

Menlo's Parent Ed Conference 2/3/18 – Ana Homayoun Social Media Wellness

Ana Homayoun focuses on our relationship with digital world. Her work with students is about developing their own values for work and life. She's the founder of Green Ivy Educational Consulting. Author of 3 books, educator and school consultant.

She started by working with students to clean out their backpacks. She gathered 2 garbage bags of papers and set up a binder system. That led to a book: [That Crumpled Paper Was Due Last Week](#)

Ana showed video about social media – 3 tips

1. Encourage healthy socialization
2. Effective self regulation – focus on 1 task at a time
3. Overall safety – promote social, emotional safety online and in real life

Ana surveyed students. One student admitted that she should give her phone to her mom at night. How many of you would like an extra 7-9 hours free time per week?!

Menlo survey of MS and US students revealed that everyone would like to spend more time with friends, family, hobbies, and school activities. Out of 20 schools that Ana surveyed, Menlo students were the highest in wanting to spend time with their families!

Parents need to speak the language of the digital world. And help their students gain a sense of balance.

She has learned that people who loved their careers the most had started with something they loved to do in MS or US. Today kids don't have time to figure out what they want to do.

She visited schools nationwide that implemented tablets and computer programs. With all the benefits that these devices provide on organization, there also needs to be a plan for social media wellness.

When she started working, there was no social media. Previous distractions were food, dog, etc.

In 2014, she was offered a book deal for social media wellness. At the time, the average student received 1500 text messages/per month. 2 years later, the average was 4k texts per month. And that doesn't include Snapchat. Today, most students don't send texts. They send Snaps.

Ana has seen a range of parents. From the permissive mom who says "I trust my son," to the fear based mom who says "I don't have to worry because I have full control of his Instagram." Many of those kids have private Instagrams that their parents are unaware of. Ana wants to bridge the gap between the spectrum. Parental awareness is important. Learn the lingo. Be part of the conversation.

If you have a public profile, you have an audience. If you have an audience of more than 1 person, then it's public.

The idea of direct messages is that it feels like private commentary. But all private messages have the potential to become public. We don't want something from 7th grade to end up on a job survey. So we need to convince them to make intentional choices early.

There are anonymous apps that kids use because they want to know what people really think of them.

Video and Live Feed are the new social media.

She asked students in 10th grade when they thought people should get smart phones and most answered "not until 8th grade."

Ana gave example of a girl who comes home from a dance and thought it was best night ever. She goes upstairs and checks her phone then learns there was an after-party that she wasn't invited to. Now it's the worst night ever.

You can download an app to track phone usage.

Other apps to be aware of:

- SnapMap – GEO locator – shows your contacts where you are
- Photo as Instagram Direct Message
- After School app – anonymous chat board app. Private space for you and your school to learn fun facts anonymously.
- Yubo (now called Yellow) – location based. Like a Tinder for Teens.
- Tbh – 4 friends from your contacts. You choose a superlative (most likely to succeed, most likely to have 5 dogs).
- Live.ly – live feed from music.ly

In her book, Ana discusses:

- Altered expectations – what perfect should look like; flattens clusters of communities
- Mixed messages – distracted driving; I wouldn't check my phone during day or while driving but my parents want to hear right back
- Info overload – constant stream of messaging – go online to get something educational
- On All the Time Mentality – FOMO (fear of missing out); what if I go to bed and miss something
- Likes, loves, comments and followers
- Watched The Bachelor for relationship advice

Ana's goal is to set up systems that work and they'll stick with when they go off to college and careers. Binder system.

We love quick fixes but most take time to build habits.

Organization and time management. – first 2 books

Healthy socialization (opt in and out)

Identify - What's energizing and what's draining? Ana was in SF for a presentation. A 7th grade girl told her that all last year she was acting like she was doing her homework but was really on AskFM. The girls heard Ana's presentation and learned that she had a choice. She went home that night and deleted her AskFM profile. She told Ana she's getting homework done faster and she's learning to filter in and out what she wants to see.

Effective self-regulation

The one thing they need to complete their work (their computer) is also their biggest distraction. In a Menlo survey, most reported that social media messaging and gaming prevents them from getting work done. Many students are in their room doing homework and then a text comes in. They often want to self regulate. But brain development for kids continues until about 24 years old. Ana suggests figuring out a way to build awareness to build better habits. Download the Moment app. See how much time you're spending on your phone/day. Homework could take a lot less time if you're not distracted. The Forest app is a timer building a digital tree; it's actually very motivating. Are you getting enough sleep? Let's start with that. ***Take devices out of bedroom at night. In a Menlo survey, half the students reported feeling sleep deprived.

Create a family mission statement around technology use. What does social and emotional look like in your house?

Be aware of social manipulations that happen on pop apps. Ask your kid what they're friends are doing online. You'll likely see a photo on Instagram where some girls are tagged and some are not.

Ask what is the biggest thing online that stresses you out?

HR 1761: if this bill passes, it will be a felony to send a nude photo of yourself.

Who's your child's supportive team? Ideally your child has 3 supporters/friends and 3 clarifiers (coach, counselor, etc)

Crisis text line – 741741 (trained crisis counselor)

What are 5 healthy ways to manage their stress? Have this discussion.