

## Momentum Blog #4: We just finished Momentum!

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We just finished Momentum!

We are a group of 4 individuals, Kensho K., Emilie M., Sara L. and Adeline M. assigned to the Bay Area.

Our best experience was at Bay Area Technological School. During a 6 hour anti-bullying workshop. We covered three main topics of awareness, empathy and moving forward. The students get a chance to share personal stories that have happened to them in the past to raise awareness as well as empathy. Step into the circle, similar to Cross the Line, is one of the activities that we do where the students are aware that each individual is going through or has gone through pain. We emphasize the point that pain is a part of life, but it is up to them if they want to suffer from it or move forward. Affirmations conclude the empathy portion, with caring and loving words from their peers and staff. Our last point is moving forward, where we give them the opportunity to accept that they can't change what has happened, but they can make steps to move forward in their life.

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Kensho;

Hi! This is Kensho speaking. My experience with this Bay Tech presentation was very powerful. I was the MC for this presentation and during discussion groups I usually sat out and took care of anything unexpected. During this presentation, a student stood up from a discussion group and walked out with tears in his eyes. I followed him of course. We stopped right after we left the gym that the presentation was taking place in. I asked him what was wrong. The things he told me completely blew me away. He's living a really hard life and he even had to go through a painful experience just a couple of months earlier. His name is Kevin. We both cried in the hallway as he expressed his pain, hate towards the town that he lived in, and the unfairness of life. Then afterwards, I shared my story and the hardships I went through. Needless to say, there were tears streaming down both of our faces.



*Step into the Circle at Bay Tech*

Through that vulnerability, both of us completely understood each other's pain. We hugged after and walked back into the presentation with smiles on our faces. I will never forget this experience. Even if I only had this one experience during the whole month, Momentum would have been worth it.

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Adeline;

Momentum was great. Hearing kids speak about real life situations I rarely hear put my life into perspective. During our bay tech presentations, I was deeply moved by all the kids in my discussion group. In one of our more serious talk activity, everyone expressed some sort of personal issue that has happened in their life. The energy and support was great. Tears rolled down their faces, arms of comfort cradled one another, and soothing words were spoken. It is hard for most to talk about their personal life, let alone in a public setting with people they may not know so well. I was extremely heartfelt by the bravery and honesty they showed forth. These students have years ahead with their class and they've only known each other on the surface level. Letting kids have a chance to show who they really are is so important. I hope students see how crucial it is to be there for each other. I'm extremely proud of what we

are doing and what we have completed as a team. To me, my greatest joy was from the kids expressing who they really were, and realizing everyone has a story. It was a memorable learning experience for me.



*Sara and Adeline Leading a group. Students are writing down their serious story*

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Emilie;

Momentum is such an amazing experience. I've learned so much especially at Bay Tech High School. We've done three presentations there with different classes, but the last presentation was different for me. To be honest, for the first two I wanted to be MC because I was too afraid to hear the painful stories that the students had went through. So, this last presentation I built up the courage to be a group leader. And wow! It hurt so much to hear the struggles that these kids had to go through. Each time a student in my group would share my heart would feel like it was being ripped to pieces over and over again. I felt so much for these kids and I didn't even know them. I hate knowing that people actually go through the things they were sharing and what's worse is knowing that you can't erase their pain. But this experience has opened my eyes. It's made me realize how fortunate I am but more importantly how much I care for the people of this world. And although, I can't erase their pain, I can still help them make steps to moving forward, make them smile, help get them closer to their classmates and for those students that feel like no one cares, show them that I do no matter what. Momentum was definitely worth it.

Thank you.



*The students writing affirmations to their classmates*

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Sara;

Momentum was a great learning experience. Every time I walked into a school a rush of nervous energy infiltrated my body as I reminisced about my difficult experiences in middle/high school. At the same time I felt extremely excited to come back and be able to support and inspire the students, because I wished that someone would have done that for me. There was one particular school that inspired and taught me a lot. My first presentation at Bay Tech. was with a group of 8th graders. We started our group discussions with funny stories to break the ice and get people communicating. When we got to the more serious stories, I had to be vulnerable first in order for the students to open up to the group. I shared about my awful body image issues and how it is a struggle every day. It was a story where every girl and boy in my group, in some degree, could relate to. They shared about their own struggle with body image/self-esteem, and some in cases its correlation to their bullying. Some said they felt less alone and more comfortable to bring this problem up because they realized a lot of their own peers had similar experiences with this issue. I now found value in my struggles; I can overcome my struggle by supporting others to stay strong together. As we finished up the discussion on body image, some students went even more in-depth about their struggles. They talked about family issues, drug problems and gang violence. In the end everyone's experiences were different but we all came together and realized everyone goes through often unbearable times but that you are never alone in struggle. We can't erase pain but we can take steps to move forward and live full happy lives. I learned a lot in facilitating such awesome groups during Momentum.