINING GOSSIP.** What makes gossip such a hard-to-remedy and painful form of relational aggression? How is it different from other forms of bullying?

**FEELING RAW.** How can you help your child when they come home devastated that people are gossiping about them?

**ADDRESSING YOUR OWN ANXIETY.** What personal issues do you bring to the table? Do you think gossip is different today than when you were growing up?

**SPREADING THE MEANNESS.** Why do you think many kids feel compelled to tell their friends about mean comments others make about them? What do you think they should be doing with the information? How can a child avoid engaging in gossip in the first place?

**PROTECTING THEIR REPUTATION.** How can you mitigate the damage once a rumor has been spread? If you went through a similar experience, what were the takeaways for you?

## **CHAPTER 9: GROWING UP SEXUALLY HEALTHY**

**ADMITTING DISCOMFORT.** What do you think makes it difficult for some parents to broach sexuality with their child? How can you move beyond that awkwardness? Do you think you have a good sense of what your child knows about sex? How much information (or misinformation) did you have at their age?

**TALKING ABOUT VALUES.** How does articulating your family's values provide a framework for talking about sexuality and relationships? If you had to name your family's top five values, what would they be? How does each one relate to healthy sexuality?

**EXPLAINING CONSENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT.** Given what you know about middle schoolers, how might they approach issues such as consent or harassment differently than adults? How can parents broach this topic?

**ADDRESSING STEREOTYPES AND GENDER DIFFERENCES.** What gender stereotypes do you think your child has internalized? What are the different norms and expectations for boys and girls? How can parents avoid perpetuating stereotypes?

## **CHAPTER 10: PREPARING FOR LOVE**

**SHARING YOUR WISDOM.** What life lessons have you learned from both good and bad relationships that you'd like to share with your child? What are your own memories of middle school crushes or first dating experiences?

**FACTORING IN OUTSIDE INFLUENCES.** How can you use the media to bring up love? What realistic and unrealistic portrayals of love do you think your child has picked up from the media? What was your attitude toward dating or relationships when you were a teen?

**PREPARING KIDS FOR EMOTIONAL RISKS.** What do you want your child to understand about heartbreak and emotional vulnerability?

**IMPARTING THE NUANCES.** Do you think your child knows the difference between a crush, physical attraction, and enduring love? What do you wish you had known growing up that you'd like to share with them?

## **CHAPTER 11: ENCOURAGING BALANCE AND SETTING REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS**

**ENCOURAGING BALANCE.** What makes it difficult for a middle schooler today to lead a balanced life? How can you help your child recognize when their plate is full? Do you think you struggle with balance in your life?

**EASING PERFORMANCE PRESSURE.** One middle school principal recommends that you “grow the tree you’ve got.” What does that mean to you in regard to your child? Do you think your expectations are clear and reasonable? Did you prioritize pleasing your parents when you were your child’s age?

**COMBATING PERFECTIONISM.** How can you help your child set realistic, attainable goals? How can you keep the mood light when tensions run high? Are you hard on yourself? How can you model self-compassion?

## **CHAPTER 12: TACKLING HOMEWORK**

**DEALING WITH AVOIDANCE.** What are some of the reasons a middle schooler might avoid homework?

**GIVING KIDS AGENCY.** How can you avoid a power struggle with your child? What kinds of choices can you give them so they feel a sense of control?

**ENGAGING WITH SCHOOL.** When should you get the school involved? Why is the school better equipped to deal with quality control and accountability?

**NAMING NEGATIVE VOICES.** How can you depersonalize the struggle so kids stay positive and maintain a growth mind-set? Was homework a struggle for you?

### **CHAPTER 13: INTERVENING WHEN SCHOOL IS A STRUGGLE**

**QUESTIONING VERSUS ACCUSING.** One educator is quoted as saying, “Most questions are really accusations with a question mark at the end.” What does that statement mean to you? What are some questions you can ask that get at the root of your child’s struggle and also treat them as the expert in their own lives?

**PARTNERING WITH THE SCHOOL.** What are some effective strategies for working with the school? How can educators help you identify the underlying issues? Did any learning, attentional, or emotional issues get in your way when you were a student?

**COPING WITH SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS.** A learning or attentional issue can impact a child’s friendships. How can parents help kids explain or compensate for their social difficulties?

**LEVERAGING STRENGTHS.** How can teachers help a struggling child maintain their reputation in the classroom? What’s the upside to spending more time focusing on a child’s strengths instead of their deficits?

### **CHAPTER 14: CONNECTING WITH BOYS AND HELPING THEM CONNECT WITH OTHERS**

**CHALLENGING MASCULINE EXPECTATIONS.** What are some of the pressures boys face today? Do you think the middle school environment makes it easier or harder for boys to buck stereotypes? Do you think it’s important to challenge these norms? What role can fathers play? What are some myths about boys that you think society perpetuates?



**ACCEPTING YOUR CHILD FOR WHO THEY ARE.** Why is a parent’s acceptance and unwavering love so critical during this developmental phase? What are “high-yield” conversations, and how do they give boys a sense of security?

**CONNECTING AND CONVERSING.** What are some tips and tricks for initiating meaningful dialogue with your son, especially if he’s reserved?

**NORMALIZING EMOTIONAL INTIMACY.** One expert notes that boys are quicker to walk away when there’s a hiccup in a relationship. Do you think that’s true? How can you teach your son to repair a rift in a friendship?

**NURTURING CURIOSITY.** How can you teach your son the art of listening and asking questions? How does curiosity help boys forge relationships?

## **CHAPTER 15: RAISING STRONG, EMPOWERED GIRLS**

**BUILDING CONFIDENCE.** Surveys show that girls take a bigger hit to their confidence than boys during the middle school years. How can you help your daughter continue to take risks and maintain her sense of self? When we tell girls to be strong and brave, are we layering on yet another set of expectations?

**STRENGTHENING FATHER-DAUGHTER BONDS.** Why do you think fathers tend to pull back when girls enter puberty? Research shows that might be when they need them most. What’s different or unique about the father-daughter relationship?

**DEFINING LEADERSHIP.** Many teen boys and girls (along with their parents) are biased against female leaders. How can we define leadership more broadly so both extroverted and introverted girls feel they can make a difference?

**IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF SUPPORT.** What role can mentors play in your daughter’s life? Have mentors been impactful in your life?

**DREAMING BIG.** Do you think girls are less likely to take credit for their work? If so, how can parents encourage them to own their success?

How can parents convey that nice, kind girls also can be competitive, ambitious, and goal-oriented?

## **CHAPTER 16: TAKING RISKS IN A WORLD OF NO'S**

**DEALING WITH SETBACKS.** Recovering from failure is hard for anyone, but it's especially hard at twelve or thirteen when you feel like the world is watching you. How can you help your child move forward with optimism after hitting a bump in the road? What makes middle school the perfect time to develop resilience?

**QUITTING REQUIRES BRAVERY.** Why is quitting often viewed in a negative light? Are there times when quitting makes sense? Why do some parents have a hard time letting their child drop an activity? What have you quit in your own life, and how do you feel about those choices now?

**INTERPRETING FEEDBACK.** What might make a middle schooler more likely to misread feedback? How can you help your child accurately interpret social cues?

**SCAFFOLDING RISK.** You and your child might have very different ideas about what constitutes a risk. How can you help your child tackle a fear, and how can you model risk-taking in your own life?

## **CHAPTER 17: MANAGING SETBACKS AND SHORING UP RESILIENCE**

**IDENTIFYING DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY.** Do you think you'd know if your child were struggling emotionally? How can parents maximize the chance their child will reach out for help if they're suffering?

**PROCESSING EVENTS IN THE NEWS.** From school shootings to terrorism, kids are barraged with the 24-7 news cycle. How can you help your child process upsetting events, particularly those you may be having difficulty making sense of yourself?

**LOOSENING CONTROL.** How much freedom do you feel comfortable giving your middle schooler? What are the signs that your child is ready for more autonomy? How much freedom did you have at their age? How is the world different today?

**REGULATING EMOTIONS.** Middle schoolers can have intense highs and lows. How can you help your child build a “toolbox” of coping strategies? What approaches have worked for them in the past, and what works best for you?

## **CHAPTER 18: PREPARING KIDS FOR A CHANGING WORLD**

**CREATING INNOVATORS.** How can you expose your child to innovation and give them opportunities to practice creative problem-solving?

**CULTIVATING “BIG LIKINGS.”** What’s the benefit of fanning the flames on “big likings” rather than focusing on passions?

**DEVELOPING CURIOSITY.** It can be hard to know how to prepare kids for such a rapidly changing and uncertain world. What skills do you think your child will need most?

**COACHING VERSUS CONTROLLING.** What’s the difference between the two parenting approaches? Why is coaching more likely to produce kids who can resolve conflict or solve problems? What style do you use most often?

## **CONCLUSION**

**ADAPTING TO CHANGE.** Is change hard for you? What have you learned from watching your child adapt to new routines, expectations, and friend groups?

## EDUCATOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

**DRAWING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.** The book starts with this line: “Mention the words ‘middle school’ and most adults groan.” What memories do you bring to the table, and how do they impact your teaching? What do you think makes this phase unique?

**ENGAGING WITH KIDS.** Do you think you engage with students differently because of your own experience? What initially drew you to work with this age group?

**ADDRESSING CHALLENGES.** What are middle schoolers’ biggest social and academic challenges? How can educators ease students’ transition to middle school?

### CHAPTER 1: WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL?

**PRESERVING CREATIVITY AND CONFIDENCE.** Surveys show that kids’ confidence can plummet in middle school. Have you seen any evidence that this is true? Have you observed differences in confidence between male and female students? How does this impact your teaching?

**ACQUIRING THE TEN KEY SKILLS.** Which of the ten skills do you think students most need in middle school? Which ones do you think will

be most critical to their success and happiness? Which of these skills do you think have been most essential in your own life?

## **CHAPTER 2: MAKING RESPONSIBLE, HEALTHY, AND ETHICAL DECISIONS**

**PROBLEM-SOLVING.** Research shows that critical thinking more strongly predicts life events than intelligence. How can teachers impart problem-solving skills?

**HELPING STUDENTS STRETCH.** Middle schoolers (and teens in general) are wired to seek novelty. How can educators help students feel grounded and purposeful? What are ways students can stretch, experiment, and grow at school?

**STARTING WITH TRUST.** How can teachers build a trusting relationship with students who break rules or push the envelope? How can they get them back on the right track without damaging their relationship? What is your school's approach to discipline, and do you think it's effective? When do you think it's helpful to share your own mistakes with students?

## **CHAPTER 3: FOSTERING HONESTY**

**STAYING CALM.** What's your approach when students lie or plagiarize? What do you wish parents understood about this age group when it comes to making mistakes?

**DETERMINING THE ROOT CAUSE.** What are some of the reasons your students lie? Why does the root cause matter?

## **CHAPTER 4: ENCOURAGING KINDNESS AND EMPATHY**

**KEEPING IT REAL.** How can you build a positive school climate? How can you encourage kindness while acknowledging that middle schoolers will choose their own friends and won't like everyone?

**ROLE MODELING.** Like parents, teachers are role models. How can you set a positive example? What are effective ways to respond when you notice that a child is targeting others?

**SETTING EXPECTATIONS AROUND BEHAVIOR.** You can't legislate feelings, but you can be firm about behavior. Why is shaming a student ineffective? How can you use homeroom or advisory time to build understanding among classmates, or to solve sensitive interpersonal issues?

**BUILDING EMPATHY.** The book mentions the Shadow a Student exercise, which is designed to help educators understand students' experience. Why is it so important for educators to have empathy for their students? What does having empathy look like in the classroom? Can you recall a time when you made an incorrect assumption about a student?

## **CHAPTER 5: EMBRACING DIFFERENCE IN SELF AND OTHERS**

**ENCOURAGING AUTHENTIC INCLUSION.** What's the difference between true social engagement and acts of charity? How can educators help children move beyond fear to understanding? What can they do to promote inclusion everywhere from the classroom to the cafeteria?

**PROVIDING WINDOWS AND MIRRORS.** Why is it important for kids to see visual representations of themselves? Does your curriculum expand students' worldview? How can teachers help kids take pride in their identity?

**EXAMINING BIAS.** No one is immune to bias. As an educator, how often do you think about your own biases? What steps do you take to address them?

## **CHAPTER 6: MANAGING SHIFTING FRIENDSHIPS**

**FINDING THEIR PLACE.** How can educators give an assist to students who are struggling to find their place in the social hierarchy?

**CULTIVATING GOOD MATCHES.** What should teachers consider when forming groups or assigning team projects? What role can teachers play in clique busting or disrupting negative social dynamics?

## **CHAPTER 7: DEALING WITH BULLYING**

**EXAMINING SCHOOL CLIMATE.** Is bullying a problem in your school? How does your school approach the issue? How can educators help a student who has been targeted?

**RESOLVING CONFLICT.** Why is it so important that administrators tread lightly before bringing an aggressor and target together?

**DEFINING BULLYING.** Do you think parents understand the difference between a child who's acting mean and one who's bullying someone? Why is that distinction important?

## **CHAPTER 8: COPING WITH GOSSIP AND SOCIAL TURMOIL**

**CONTAINING GOSSIP.** What makes gossip such a hard-to-remedy and painful form of relational aggression, and how can it leak into the school setting? What role can schools play when it comes to putting a stop to it or helping students return to normalcy?

**ADDING SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE MIX.** How has social media changed your job? Why do you think students feel so powerless when they're the subject of gossip? Have you had to deal with any relational aggression in your own life? If so, how has that experience informed your teaching and the way you relate to middle schoolers?

## **CHAPTER 9: GROWING UP SEXUALLY HEALTHY**

**GIVING OUT INFORMATION.** Does your school offer sex education or health and wellness classes? Do you think students are getting the information they need to make good choices? What do you see as the school's role, and what do you see as the parents' role?

**EXPLAINING CONSENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT.** Does it surprise you that middle schoolers struggle with many of the same issues surrounding consent and harassment as adults? Are you seeing any evidence of this in your school?

**ADDRESSING STEREOTYPES AND GENDER DIFFERENCES.** When you were growing up, what ideas did you absorb about gender expect-

tations? Do you think societal norms are different today? How can educators avoid perpetuating stereotypes in the school setting?

## **CHAPTER 10: PREPARING FOR LOVE**

**SHARING YOUR WISDOM.** Do students ever ask you for romantic advice or pose questions about your own relationships? What are their biggest concerns? What do you think is appropriate to disclose about yourself? What are your own memories of middle school crushes or first dating experiences?

**INCORPORATING RELATIONSHIP TENETS INTO THE CURRICULUM.** Do you think teachers should be talking about healthy relationships with students? If so, how can you find natural extensions in the curriculum?

## **CHAPTER 11: ENCOURAGING BALANCE AND SETTING REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS**

**SEEKING BALANCE.** What factors make it difficult for students to lead balanced lives? How can you help students manage perfectionist tendencies? In your community, what are the norms around achievement? Do you think they need to be reexamined? How can educators keep the mood light?

**MANAGING EXPECTATIONS.** How can educators help students set reasonable, attainable goals? How does your own temperament influence how you advise students?

## **CHAPTER 12: TACKLING HOMEWORK**

**GIVING KIDS AGENCY.** How can teachers work with students who avoid homework? How can they depersonalize the struggle so kids stay positive and solution-oriented?

**ENGAGING WITH PARENTS.** What do you do when your student is battling their parents over homework? What do you think are parents' biggest misconceptions about homework?



### **CHAPTER 13: INTERVENING WHEN SCHOOL IS A STRUGGLE**

**IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT ISSUES.** What are some questions you can ask to get at the root of a student's difficulties? What do you think it means to treat kids as the expert in their own lives?

**PARTNERING WITH PARENTS.** What's the role of the school in addressing learning issues, and what's the role of parents? What factors might strain that parent/school partnership?

**GIVING STRUGGLING STUDENTS A BOOST.** How can teachers leverage struggling students' strengths, especially when their classmates grow impatient with them?

### **CHAPTER 14: CONNECTING WITH BOYS AND HELPING THEM CONNECT WITH OTHERS**

**CHALLENGING MASCULINE EXPECTATIONS.** What are some of the pressures middle school boys face today? Do you think the school environment makes it easier or harder for them to buck stereotypes? How can educators tackle stereotypes about masculinity?

**SETTING BOUNDARIES.** Middle school boys can be physical or flip-pant, and not every boy enjoys those kinds of interactions. How can educators help boys recognize and respect their classmates' boundaries?

**NURTURING CURIOSITY.** Researchers have found that teaching boys interviewing skills helps them forge relationships. How does showing curiosity help boys connect with others more intimately? How can you foster that trait in the classroom?

### **CHAPTER 15: RAISING STRONG, EMPOWERED GIRLS**

**BUILDING CONFIDENCE.** Why do you think girls take a bigger hit to their confidence than boys during middle school? How can educators help them maintain a strong sense of self?

**DEFINING LEADERSHIP.** Many teen boys and girls are biased against female leaders. How can schools encourage girls to take on leadership roles?

How can they convey that leaders come in many different forms, and that reserved girls can make a difference too?

**DREAMING BIG.** How can educators encourage girls to take credit for their work and to own their success? How can they convey that nice, kind girls also can be ambitious, competitive, and goal-oriented?

#### **CHAPTER 16: TAKING RISKS IN A WORLD OF NO'S**

**TAKING RISKS.** Recovering from failure is hard for anyone, but it's especially hard at twelve or thirteen when you feel like the world is watching you. What makes middle school such a prime time to develop resilience?

**SCAFFOLDING RISK.** How can teachers help students tackle fears? How can they make it safe to take risks in the classroom?

#### **CHAPTER 17: MANAGING SETBACKS AND SHORING UP RESILIENCE**

**IDENTIFYING DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY.** How can educators normalize help-seeking behavior so students don't suffer in silence? Do you feel equipped to support students who present as anxious or depressed? Does your school have enough resources to address students' mental health needs? How do students' emotional challenges impact their performance or behavior at school?

**BUILDING COMMUNITY.** How can schools establish a caring community in which students look out for one another? How can educators incorporate social-emotional learning into the curriculum?

**REGULATING EMOTIONS.** Middle schoolers can have intense highs and lows. How can teachers help students identify and utilize positive coping strategies?

#### **CHAPTER 18: PREPARING KIDS FOR A CHANGING WORLD**

**CREATING INNOVATORS.** How can middle schools give students opportunities to solve problems and engage in experiential learning? How can teachers encourage kids to be inventive?

**TEACHING COLLABORATION.** When it comes to group projects, loud voices can drown out quieter contributors. What can teachers do to make sure that everyone plays a role and has the chance to work on skills such as teamwork and conflict resolution?

### **CONCLUSION**

**ADAPTING TO CHANGE.** Is change hard for you personally? What have you learned from watching your students adapt to new routines, expectations, and friend groups?