

# Take Responsibility

## What does it mean?

**I act with integrity** - I adhere to my moral and ethical principles.

**I am human** - I make mistakes and own them.

**I don't pretend something didn't happen** - I admit when I'm right and wrong.

**I do not blame** - I focus on the issue, not the person, and seek resolution.

**I do not dwell on what went wrong** - I focus on what to do next.

A sign of wisdom and maturity is when you come to terms with the realization that your decisions cause your rewards and consequences. You are responsible for your life, and your ultimate success depends on the choices you make. - Denis Waitley, author and coach



# Take Responsibility

Looks like:

Sounds like:

Feels like:



# Take Responsibility

## Looks like:

Fixing my own problems

Pausing to think

Doing my best work

Taking initiative

Having focus

## Sounds like:

"I choose to..."

"I decided to..."

"Let's focus on the issue"

"I am working to understand."

"I'll give it my best and  
seek help when needed."

"I admit I was wrong."

"Let's think through our  
alternatives,  
consequences  
and rewards."

## Feels like:

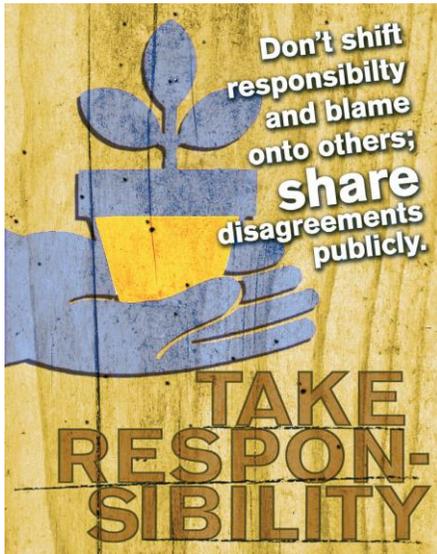
Doing the right thing

Being in charge of choices

Being empowered

Being genuine and honest

Being in control of my own  
happiness



# Take Responsibility

## Discussion Starter Questions:

What does "taking responsibility" look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Play the blame game: List common blaming statements. Change each to a statement to reflect taking responsibility.

When you get involved in the blame game, how does it feel? How do you get out of it?

Explain the difference between taking responsibility, making excuses and/or finding blame. What does each look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Identify a time when you took responsibility for hurting someone. How did it feel? How did it impact the person or group you were speaking to?

If you have both made errors, how can you own your piece without owning it all?

How do you determine when it is appropriate for responsibility to be shared and when it is time to take full responsibility?

Describe a time you took responsibility for an action that resulted in a positive consequence. What led you to make that choice? How did it feel?

Consider a time you engaged in an action that resulted in a negative outcome and describe your level of responsibility.

What are the rewards for being a person who takes responsibility for his/her behavior?

## Situations to Discuss:

- You are a member of a five person group assigned to do a small research project. The team identifies the topic and each participant agrees to complete a task prior to their next meeting. Two people have done their jobs. One student states she was ill. The other two state that they did not complete their tasks because they couldn't find a time to collaborate. What could happen? What responses will be destructive? What responses will lead to a positive outcome?
- You are with your friends and things are getting a little crazy. A couple of them 'cross the line' and an authority figure sees and reports this to the cops. Each of you is brought in for questioning. What does taking responsibility look like, sound like and feel like in this situation? (This is a generic situation. Students may relate to an incident of vandalism, drinking, bullying, joy riding, etc.)
- You are in class. The teacher needs to step out and asks a student leader to continue the discussion. This student points at another student and says, "Let's hear from the... (Gay, autistic, fat, brainy) kid." As a bystander, how do you respond to this? As the target of the words, how do you respond? What does taking responsibility look like, sound like and feel like in this situation? What are your personal guidelines as the bystander?
- You and your friend get into an argument and both say things that hurt. How will you take personal responsibility for your role? What would share responsibility look like, sound like, feel like?