

Leading With Confidence™

A 5-Week Communication & Leadership Journey · Ages 13–18 · Course Syllabus

Course Overview

Participants learn practical strategies for leading discussions, presenting confidently, managing conflict, collaborating effectively, and communicating with authenticity.

Format

- 5 weekly virtual sessions, 45 minutes each
- Delivered live, in a small-group format, via video
- Each session follows the same five-part rhythm: Welcome & Warm-Up, This Week's Skill, Let's Talk About It, Practice Time, Carry This With You

Outcome

Students strengthen communication, leadership, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and public speaking skills in preparation for higher education and future careers.

Weekly Session Plans

WEEK 1 — Finding Your Authentic Voice

Learning Objective

Students distinguish their authentic communication style from a performed or expected one, and identify what genuine confidence sounds like for them specifically.

Welcome & Warm-Up (5 min)

Quick round: one word for how everyone's feeling as the group starts.

This Week's Skill (10 min)

Discussion opener: the difference between the voice you use to fit in and the voice that's actually yours — and how the most memorable leaders and speakers tend to sound like themselves, not like someone else.

Let's Talk About It (10 min)

- Is there a difference between how you communicate around certain people versus others? What drives that?
- Who's someone you find genuinely compelling to listen to, and what makes their voice feel authentic?

Practice Time (15 min)

Each participant shares a 60-second unscripted answer to "something I care about and why," focused on sounding like themselves rather than being polished.

Carry This With You

This week's takeaway: "My voice doesn't need to sound like anyone else's to be worth hearing."

WEEK 2 — Leading Discussions & Active Listening

Learning Objective

Students practice facilitating group conversation — asking questions that open discussion, and listening well enough to build on what others say.

Welcome & Warm-Up (5 min)

Recap: one moment this week where you noticed yourself really listening, or not.

This Week's Skill (10 min)

Introduce the difference between a good question (opens discussion) and a closed question (shuts it down), plus the skill of building on someone else's point rather than just waiting for your turn to speak.

Let's Talk About It (10 min)

- What's the difference between listening to respond and listening to understand?
- What makes someone feel truly heard in a group conversation?

Practice Time (15 min)

Small-group practice: one participant facilitates a 5-minute discussion on a simple prompt, practicing open questions and building on others' answers, while the group gives brief feedback afterward.

Carry This With You

This week's takeaway: "Great leadership sounds like good questions, not just good answers."

WEEK 3 — Presenting With Confidence

Learning Objective

Students learn a structure for a compelling presentation and a strategy for managing nerves in high-stakes speaking moments.

Welcome & Warm-Up (5 min)

Grounding breath together (box breathing: in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4).

This Week's Skill (10 min)

Introduce a simple persuasive structure (hook → point → evidence or story → call to action) and discuss managing nerves as a skill, not a personality trait to overcome once and for all.

Let's Talk About It (10 min)

- What's the highest-stakes presentation or speech you've had to give? What helped, and what didn't?
- What's one thing you could do differently next time you feel nervous before speaking?

Practice Time (15 min)

Each participant delivers a 90-second impromptu "pitch" on a topic they care about, using the hook-point-evidence-close structure, with brief peer feedback.

Carry This With You

This week's takeaway: "Nerves and confidence can exist in the same room."

WEEK 4 — Managing Conflict & Collaborating Effectively

Learning Objective

Students practice navigating disagreement productively and giving/receiving feedback without damaging a working relationship.

Welcome & Warm-Up (5 min)

Quick round: one small win from a group project or team situation this week.

This Week's Skill (10 min)

Introduce the difference between conflict avoidance and productive disagreement, and a simple framework for giving feedback (specific, kind, and focused on the work, not the person).

Let's Talk About It (10 min)

- What's your default response to disagreement — avoid it, confront it, or something else? Where do you think that comes from?
- What's the hardest part of giving someone honest feedback?

Practice Time (15 min)

Role-play in pairs: practice giving specific, kind feedback on a low-stakes scenario (e.g., a partner's mock presentation idea), then switch roles.

Carry This With You

This week's takeaway: "Disagreement handled well builds trust, not distance."

WEEK 5 — Leadership in Action

Learning Objective

Students apply everything from the course in a single integrated exercise, and connect these skills to real upcoming moments — college interviews, job applications, leadership roles.

Welcome & Warm-Up (5 min)

Look back across the four weeks: which skill has felt most useful so far?

This Week's Skill (10 min)

Discuss where these exact skills show up in real near-future moments: a college interview, a part-time job, leading a school club or team project.

Let's Talk About It (10 min)

- Where do you expect to need one of these skills in the next year?
- What's one thing from this course you want to keep practicing on your own?

Practice Time (15 min)

Each participant leads a short (2-minute) discussion or presentation on a topic of their choice, applying at least two skills from the course (e.g., an authentic opener plus a persuasive structure), with group feedback.

Carry This With You — Series Closing

This week's takeaway: "I already have what it takes to lead — I just need to keep practicing." Close the course with the full refrain: My voice doesn't need to sound like anyone else's. Great leadership sounds like good questions. Nerves and confidence can exist in the same room. Disagreement handled well builds trust. I already have what it takes to lead.

Certificate of completion and encourage participants to identify one real opportunity in the next month to practice these skills.

Facilitator Notes

- The five-part structure stays fixed each week, with slightly longer discussion and practice time than the younger course given the 45-minute format.
- Encourage participants to bring real, current situations into discussion (an actual group project, an actual upcoming interview) rather than only hypothetical scenarios — this age group engages more with real stakes.
- In Week 4's role-play, keep scenarios low-stakes and clearly fictional/practice-based so feedback practice doesn't accidentally surface real interpersonal conflict between participants.
- Give specific, concrete feedback after each practice exercise, modeling the exact feedback skill being taught in Week 4.