



PARENTS' GUIDE



Erasmus+



SUPREM

INTRODUCTION

This document was developed as IO3 of the SUPREM project, funded under the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission, and it is one of the project's final outputs. It is intended for parents of students aged 13-14 who are about to make a choice about their future course of studies.

This can be a complex time in the life of students and their families and the Guide has been developed to support them in making a choice based on a correct assessment of the student's interests, talents and wishes, as well as with full awareness about its potential outcomes. The hope is that students and families may find advice and inspiration about dealing with similar conflict situations by improving dialogue and mutual understanding.

For this purpose, the Guide presents 18 case studies, in which conflict situations arise in connection with the student's choice of a future course of studies. Each case study presented describes a conflict situation and analyses a possible dealing strategy on the part of the student, the family and also touches on the role of teachers. Finally, each case study offers online resources, which students and families may find useful, to deepen their understanding of the strategies suggested, particularly in the areas of emotional intelligence and life skills.

All case studies presented:

- ✓ focus on the choice of the future learning path of students aged 12-13;
- ✓ are representative of real-life situations, in order for readers to potentially identify themselves in the scenarios proposed;
- ✓ aim to serve as a stimulus to self-reflection for students, families and teachers;
- ✓ offer a range of strategies for students and their families to deal with the situation;
- ✓ offer additional resources to deepen the understanding of the strategies proposed.

It is important to clarify that any conflict situation may have a wide variety of possible outcomes, because in real life every situation has a large number of variables that cannot be contemplated in this document. For this reason, the intention of this document is not to provide an "ending" to the case studies

presented, but rather to focus on the skills and competences needed by parents and students to deal with complex situations relating to the choice of a future course of studies. In particular, the focus is for parents to better understand and work on competences relating to the area of emotional intelligence and for students to work on developing or strengthening fundamental life skills.

All case studies presented in this document are common and transversal to the different countries participating in the SUPREM project¹ (Hungary, Italy, Romania and the Netherlands), thereby overcoming national differences and the specificity of different school systems. In this respect, this document may be of interest, and could be transferable, to other European countries.

The document was developed by the SUPREM project partnership, led by Italian partner Borgorete. National panels made by students, parents and teachers in each country were involved in a process of consultation and feedback prior to the finalisation of this document and all case studies were finalised with the supervision of a certified psychologist and psychotherapist.

The authors

www.suprem.eu

¹ Please note that all names and stories presented in the case studies are fictitious.



CHOOSING THE FUTURE COURSE OF STUDIES: A GUIDE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

If you are a
STUDENT



- Read through the case studies and see if you recognise yourself (or your friends) in the case studies described, or if you are familiar with some of the conflict situations presented, or aspects of them
- If so, find interesting insights about dealing with similar situations and advice about strengthening important **life skills**, to help you and your family discuss together and improve your communication
- Finally, find additional **resources** to explore the suggested strategies more in-depth, including YouTube videos

If you are a
PARENT



- Read through the case studies and see if you are familiar with some of the conflict situations presented, or aspects of them.
- If so, find interesting insights about dealing with similar situations and advice about adopting approaches relating to the area of **emotional intelligence**, to help you improve your communication with your son or daughter
- Finally, find additional **resources** to explore the suggested strategies more in-depth, including short YouTube videos.

If you are a
TEACHER



- Familiarise yourself with this Guide and the case studies presented and see if there are insights for you as a teacher
- You may **suggest using this Guide and its resources to your students and their families** when they approach the decision about their future course of studies
- You may **suggest using this Guide and its resources to your colleagues** as a stimulus to self-reflection as well as a tool to suggest to their students and their families.

CASE STUDY #1: Choosing a school to follow a friend?



Maria is 13 years old. The last year of secondary school finishes in June, but she has to choose what course of studies she will follow until the age of 18 within February. Her results in school have always been very good, she has always been a brilliant girl, especially in writing, but in the last year she has lost interest in study and she became more and more worried about social relationships with her peers.

Her mother works as a saleswoman in a role of responsibility, she is very busy and stressed; her father is a railway worker, she has a 9 year old sisters.

Neither parent went to university. They hope that Maria can continue her studies to lead a less tiring life than theirs and have a better paid job.

Maria doesn't know what she wants to become, at the moment she is not interested in the future but she only wants to be accepted by her friends. There is one girl she likes particularly because of her self-confidence and her parents don't like her at all.

Maria wants to choose the school that her friend will choose, without considering the subjects she loves, her skills, her talents, her future. This school is not a school that can prepare well for an academic path. Maria doesn't want to talk to her parents, she listens to their motivations but she doesn't care in the future now. They understand Maria's motivation but can't allow her to make a choice that, in their opinion, may ruin her future. They are convinced that she is making the wrong choice and that she will regret the choice made when grown up.

Tension and discussions start coming up in family conversations.

Maria withdraws more and more in herself and becomes more and more hostile towards her parents.

Incidence: This is quite a typical scenario when students are so insecure and focused on peer approval to lose sight of themselves and their life goals.

Student's strategy



Defining goals: To define her goals, Maria needs to be reassured about her fears on relationships and to start working on her insecurity.

Role models: As well as friends who seem more confident to her, she may reflect on adult models she would like to look like and the work they do.

Responsible decision-making: the responsibility that the parents give her pushes her to reflect further on the decision she has to take.

Managing conflicts: when her parents notice that Maria is getting further and further away, they lower the level of the conflict and try to mediate. This helps Maria to understand how to manage a conflict.

Parents' strategy



TEAMWORK Maria's parents and teachers are agreed that Maria can aspire to an ambitious academic course of studies, both are worried of the apathy of Maria and her loss of interest in study. The teacher suggests to Maria's parents to lead her to a psychologist because she always seems sad to her. They welcome the teacher's point of view and ask her to support Maria in her decision making process.

EMOTIONAL SELF AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL SELF CONTROL

Initially they aren't perfectly conscious of the emotions that make them so reactive in the management of this but they look for support from friends and family. So they can be aware of their fears and try to control them.

EMPATHY Parents try to understand, also helped by the indications of the professors, what may be the causes of Maria's decision and support her for the resolution of the same. To better understand her daughter they try to remember the importance of having good relations when they are teens.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: They understand that they cannot force Maria and engage "a war" with her, risking to compromise the relationship. If they fail to convince her, they will trust her, and accept that she can make the wrong choice by reassuring her that they will be close to her in dealing with the consequences.

ADAPTABILITY: they try to hypothesize with her alternative solutions and mediations that can guarantee her the relationship with her friend (for example, by granting that the friend will be able to spend with them every

other weekend). Once reassured on this aspect, they try to explore with her what she might like and how she sees herself in the future, in order to make a choice.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK Even if Maria is still young the parents accept that the final choice on her path is hers, but they remind her the importance of this choice for her future, the consequences that it may have and that, once taken, go back or changing road will involve hard work, reassuring her that they will still be close to her.

Teachers' role:



The teacher provides the family her point of view on Maria, which is useful for making them understand the causes of her decision.

She helps Maria to imagine herself in the future while doing various jobs.

She helps her to understand what her resources, her values, the activities that give her pleasure are.

She helps her feel more confident by valuing her strengths.

If you wish to hear more about Conflict resolution, please follow the YouTube links below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_HfbiM5jjE
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBPw8ZUxnWw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5Xx0jtYeDc>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovdPxLfAsqo>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNr_pKgf1ro
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEZbMdUR34>

If you wish to hear more about self-confidence, please follow the YouTube links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ05M1UhPrY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SJe7spsF94>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=053P4ai5O_w
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i1NhdvyAbI>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_NYrWqUR4o
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-HYZv6HzAs>

CASE STUDY #2: Choosing a school because of family's expectations?



Marco is 14 years old and he's attending the last school year before choosing high school. He isn't motivated and his results in school have always been poor, especially in theoretical subjects. He likes P.E. and sports. His parents, however, think that he has much more academic potential than his school results have been showing to date, and that the school should motivate him more, with more interesting activities.

Marco comes from a family with a high cultural and economic background. His parents are lawyers and are very wealthy. They live in a villa with a swimming pool and they have friends of a similar social background. The family also supports him with private lessons and a great variety of courses, including experiences abroad to learn foreign languages. Marco's parents believe that school performance will improve in the future and they would like him to become a lawyer or a doctor.

Marco doesn't like studying and he has no real plans about his future life. He has difficulties in memorization, therefore, attending University courses like Law or Medicine would be very difficult for him. He doesn't care about school and his future and he wants to concentrate on sports, especially on volleyball, since he's the best player in his team. Teachers suggest for him a higher secondary school with a specific focus on sports, which is not too demanding academically, and encourage him to join a professional volleyball team, considering his good results. His family doesn't accept this advice, they don't agree with school teachers and are disappointed because their friends' children generally have better school results and are choosing very demanding academic schools for their future studies. They often discuss with Marco, because the parents believe sport to be just a free-time activity and that, in order to ensure good financial opportunities, he should choose a school that would lead him and prepare him for a degree in Law or Medicine. Marco always feels inadequate in school, while he's successful at volleyball. He feels confused and can't make a responsible decision, because he is aware of the difficulties he has at school. He loves the family's 'golden life', but he can't accept studying subjects that he finds so challenging and uninteresting. Life at home has become unacceptable, as everyone considers the other one's point of view but without a real understanding.

Incidence: This is quite a typical situation when a student chooses a course of studies that is in conflict with family's expectations for the student's future.

Student's strategy



Marco tries to talk about his problems with his friends but nobody can truly help him. So, he decides to talk about the situation at home with his volleyball coach who supports him in the decision to go ahead with the volleyball career. After that, Marco involves his P.E teacher, explaining how important the decision is. The P.E. teacher suggests having a meeting with: parents, coach, Marco and the sports' high school headteacher.

First of all, the teacher suggests Marco to be more relaxed when he talks about his decisions with his parents.

Defining goals and planning to achieve them: Marco needs to clearly define his future goals in order to present them to his family in a coherent way and not afflicted by tensions.

Role models: Marco needs to manage between old role models played by his parents (that are still important and necessary for his future) and the new one offered by his coach.

Parents' strategy



In this situation, Marco's parents don't accept teachers' advices because they can even support their son with private lessons and teachers, in order to potentially follow an ambitious academic course of studies. They don't care about Marco's lack of self-confidence. At first, they try to show Marco all positive aspects of their economic and social situation and try to persuade him to choose what they consider the best for him. Anyway he doesn't want to attend such a career.

The parents start to consider Marco's reasons and explanations.

ACTIVE LISTENING is a skill that is most useful when positions are distant and it involves the ability to focus on the person's words and body language to fully understand their point of view, as well as their feelings. Active listening refers to a pattern of listening that keeps you engaged with your conversation partner in a positive way. It is the process of listening attentively while someone else speaks, paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said, and withholding judgement and advice.

	Active listening also allows EMPATHY in communication, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide our actions. That makes it different from kindness or pity. Through this approach, dialogue between Marco and his parents can improve and they are able to have more constructive conversations.
Teachers' role: 	The P.E. teacher involves the others in this case. In this situation, the teacher offers Marco support by organising the meeting and suggesting Marco to talk to his parents in a more conscious way. The teacher does not provide a "solution" to Marco or to his family, but supports Marco in developing a fundamental "life skill", to indirectly help him to afford the situation and find a solution that would be acceptable for everyone involved.

If you wish to hear more about assertiveness, please follow the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlwmfiCb-vc>

If you wish to hear more about empathy and active listening, please follow the links below:

<https://newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/>

<https://www.oscartrimboli.com/recommended-listening-resources/>

CASE STUDY #3: Choosing a school with a view to dropping out?



Michael is 14 and is at the end of this school year, he has to choose his future higher secondary school. His results in schools have always been very poor in all subjects. He has a migratory background and his family have lived in Europe only for three years. They are not fully aware of the importance of school for Michael's future in Europe. They have a low social and economic background and they focus their strengths only to give Michael economic security, including the possibility to dress well, which they believe will help him to be socially included.

Michael is not interested in school activities and he doesn't understand the importance of responsible behaviour and attitude in the school context. In fact, school is, in his opinion, only a waste of time. He would like to look for a good job without spending time in training. He isn't aware that every job needs background knowledge and training. As he's still at an age when school is compulsory, he knows that he will have to make a choice about his future school anyway, but he is not so interested in this choice as he plans to drop out early. He doesn't share ambitions and plans for the future with his classmates, because he prefers not to bring attention to his background and future plans.

Incidence: This is quite a typical situation for students of recent immigration coming from poor cultural and economic backgrounds.

Student's strategy 	Michael should develop responsibility and make responsible decisions. Michael needs to share his opinions and ideas with his classmates, who can help him in his decisions. Role models: Michael needs to focus the attention on role models around him. His parents are a model because they have worked honestly and looked for giving the family financial security. The classmates are an important role model, because they have different family backgrounds and offer him a different perspective. Even teachers, with their efforts, can offer a role model for him.
Parents' strategy	In this situation, parents should participate in high school informative "open days", in order to be active in the choice of their son. After that, having more information on school options, parents would be more able to discuss options with their son. In all the steps, active listening is required. Active listening refers to a pattern of listening that keeps you engaged with your conversation partner in a positive way.



It is the process of listening attentively while someone else speaks, paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said, and withholding judgement and advice.

Active listening also allows **empathy in communication**, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide our actions.

Through this approach, dialogue between Michael and his parents can improve and be able to have more constructive conversations.

Teachers' role:



Teachers can enhance communication with the family, focusing on the importance of education to get a better job in the future.

Teachers can work with the class organising “**peer tutoring**” and “**debate**” activities, in order to involve students and make them aware of the importance to grow their own passions and work hard to **reach goals**, it doesn't matter in which area.

Peer tutoring is a strategy to develop relational attitudes and culture of solidarity. The tutor and the pupil role help them understand the meaning of responsibility, because he is no longer an object of learning but an active subject, with all positive effects that this change of perspective has. They can be involved in interviews with families asking about jobs, and their positive and negative aspects.

Debate strategy: it's a method to help students to seek and select sources with the aim of forming an opinion, developing public speaking and listening education skills, self-assessing, improving their cultural awareness and self-esteem.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlwmfiCb-vc>

If you wish to hear more about empathy and active listening, please follow the links below:

<https://newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/>

<https://www.oscartrimboli.com/recommended-listening-resources/>

CASE STUDY #4: Choosing a school because of the family's financial needs?



Sofia is 14 and is in the final school year. She has to choose her future course of studies. Her results in school have always been very good and she loves all the subjects at school. She has a lot of cultural interests such as theatre, literature, music. In her free-time she goes to the library and takes out books that she can't buy. Her dream is to become a literature teacher.

She's unusual in her family, as she comes from quite a low cultural background and her parents are not interested in cultural activities. They believe that their children should help the family as soon as possible, by starting to work early and contributing to the family budget. Because of that, they think their daughter should attend a professional school, in order to find a job immediately after school. On the other hand, Sofia would like to attend a more academically-focused school and continue her future studies at University, but she can't decide because her parents work hard for a very low salary and don't have enough financial resources to allow her to attend University. She thinks that her desire to attend University might be selfish and she feels responsible and guilty. At school, teachers are sure that Sofia will choose a more academic school, taking into consideration her excellent school results. They are convinced that her parents are proud of her and would be happy with such a choice. Her teachers notice, however, that Sofia is often sad, even though she doesn't talk about this issue with them.

Incidence: This scenario is not so common, but it may happen that teenagers don't communicate their needs to adults (families and teachers).

Student's strategy



Sofia is able to develop life skills and have a responsible and positive behaviour, adaptable to her family situation.

Sofia can have an **effective relationship** with her parents.

Effective relationships indicate the ability to assert one's role and opinions without overpowering the others, but respecting their ideas and needs. Sofia, after improving dialogue with her parents, is better able to **manage feelings and emotions**.

Emotion management refers to **the ability to make emotions productive**, which are used as levers for action and reaction.

Parents' strategy



Parents should be empathic and able to listen to Sofia's problems.

THE ABILITY TO LISTEN is a fundamental aspect of interpersonal relationships; it means not only understanding what the other person is saying with words, but able to grasp further aspects, such as emotional suffering or a need, which are not expressed directly.

Teachers' role:



Teachers can communicate with Sofia, stimulating her emotional, cognitive and relational abilities. In this situation, teachers can't understand the reason Sofia is so sad. She doesn't participate in the lessons and it seems she doesn't care about studying. She has sent teachers messages through **non-verbal communication** (all the messages she sends without using words but expressions and feelings). A good teacher should be able to understand body language, facial expressions and role in groups.

They encourage and invite her to tell her difficulties through **active listening**.

After the conversation, her teachers suggest Sofia to talk to her parents in order to find a solution for this situation (**Defining goals**).

Teachers focus on her **responsibility** and her **making decision** ability and **problem solving**.

If you wish to hear more about assertiveness, please follow the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlwmfiCb-vc>

If you wish to hear more about empathy and active listening, please follow the links below:

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<https://www.oscartrimboli.com/recommended-listening-resources/>

CASE STUDY #5: Choosing a school to follow artistic talents?



Mia is 13. She is a little artist: she likes drawing and painting, she sings in the school choir and she attends ballet classes. Her school results are average in all subjects, except in English where her results are very good. Next year she will have to be successful at her final exams and she will need to choose a school to continue her studies. She needs to keep up with maths, literature and modern languages.

She comes from a middle class background, at her age both her parents attended an academically challenging secondary school and they would like Mia to do the same. However, Mia has her own plans. She wants to continue her studies in the Arts school, she dreams of becoming a freelance artist. She feels that the only person who understands her is her best friend, Norah, who shares the same interest in music and visual arts. Mia is aware that her parents do not think very highly of vocational schools and believe that art is very insecure as a career choice and that it may not provide a comfortable life for her.

The family has occasional discussions on Mia's upcoming choice, yet their opinions differ. Mia's father doesn't want to hear anything about art studies. He says that Mia can do better and believes that she is being negatively influenced by her friend. Mia's mother would like her daughter to take her studies more seriously. She thinks the best solution would be for Mia to continue having private art classes and singing lessons alongside enrolling in more academic secondary school. Mia feels that her parents are pressuring her too much and they do not understand her at all. She tries to find solid arguments to convince her parents that it is her life that they are discussing and she should have control over it in spite of the fact that she is not an adult yet. She is afraid of having to make such a difficult decision and she doesn't know where to turn to get some valuable advice.

Incidence: This is quite a frequent situation. In many cases, students need to deal with the different views of their family members as opposed to their individual career plans or interests in certain areas.

Student's strategy



Defining goals and planning to achieve them: Mia needs to formulate her goals clearly so that she will be able to present them to her family in an adult-like way. Focusing on her goals instead of her emotions when talking to her parents, would allow her to present her point of view, her thoughts and feelings clearly and in a more appropriate way.

She also needs to think about the smaller steps to take in order to achieve her goals.

Role models: Mia also has to think about her role models. In this respect she might want to speak to her teachers, or (if available) to the school counsellor or psychologist. Her parents might remain role models for her in certain areas (i.e.: motivation, sustaining their principles etc.)

Learning as an experience: Mia might want to talk / spend some time with a professional artist (a musician, a ballet dancer or a painter) so that she gets a better understanding of the type of life she is aspiring to, its positive and negative aspects. In case this is not possible, she could watch some biographical movies connected to famous artists.

Parents' strategy



In this situation, Mia's parents might need to talk to their daughter's arts, music or ballet teachers so that they can be reassured about Mia's artistic talents.

They should also have frequent conversations with Mia at this time and make an effort to understand her points of view without dismissing them as something arising from outside influence. They should also carefully **LISTEN** to Mia's point of view on her future life and possible plans she might have. During these conversations they should explain to Mia why they think it is important that she has a good education and good prospects for future career options.

It is important for both sides to practice **ACTIVE LISTENING**. Active listening is a technique of careful listening and observation of non-verbal cues, with feedback in the form of accurate paraphrasing, that is used in solving disputes or conflicts. It requires the listener to pay attention, understand, and respond to what is being said. Over time, the dialogue between Mia and her parents can lead to mutual understanding.

Teachers' role:

The teacher was involved in this case by Mia, who asked for advice on how to convince her parents about her talent. The teacher advised Mia to talk to her parents without involving anger or other negative feelings and presenting her point of view as clearly as possible.

The teacher did not provide any ready-made solutions to Mia or to her family, but supported them in coping with the situation and finding a solution that would be positive for both parties.

If you wish to hear more about active listening, please follow the links below:

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/coaching-others-use-active-listening-skills/>

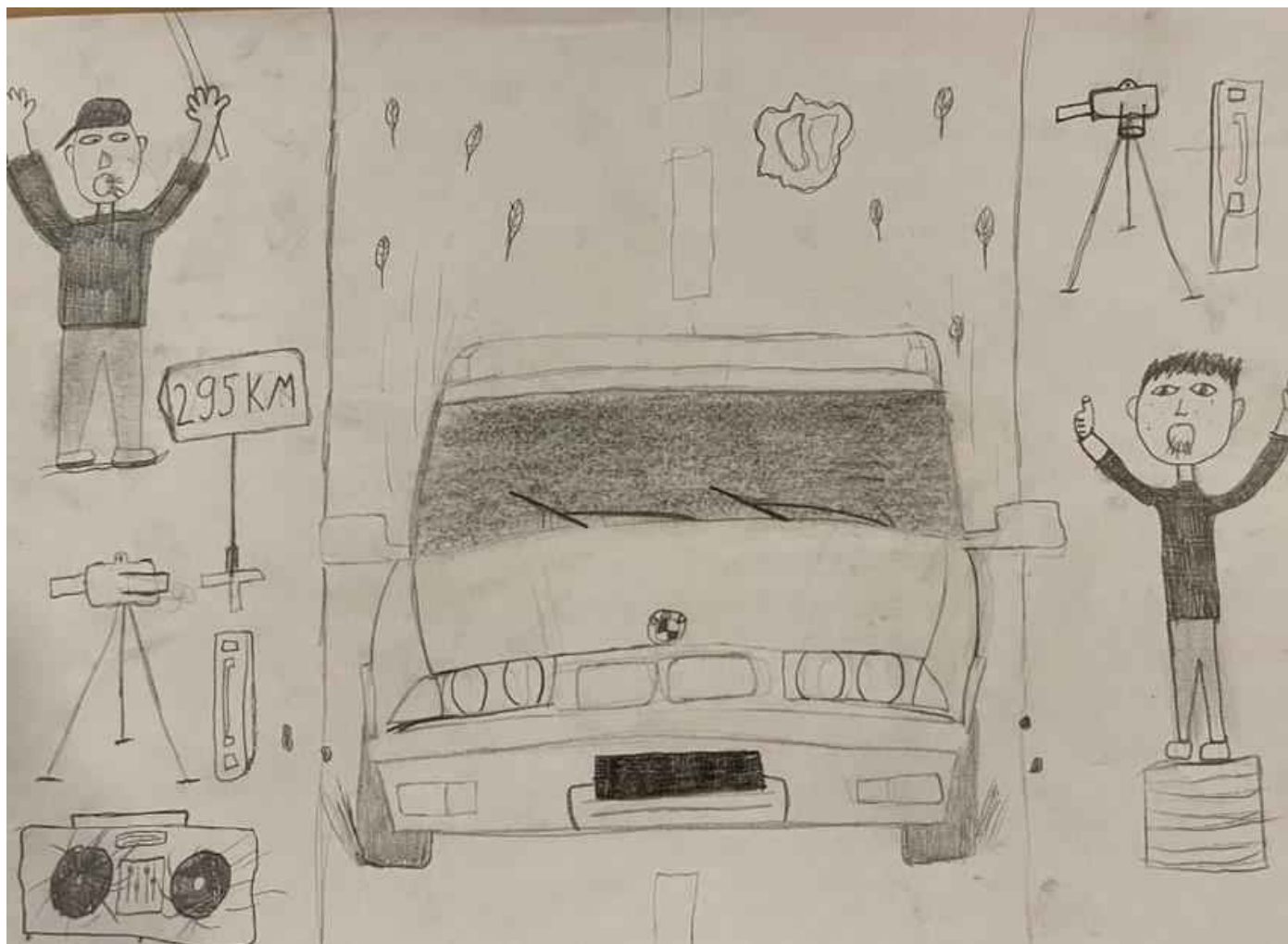
<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzsVh8YwZEq>

<https://positivepsychology.com/active-listening/>

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening#communication-dead-ends>

CASE STUDY #6: Choosing a school as a consequence of a negative influence?



Matt used to be a bright student. His teachers all liked him and expected much of him in every school subject. Until last year Matt was a very diligent student, always prepared homework and never complained about workload. Sometimes he had to stay up late or study on weekends too. His family supported him in every possible way. His parents were sometimes worried about Matt staying too much inside the house. He attended 2-3 volleyball training sessions a week, but he rarely hung out with his friends.

About a year ago Paul, a new student, arrived at the school and joined Matt's class and they became good friends. Initially, Paul fitted in well in the new school but soon he started neglecting schoolwork and lying to his parents. This was reflected in his school results and the situation led to conflict with teachers and parents. In the meantime, Matt started spending more and more time in Paul's company. Sometimes, this meant skipping classes, sometimes neglecting homework.

Having in mind that Matt was in his final year before having to choose a school for his further studies, and in order to do that he had to be successful at his final-year exams, his parents became very concerned. They were unhappy about their son's friendship with Paul, as they realised that Paul was a negative influence on their son. So, they decided to have a serious conversation with him about his future and his perspectives. Obviously, Matt had different views on the things discussed. Matt feels that his parents do not understand him and they are expecting too much of him. He thinks that expectations are too high at school as well. Everybody expects him to be perfect. When talking to his parents, he feels like they don't even try to put themselves in his shoes. He knows that Paul is not a perfect teenager but he does not want to put an end to their friendship because he was feeling lonely before Paul arrived. He feels stuck between the two opposing sides.

Incidence: This type of situation is quite frequent when a student gets into conflict with his/her family because one of their friends is not accepted by their family.

Student's strategy



Defining goals and planning to achieve them: Matt needs to think about his future and formulate some future goals. He needs to take responsibility for his own life.

Role models: Matt needs to find some genuine role models. Perhaps he could consider taking into consideration different features connected to different people, not look for one single perfect role model.

Independent work organisation: Matt should organise his daily schedule more thoroughly, delimiting time for schoolwork, but also for leisure time spent with his friends. And he should stick to his own plans.

Managing conflicts: Matt should think that in order to solve a conflict, both sides need to reach compromises. He should clearly identify things that he could give up and things he wants to keep. He should make an effort to present these to his parents in a calm, logical manner.

Presenting his position to his parents clearly and unemotionally would help them understand him better, and maybe support them in finding common ground.

Parents' strategy



TALKING TO TEACHERS: In this situation, Matt's parents decided to talk to one of their son's teachers. They knew that he was a really good student and could easily follow an academic career. This was confirmed by his teachers as well. This was useful to them, as the teacher was able to offer a broader perspective about teenagers at Matt's age, their process of change, and the need to give them time to realise the consequences of his actions.

DIALOGUE: Matt's parents should talk to him frequently at this time. During these conversations they should explain to Matt why they think it is important that he has a good education and good prospects for his future career. They should also carefully listen to Matt's point of view on his plans for the future.

ACTIVE LISTENING: It is important for both sides to practice active listening. Active listening is a technique of careful listening and observation of non-verbal cues, with feedback in the form of accurate paraphrasing, that is used in solving disputes or conflicts. It requires the listener to pay attention, understand, and respond to what is being said. With proper communication between Matt and

	his parents, their relationship could improve over time and Matt would find his way back to normality.
Teachers' role: 	One of the teachers was involved in this case by Matt's parents who came to school and filled her in with Matt's situation. She confirmed that Matt has good skills and that he could easily follow an academic career. The teacher advised them to talk to their child calmly and patiently as many times as it was necessary. She also told them that forbidding Matt to stay in touch with his friend would be difficult to accept for Matt and would probably make him angry. She advised them to be patient with him. The teacher did not offer a solution to Matt's family, but suggested they work on coping with the situation and find a solution that would be positive for everyone.

If you wish to hear more about reaching a compromise, please follow the links below:

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/7-ways-learning-compromise-improves-all-your-relationships.html>

<https://www.bustle.com/p/8-tips-for-compromising-in-a-relationship-according-to-experts-18659567>

If you wish to hear more about managing conflicts, please follow the links below:

<https://www.fao.org/3/AD346E/ad346eoc.htm>

<https://www.peoplehum.com/glossary/conflict-management>

If you wish to hear more about active listening, please follow the links below:

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/coaching-others-use-active-listening-skills/>

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzsVh8YwZEQ>

<https://positivepsychology.com/active-listening/>

CASE STUDY #7: Choosing a school for unattainable social status?



At the age of 13, approaching Christmas, Anna began to demand certain material goods, objects, status symbols. She is now over 14 and her demands have grown exponentially ever since and she's constantly insisting on having something new. This could be an unaffordable mobile phone, a game, or simply more sweets, soft drinks etc. Her parents did not take it seriously at first. As a first reaction, they accommodated Anna's requests and agreed with her constant demands. However, the problem often escalates. Anna has been playing with her parents' emotions, demands attention, and often tries to put her parents against each other. In such cases, the real goal is not primarily to achieve the desired object or emotion, but to satisfy another's physical or emotional need.

Anna doesn't fully understand her own emotions and may be ashamed to express herself honestly. She feels that her friends are always ahead of her in fashion, dressing, and buying new things. They come from wealthier backgrounds and this makes her frustrated: she's afraid that eventually they will leave her alone. Anna's parents can't afford to follow their daughter's constant desires, even though they want to do all they can for her. However, they don't spend much time at home, because they both take on extra work to increase the family income, so they supplement their earnings with casual work: morning flyer delivery and cleaning.

Anna knows for sure that as an adult, she wants a secure job that allows her to earn enough money. She does not yet have a concrete idea of further education, her school results are good, but not outstanding. As her friends will enrol in a private and expensive secondary school, she starts asking for the same thing, even though she is aware that the private school fees are very high and that there are other public schools that would be just as good from a learning perspective.

Incidence

It is common among the 8-14 age group, that young people get into conflict with parents and want to be more like their friends, especially if they feel neglected by their parents or "inferior" to their friends. This can lead to claiming more and more material goods, and can negatively affect decisions about the future.

Student's strategy



Self-awareness: The first step is to be aware that the behaviour is a problem for everyone involved. By realising that we are facing a problem, we've already achieved a result. Often this realisation doesn't happen until conflict arises. If Anna understands that she has a problem: she can analyse her thoughts and set goals for what is really important in her life. Who are the really important people

around her? Secondly, she can ask for help from her family and / or from her teachers.

Anna needs to understand that she doesn't really need the objects she constantly asks for. She must face the reality that her family financial situation makes her demands unrealistic, and that emotional blackmail is also not right and painful for her parents. At 14, it's hard to accept that. At this age, some children consider the common values of peer groups to be paramount. Anna does the same when she imitates them. But if Anna realises that she is not completely independent by doing so, she has lost her self-control, then there is hope for a solution as well.

A positive solution is for Anna to choose a school that is right for her and that her parents can afford.

Connecting life-skills: goal setting, decision making, negotiation, choosing role models.

Parents' strategy



DIALOGUE AND ACTIVE LISTENING:

It is really important that Anna's parents understand where her demands originate from: she's asking for attention and feels "inferior" to her friends because her family is not wealthy. When a child in his / her own opinion „suffers" from something, often begins to claim. They demand things that are not really needed in order to compensate for other real needs. Many times, these are only ways to ask for attention and care.

Open dialogue can support understanding the student's real needs and address them in the best way: In Anna's case, it all comes from the combination of adolescence and lack of attention in family and school. Parents may understand that they need to spend more quality time with her; she may understand that her friends love her even if she doesn't have the latest expensive clothes or electronics gadget. Parent need to understand that this is a slow process and that they need to take it step by step. There may not be immediate results, but they should persevere in keeping up open dialogue. Becoming aggressive will not reach any positive outcome. **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ELEMENTS** that are important to support the child: achievement orientation, influence, coaching and mentoring skills, conflict management, self-awareness.

Teachers' role:



As a teacher, this problem is very difficult to detect. Only teachers who really know her can help Anna, by noticing her emotional changes and perceiving signs that her personality is evolving in a negative direction. They could see what the imitation of her friends and her worsening relationship with her parents came from. Only a teacher who has a deep, friendly relationship with Anna can give her support.

In this situation, a teacher who understands these signs could talk to the student honestly and show her trust without attacking her and trying to lead her to find a solution herself. Anna needs to figure out what her parents are doing for her. Anna herself must understand that her claims are unrealistic. Adults can help her with **role-playing** games to support her in **defining her goals** and planning strategies to achieve them. Activities to to speak openly, to discuss values, under the guidance of a class teacher or teacher. Set up an order of things that are important to 14-year-old students. To confront human things and material values. Determine where we want to be in 3-4 years.

If you wish to know more about manipulative behaviour:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs-RBcvzZuo>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/article/why-too-much-stuff-can-make-kids-unhappy>

CASE STUDY #8: Choosing a school to rebel against the family?



Anita is 14 years old and she has behavioural problems. She is very aggressive and, at times, a bully in her class, verbally abusing her classmates. She taunts, talks back, bullies. Her classmates can't recognize what she really does. They look at her as a 'cool girl' who has everything a teenager needs at home – own room, private life, ICT tools, expensive phone, fashionable clothes, regular holiday abroad and private teachers. Sometimes one or two girls feel hurt and humiliated because of their own circumstances, but are afraid to speak out, for fear of falling out of Anita's close circle. Those who are not part of the ever-changing community in the class, often feel isolated. Anita sometimes gives her friend 'presents' or invites them home. But a few days later she can start to bully anyone for no reason.

Anita's family looks perfect on the outside. She is an only child and her parents are very wealthy and can buy everything for her. They both work long hours and have good careers. Because they spend little time at home and together, their marriage seems to be empty, they don't have real connection with each other and with their daughter. They have been talking about divorce for months. Anita does not know about it, but she senses that something is not right. In general, family life is quiet, without conflict or loud arguments.

The only issue of discussion is Anita's future education, as her parents say she must go to University and get into the best secondary school in town. Anita refuses to accept the role she has been forced into, refuses to study, refuses to prepare for the entrance exam and her grades are rapidly deteriorating. She feels she doesn't want to be the same as her parents, because she feels they aren't happy together. One of her teachers realises that Anita has problems with her behaviour, she was a witness of verbal bullying of a girl, and subsequent crying. She decides to talk to Anita and her parents.

Incidence

By aggression we mean aggressive behaviour towards parents, adults, peers, whether verbal or physical. This could be a typical problem at any age, both among boys and girls.

Student's strategy



Managing conflicts: Anita has to accept that her behaviour is very frightening and painful to others, and she won't be able to make it unhappen. She needs help in expressing feelings, accepting other people's feelings and circumstances. Anita initially feels very insecure and struggles to make valid relationships with others but firstly, she needs to realise that her problems are not in the classroom but at home. She also needs to learn collaboration with her mates too, in a way she can solve her problems without aggression.

Assertive communication: Assertiveness means defending one's rights, expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a direct, honest and appropriate way. Anita can't find time and place for talking with her parents and she feels that they are inaccessible for her. She needs to learn to be able to talk about her feelings and inefficiency.

Planning to achieve goals: She needs help, because she still doesn't have an idea about her future studies at the age of 14, she only knows what she doesn't want – following in her parents' footsteps. The solution can be in her teachers' support, in case they can show her other options, and other points of view in future planning.

Parents' strategy



Anita's parents don't feel the need to talk to Anita's teachers because they don't know about her behaviour in school. They think their child's mental health is fine and her school results do not show any problems. The girl does not talk about school-life at home.

ACTIVE LISTENING: They need to be more active in listening to their child, and they should pay more attention to Anita's signs, like nail-biting, and the lack of friends. They should trust in the teachers' opinion, who are the witnesses of bullying and they must work together to solve the problem, and must reduce it as soon as possible.

The most important thing is to give safety to Anita; they must talk with her honestly about their problem with their marriage and try to accept the child's feelings. Much more time is needed to spend together, if they don't want to lose their daughter.

Through this approach, dialogue between Anita and her parents can improve and they are able to have more constructive conversations and feel closer to each other.

MANAGE YOUR OWN FEELINGS FIRST. Stay calm, and project the assurance to your child that you will see to their protection and safety. If they are the target of, or witness to, the bullying, assure them it is not their fault.

MODEL HOW TO TREAT OTHERS WITH KINDNESS AND RESPECT. Children learn by example and will reflect the attitudes and behaviors of their parents/caregivers. Problems in the family environment may increase the likelihood of bullying. For example, exposure to family conflict, parental use of drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, and child abuse is related to a greater likelihood of bullying others and also being bullied by peers.

LOOK FOR SELF ESTEEM ISSUES. Children with low self-esteem often bully to feel better about themselves. Mean behavior should be addressed by parents and disciplined.

Teachers' role:



Teachers were involved in this case in school. They decided to talk about the situation with Anita and her family.

In this situation, the teacher offered Anita support by advising her to talk to her parents in a more assertive way. The teacher tries to help them with managing the conflicts and being honest about the threats.

The teacher has another important role in this situation – talking with the class who are in conflict. They also need help to understand and process what has happened. Developing EQ is very important in this situation for all.

With the parents (and Anita) the teacher needs to plan the achieved goals for the near future. Maybe they need an outsider, a psychologist or a mediator, who can help them looking to their problems in a clearer way.

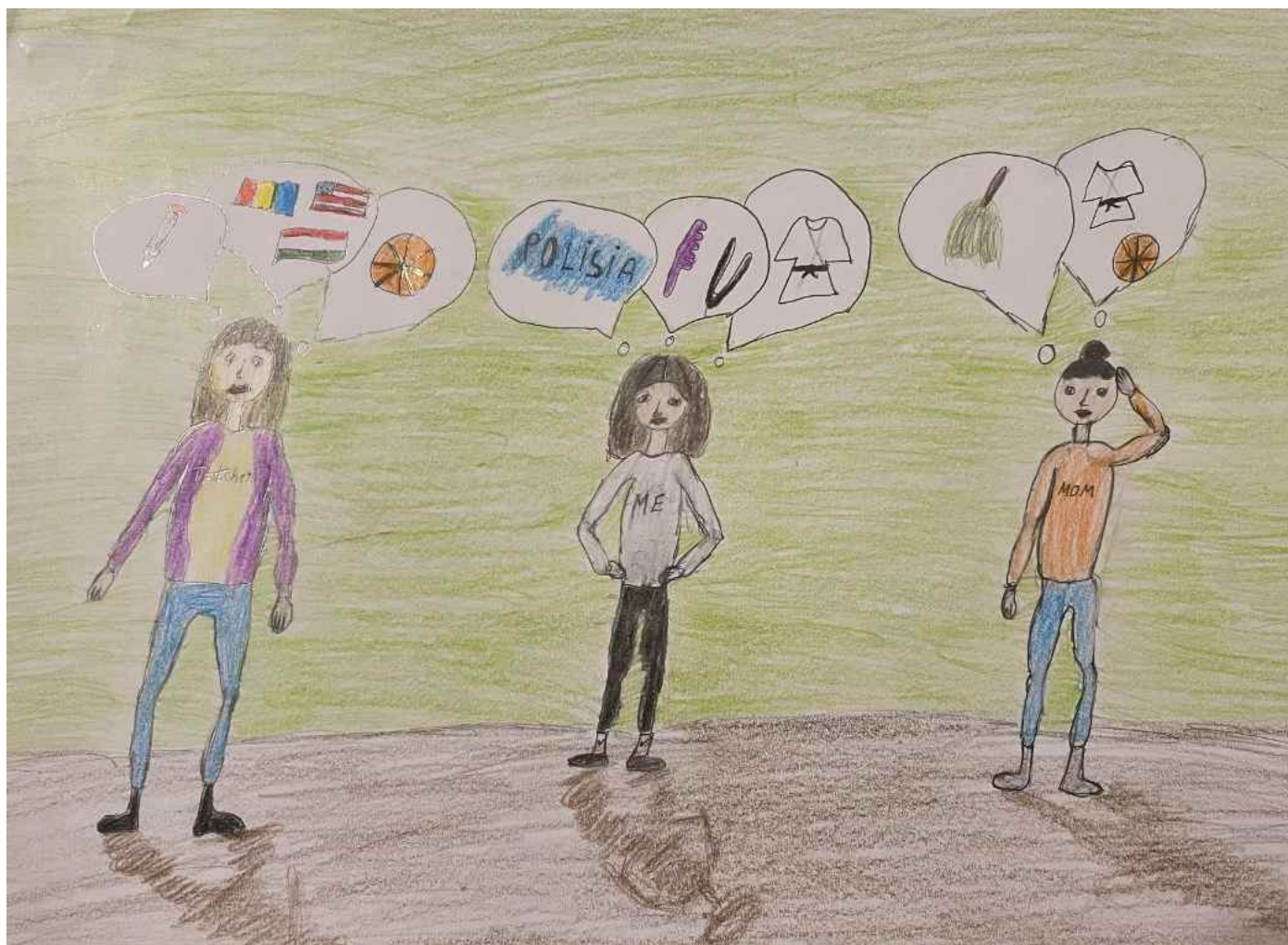
If you wish to know more about empathy and active listening:

<https://newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/>

If you wish to know more about assertiveness:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlwmfiCb-vc>
<https://study.com/academy/lesson/aggression-in-school-age-children.html>
<https://insightstobehavior.com/blog/guide-dealing-student-aggression/>

CASE STUDY #9: Choosing a school against motivation?



Daniel 15, has average results in school and teachers suggest a vocational course of studies in the next phase of the students' studies. He doesn't know what to do, because his parents want him to go to grammar school and later to university. Parents believe the student is being under-stimulated and his talents not being developed by teachers. The student is confused and finds the conflict in advice difficult to understand and cope with.

The truth is that he doesn't really like studying and he is not motivated enough to do more work, even independently at home. He only likes his physics and technology teacher enough to actively participate in all his lessons, whether they are intellectual or craft work. He likes the idea of becoming a carpenter, but knows his parents will not support him. He feels he has no interest in human subjects, has difficulty learning foreign languages and has no sense of achievement in school life in general. Daniel does not know what he wants to be, but he feels he is not hard-working enough to go to high school. He's more interested in tangible things and likes technology classes and physics. He likes working with different tools, trying out how to use them. He likes to spend time with the carpenter next door, watching him work.

His parents have seen his future as a University student and later a lawyer. They think that primary school teachers don't teach well, don't stimulate desire for knowledge and they feel that their child is much more talented as it seems in school.

Tension and discussions start coming up in family and school conversations and soon they turn into arguments, because parents want Daniel to study more and get better marks with a view to being successful at final exams.

Incidence

This is quite a typical scenario where parents and teachers have conflicts and disagreements because of the pupil's skills.

Student's strategy



Defining goals and planning to achieve them: Daniel needs to clearly define her future goals in order to present them to his family in a coherent and mature way

Role models: Daniel needs to focus the attention on who his role models are. It can be a teacher, a parent or even a neighbour. But he seems to need a 'helper'.

Time management and individual work organisation are also important skills for him. He needs to study how to manage his study-time, and he should study how to be more effective in learning. It can be useful in the exact case, when his parents hope he can get better marks, and it can help him in further studies, even if he goes to vocational school or grammar school. write better!!!!

Parents' strategy



In this situation, Daniel's parents feel the need to talk to Daniel's teachers because they are aware that he's a good student and could potentially follow an ambitious academic course of studies.

They try to talk to him as well on multiple occasions. They don't know exactly what their son wants to do in his life, and they don't know how to help him. They need to listen to his feelings and thoughts.

ACTIVE LISTENING is a skill that is most useful when positions are distant and it involves the ability to focus on the person's words and body language to fully understand their point of view, as well as their feelings. Active listening refers to a pattern of listening that keeps you engaged with your conversation partner in a positive way.

Active listening also allows empathy in communication, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. This is very important when they talk to Daniel's teachers. Parents should accept teachers' opinions and experiences about Daniel.

Through this approach, dialogue between teachers and parents can improve and they are able to have more constructive conversations.

Teachers' role:

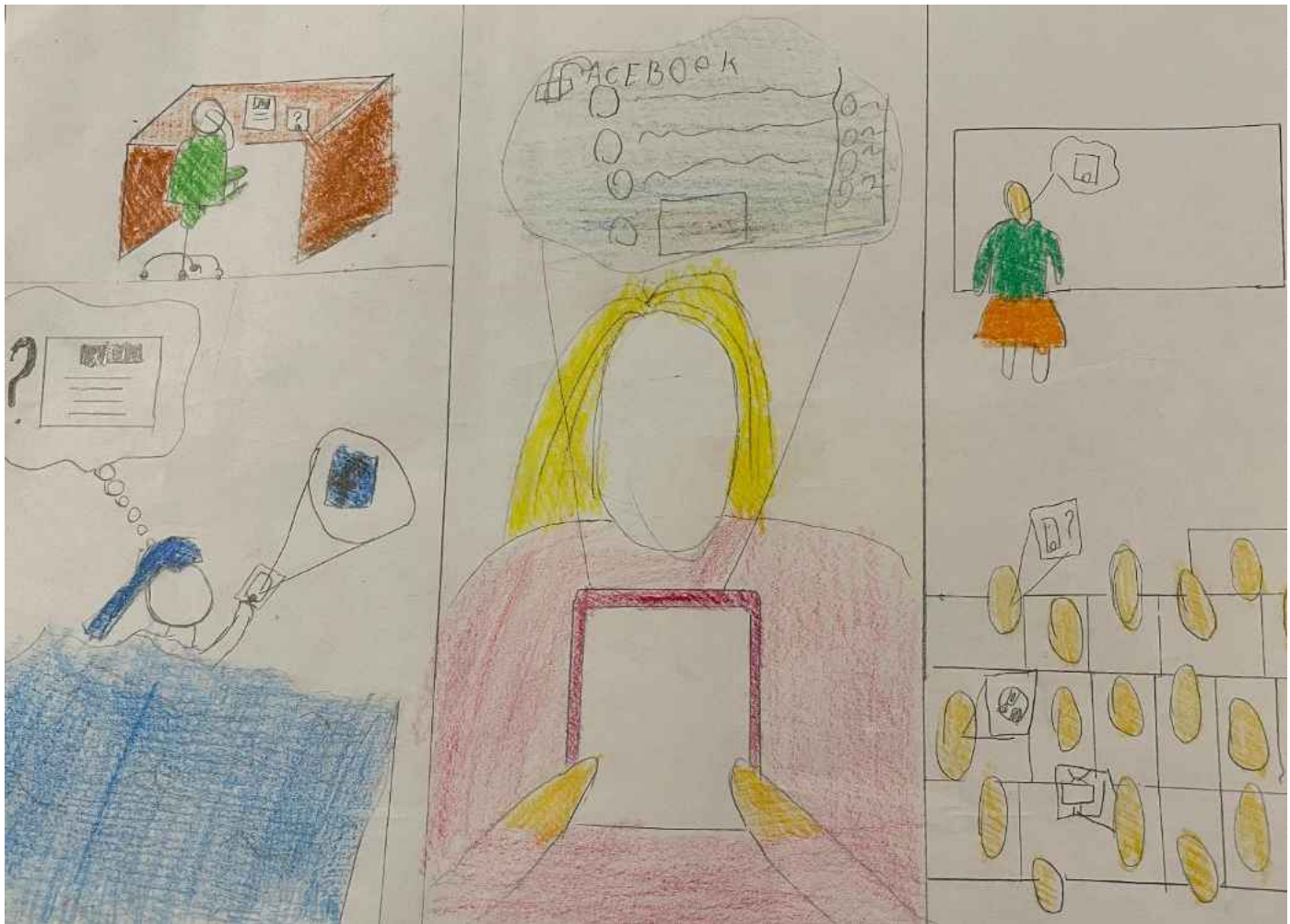
Teachers were involved in this case by parents and by themselves too, as they needed to talk to each other about Daniel's future.

In this situation, everyone needs to be very patient but honest. Teachers should **manage conflict** with parents. They should use **assertive communication** to define goals together. In this situation, the technology teacher can be a **role model** as well, and he can teach Daniel about individual work organisation.

If you wish to know more about assertiveness:

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Assertiveness.htm>
<https://positivepsychology.com/life-worth-living-setting-life-goals/>
<https://www.rootsofaction.com/role-model/>
<https://blog.rescuetime.com/time-management-for-students/>

CASE STUDY #10: Choosing a school when unable to make informed choices?



Mark is a 14-year-old boy and seems to be unable to navigate between the vast amount of information that technology provides. On the other hand, Mark is part of Generation Z (people born after the year 2000) who have used computers since childhood, surf the Internet and are considered active users of social networking sites. He successfully manages various social media, he has hundreds of followers on different social platforms. In spite of this, it is difficult for him to carry out a simple school research project because he can use ICT tools but cannot work with creating content. He is unable to filter out the necessary information from the vast amount of data he finds on the Internet. Is unable to: integrate information into his own knowledge, present the information product.

The use of the Internet in Mark's family is very different. Mark's parents attended primary school in the 1980's when there was no IT education, as the curriculum did not include any digital competencies. In recent years, they have learned to use IT in daily life: they are using internet banking, internet shopping, online shopping etc, although they have some concerns about them. Family habits have changed - Mark's parents are also active social network users, for example spending some family time on Facebook - although Mark doesn't use Facebook, as it's no longer cool if mom and dad are both "there". Mark is constantly online and posts on social media (Instagram stories, TikTok, Snapchat) regularly.

Through a discussion with one of his teachers, Mark has begun to be aware that perhaps he has a problem and that this problem might affect his prospects for the future.

How does his problem affect his ability to cope in other areas of his life? This problem prevents him from making informed choices and basing his decisions on good evidence. Mark has no concrete plans for his future work yet. He is interested in technical, STEM subjects, so he thinks he might choose a technical, vocational secondary school.

Incidence:

Digital natives - born after 2000, Generation Z and Alpha - cannot even speak when they already have excellent handling of the capacitive touch screen, can launch their own little apps, recognize shortcuts on Youtube, TikTok, Facebook. However, they do not see the meaning of the internet as if it couldn't be used for anything else.

Student's strategy



Critical thinking: Awareness of the issue is the first step. Mark needs to understand his problem and start addressing it by asking for support from his family and, most of all, from his teachers.

Decision making: Mark needs to focus on the decisions he has to make to overcome his problem.

Planning how to reach the goals: As he is familiar with online tools, one good option for Mark is to seek online tutorials and demonstration videos, short community challenges to solve specific projects.

Responsibility: Becoming aware of his problem and making a decision to address it, as well as looking for support and individual solutions, is a sign of taking responsibility and shows maturity, as well as willingness to improve.

Communication: It is also helpful and good for everyone to help his parents, learn about apps and practice using the device with them.

Parents' strategy



The first step is to identify the problem, followed by conscious examples and shared learning.

A purposeful strategy is to find a **BALANCE BETWEEN THE DIGITAL SPACE AND REAL LIFE**. It is a difficult task for Mark's parents as it is a world that their child handles much better. Setting a good example might mean, for example:

- not using family time by being on social media;
- Organising a trip using Google Maps and Google Street View or similar;
- Organising activities where Mark can use his device but for more meaningful purposes (i.e.: the QR code guide for museums and exhibitions, looking for a recipe together to make a favourite dish, or a YouTube video...).

Teachers' role:



Mark understands the cyberspace around him, but he's not a source critic. The first answer found is suitable for him. No comparison, no selection, no synthesis. Teachers need to teach the properties of information from an early age. The curriculum of each subject, and thus the curriculum of the teacher who teaches it, also includes digital competencies. However, finding content and serving it with modern tools so that Mark can become an active participant in learning, potentially creating shared knowledge and learning in a fun way, is positive.

Every student uses different information processing systems, and one of the aims of teaching is to contribute to the transformation of these systems. Teachers should therefore find a middle ground so that the threatening presence of digital dementia does not gain more ground, as technological progress is unstoppable and irreversible. They need to get used to using these tools and make the best use of them, so that they are used to the students' advantage.

Basic strategies:

- 1. Determining the need for information:** recognizing and identifying information needs, deciding what to do to get the information, being able to express the need for information, starting the search process.
- 2. Finding the information:** identifying and evaluating potential sources of information, developing search strategies, accessing selected information sources, selecting and downloading the information found.

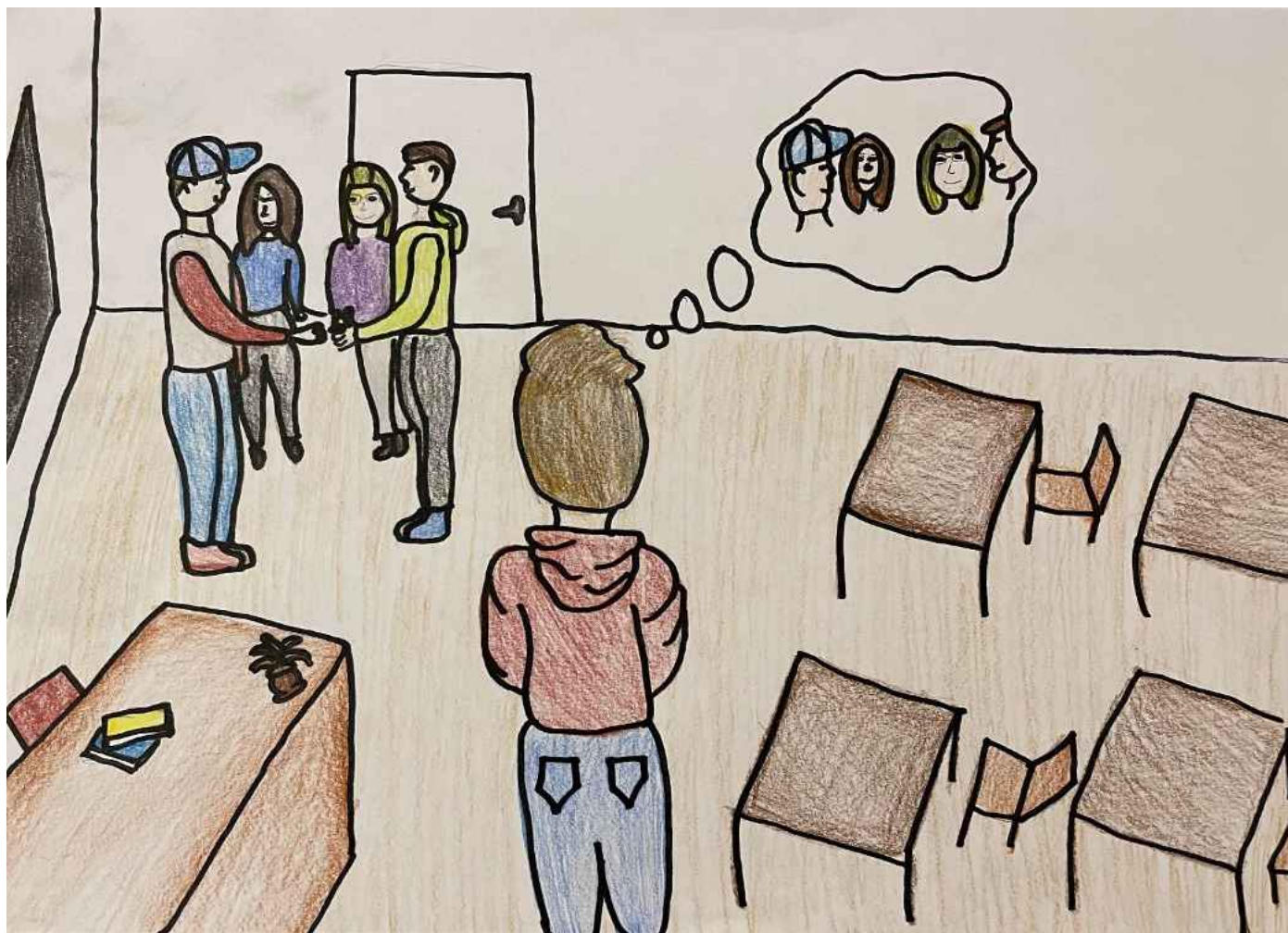
If you wish to find out more about how support the development of an useful use of technology , please follow the links below:

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/online/teenagers-and-technology>
<https://www.nytimes.com/guides/smarterliving/family-technology>
<https://youtu.be/vBoqXStvaTM>

If you wish to find out more about how support the development of digital literacy skills, please follow the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbe6xBibOL4>
<https://www.rasmussen.edu/student-experience/college-life/what-is-digital-literacy/>
<https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/edtech-integration/7-ways-teach-digital-literacy/>
<https://www.eschoolnews.com/2020/06/25/5-ways-to-help-students-develop-digital-literacy/>

CASE STUDY #11: Choosing a school for lack of self-confidence?



Peter is 13 years old and started going to school one year earlier than his peers. Therefore, he's the youngest in his class. Since the beginning of the school year, Peter has been going home more and more nervously, sometimes crying in his room. His parents believed that he was finding it hard to study this year and that he was getting frustrated because of that. This seemed to be confirmed by poorer school results than in previous years and his new wish to enrol in a vocational school, instead of pursuing a career as a journalist, as he had always talked about in the past. His parents also noticed a general change in his behaviour: a new interest in his phone and in expensive clothes. His parents tried to talk to Peter and eventually, he simply said to them that he was feeling "uncool" and wanted to be part of the "cool" group of classmates, but that he felt excluded from this group.

Peter's family understands that wanting to "belong" to a social group at this age is very common. However, this phenomenon can cause a lack of self-confidence in the long run and can significantly influence a child's decisions and even change their plans for further learning.

Incidence

Wanting to "belong" is very common at this age. So much so that it The case study describes a crisis that directly and clearly influences the behaviour, the attitude and the achievement of the student.

Student's strategy



Critical thinking: Awareness of the issue is the first step. Recognizing and accepting having a problem, is the beginning of looking for a solution. The only way Peter can start looking for a solution is to define what the problem was. Peter should ask himself why the situation is bothering him.

Self-management: When a teenager recognizes, understands, defines, and justifies a problem, it is easier to make a decision to address it.

Responsibility: Peter needs to understand that he can't solve the difficult situation on his own, and he can ask for outside help. It is important that he can talk about what is hurting him. This requires partners, e.g. parents, class teacher, or a friend. He can ask someone he trusts for advice and support.

Communication: Peter also needed to have a good relationship with his parents. After the conversation at home, he understood the cause of his problem, and with that, he could begin to process the problem.

Parents' strategy



It is difficult to recognize the problem because what happens is not in the family, but where the parents are not present and have no influence on the process. In order for parents to recognize the phenomenon, it is very important and necessary to be in daily contact with their child. As a result, Peter's parents soon recognized the problem. According to them, the development of an intimate relationship should start as early as childhood, and it is very difficult to make up for it in adolescence. If they manage to establish a confidential relationship with their child, it will be easier for them to open up, ask more often, and be more receptive to their advice. Peter's parents say we should not regret the time with the child! If parents talk to him often, even about day-to-day school things, he will sooner or later share his worries with them. If this happens, you may be able to come up with some sort of solution strategy on your own. If you get this far, you should be helped with advice and encouragement. It should be clear to the child that he or she can rely on the parents for everything.

What is definitely worth reinforcing in a child is their own values, uniqueness and specialness. If they are aware of these and are confident but not arrogant, they are less likely to give in to the expectations of others and are less likely to be influenced by external circumstances. Confidence can be strengthened and built by constant positive feedback, focus on this and avoid criticism as much as possible.

For parents emotional **SELF-AWARENESS, EMOTIONAL SELF-CONTROL, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT** skills are crucial to support the child.

As a practical level parents might encourage Peter to consciously seek the company of other peers. This could be a new community e.g. sports association, professional group, etc. where he could build other relationships based on common interests, strengthen his good qualities, and ultimately help with his self-confidence.

Teachers' role:



Guided observation: To be aware of this kind of concern of our students at all, teachers have to work hard to get students to trust them. They should feel that they can approach teachers about their issues, even when they are personal.

Guided conversation: - on the basis of a defined system of problem analysis criteria. - Defining the problem based on this, proposing a solution.

Peter must be made aware that he is a valuable person. He has to be told honestly that a teacher cannot offer solutions to personal problems but can help a process of seeking strategies to overcome the problem. Teachers can also talk to parents and/ or involve the school psychologist if deemed useful.

If you wish to know more about peer pressure:

Dealing With Peer Pressure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL5W5-gvIBE>

PSA Peer Pressure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tU4oJYYdFkc>

If you wish to know more about problem solving:

PhD Dr. Krisztián Egyed: Modern problem solving techniques (Korszerű problémamegoldó technikák)

<https://panfa.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Korszer%C5%B1probl%C3%A9mamegold%C3%B3-technik%C3%A1k.pdf>

If you wish to know more about exclusion at school:

Ildikó Nagy Székely: Exclusion at school (Kiközösítés az iskolában)

<https://e-nepujasag.ro/articles/kik%C3%B6z%C3%B6s%C3%ADt%C3%A9s-az-iskol%C3%A1ban>

CASE STUDY #12: Lack of interest in choosing a school?



Roland, 14 years old. He is late for school every morning, even though his parents wake him up on time, prepare his breakfast and pack his things, but they can't take him to school. He goes by bus – as his parents know. After starting school in September, he was given a month's grace period but then his form-teacher recorded all his delays in the class-diary. He currently has eight unauthorised lessons for which formal proceedings have been opened. His parents are invited to the school and they have to talk with his form-teacher, the school principal and a member of the authority. Tension and discussions start coming up in family conversations and soon they turn into arguments, because the parents want Roland to be more responsible and reliable. Roland doesn't understand why being late for a few minutes is so important. His school results have not deteriorated, his behaviour at school is the same as before. His friends are also late sometimes. The first thing he does when he wakes up in the morning is check what's been happening on social media. He doesn't notice that time has passed. He often misses the bus, so he has to run to school. He doesn't feel that if he doesn't behave properly (e.g., being late from school or home, not doing homework, not helping at home, etc.), he should be punished if his intentions were good intentions. And for many adolescents, it is not clear what is right and what is wrong.

Roland's problems with time management are linked to a general lack of sense of responsibility and this also shows in his poor interest about his future course of studies. He doesn't want to talk about it because he sees it as a problem and prefers to delay thinking about it until it will be absolutely necessary.

Incidence

A typical situation where a student lacks maturity and sense of responsibility.

Student's strategy



He has to learn a **sense of responsibility**, because he is alone at home in the mornings. He should ask for help in it, or accept his parents' advice.

His parents can be **role models** for him, instead of his classmates. He should work on **time management** as well, to make his morning routine more organised. It can be very useful in school-life, too. Learning about time management and working on becoming more responsible with work organisation, will also help Roland in thinking more clearly about his future and how to plan reaching his goals - choosing a future course of studies is a very important decision at this time in his life and a fundamental part of planning his objectives.

Parents' strategy



DIALOGUE: In this situation, Roland's parents need to talk to Roland's teachers and try to find a solution. They also have to talk to Roland, and they should try to explain that he has consequences for his actions, for which his parents are legally responsible. They should also be aware that in every school, later in the workplace, there are rules that must be followed and unjustified delays are not allowed anywhere.

Unfortunately, it is necessary to develop a sense of responsibility and reliability. This is a rather difficult task, especially when there is no cooperation from the child. Parents should be patient but consistent and firm, as society changes.

EMPATHY IN COMMUNICATION, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, to use that understanding to guide our actions can make it easier. Talking about the consequences of being unreliable as this skill is one of the most important in a family and in the 'real life'. It involves developing time management skills, which can be learnt at any time in our life.

Through this approach, a dialogue between Roland and his parents can improve and they are able to have more constructive conversations including conversations about planning the future and choosing the right school for him.

Teachers' role:



Teachers are involved in this case because they have to report regular lateness to the headmaster and the school. As several children in the class were affected by this problem, they could not let it go without consequences.

In this situation, teachers can offer parents support. They try to 'pick up ' against lack of interest and explain the consequences to students. Teachers have to talk about independent work organisation and time-management. This work, which can be done in class, can also support students in planning their goals and their future with better awareness and focus.

If you wish to know more about time management:

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/10-ways-improve-your-time-management-skills.html> (EN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ril1NkaDXlQ> (EN)

CASE STUDY #13: Not choosing a school and wanting to drop out?



Niki is 13 and is falling behind in many school subjects. She lives with her father following her parents' divorce but the relationship is tense and she is afraid of her father's reaction to her school results. Her father thinks that his role is to be authoritative and punish Niki for bad school results. Over time, the conflict between parent and student has intensified and this has made it even more difficult for Niki to concentrate on studying. Niki is no longer sure of anything, has lost confidence in herself and often feels that she is alone to face the things that happen to her. Niki says she won't be able to choose any other school and she doesn't really like any of them. She is really thinking about dropping out of school. Her maths teacher is also a mental health professional and she regularly monitors her students' development and wellbeing. The problem is whether Niki can still stay in that class or have to move to another if she fails in her studies.

Incidence

This can happen at any stage of the learning process when a student's psychological difficulties (particularly relating to conflict with parents) impact on their ability to study regularly and achieve good results. The more vulnerable the learner seems, the more important the right attitude of the family and class teacher. School social workers or school psychologists can also be involved to provide support if available.

Student's strategy 	Life skills: Role models, Learning as an experience, responsibility and responsible decision making. Dialogue: talking to parents about concerns is important and should be done before the situation worsens. Talking openly with a teacher may support achieving a good outcome. When you notice poor learning outcomes, you may want to signal this at home from the beginning, or look for a situation where they are not just two, but have another family or friend present who could mediate and help the discussion to be useful.
Parents' strategy	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: Emotional intelligence is the ability to relate, perceive, and positively influence one's own and others' emotions. "People with advanced emotional abilities are generally happier, more satisfied, more



balanced, and significantly more successful than their peers. Research has shown that only 20% of the curriculum learned in school has a positive effect on later success, while the other 80% have the highest emphasis on emotional intelligence, which unfortunately is still not given enough attention in the vast majority of educational institutions.

As a parent, an empathetic attitude would be important. Especially if you are raising the child alone. If you are aware of this shortcoming, you should seek the help of a professional: a class teacher, a school psychologist, a social worker, a mental health professional. In the absence of all this, even consulting with another parent can help deal with the situation. The most important thing is to face the problem and work aside to achieve a peaceful consensus.

To talk to the student frequently and show empathy and trust,
It could be worth contacting the teachers and class teachers for support.

Teachers' role:



Teachers can stimulate Niki and other students in difficulty to know and develop their interests, resilience and skills with extracurricular activities. Moreover, teachers may:

Follow protocols, for example by referring the problem to school helpers

Ask parents for a meeting, to discuss the situation and plan a way forward that would lead to a positive outcome for the student

Organise meetings with groups of parents to discuss similar issues in relation particularly to planning students' further studies.

If you wish to know more about empathy and teacher wellbeing:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/empathy>

<https://schools.au.reachout.com/teacher-wellbeing>

CASE STUDY #14: Choosing a school to facilitate sports ambitions?



Alex is 13 years old and is in his final year in this school cycle: there will be exams at the end of the year and in January he will need to make a choice about his future course of studies. His main interest, however, is football. He's been playing football since he was 5 years old, but at age 13 training sessions are becoming intensive and the environment more competitive than when he was younger. He has 3 training sessions a week and usually plays a match every weekend. He is quite a good player for his age and stands out in his team. The impact of the increased commitment in training time has been negative for Alex's school results, because he doesn't have enough time for homework.

In the last 2 years, particularly since getting taller and physically stronger, Alex's coach has been advising his family that he might have a future in professional football. Following the coach's opinions and advice, Alex's parents have invested both economically and emotionally in football as a future professional career for him, and have progressively stopped taking interest in his school results. Alex is not interested in studying further and thinks he might even drop out at age 16, because he sees his future in football. His family agrees.

Parents have been called by teachers to discuss Alex's school performance, to tell them that he is at risk of failing final exams, but parents ask teachers to push him through because he can't miss training sessions and he doesn't have enough time to focus on studying. Teachers try to warn parents that football may not be a "safe" career option.

Incidence: This scenario can occur when students have ambitions in sports and may be tempted to neglect schools.

Student's strategy



Alex is conflicted between wanting to focus all his energy into a possible future career in professional football, which is his dream, and beginning to understand that maybe he should consider the possibility of combining his commitment to football with finding a course of studies that he enjoys and can plan to continue until he's 18. He realises that cutting down his future option to football only could be risky as a strategy.

Defining goals & Planning to achieve goals Alex needs to clearly define how to combine his commitment to becoming a professional football player and

finishing his school path positively, in order to keep more options open for his future.

Role models: Alex's role models are professional football players. By doing some research online, he finds that most of them finished school cycles. A few of them even have university degrees. This shows that combining sports and school is indeed possible.

Responsible decision-making: In order to be "responsible", decision-making processes must start from awareness of options and consequences. Alex is young but he can find support to reach such awareness, as well as making the decision.

Parents' strategy



In this situation, Alex's parents should start from a process of **SELF-REFLECTION**: what do they think would be best for their son and why? Is the football dream fully shared by both parents, and why? Are they communicating sufficiently, and for their son's benefit, with his teachers, football coach and with him?

This process should allow them to be open and consider all options available to the student, particularly by discussing them with his teachers, in order to ensure that the best choice is made and that Alex can continue to play football while not cutting down other future scenarios too much, because he is still very young. Alex's main objective is also his dream. Being supportive with him and helping him work towards it can be done by discussing with him openly all possibilities and looking at all angles. This includes making him aware that there are some critical aspects to be considered, such as:

- injuries may occur and hamper a sports career
- short professional life, as athletes usually finish their career around age 40
- much competition to reach the professional level

Useful **EI** competencies to be aware of for the parents in this situation relate to self-reflection and effective communication. **SELF-REFLECTION** (also known as "personal reflection") is taking the time to think about, meditate on, evaluate, and give serious thought to your behaviours, thoughts, attitudes, motivations, and desires. It's the process of diving deep into your thoughts and emotions and

motivations and determining the great, “Why?” behind them. Effective communication **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** is a process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information such that the purpose or intention is fulfilled in the best possible manner. In simple words, it is nothing but the presentation of views by the sender in a way best understood by the receiver.

Teachers' role:



Teachers have a very important role in discussing with Alex and with his parents. They have the possibility of conveying to them the importance of continuing a meaningful school path, which can allow Alex to have more than one option open to him in the future, especially when professional sports has significant elements of uncertainty. They can also suggest courses of studies that can best facilitate a student in pursuing a sports career as well as having a positive experience in school. In particular, Alex could choose a vocational school, as a course of studies that which may have lower academic standards and can provide a final school diploma

If you wish to hear more about self reflection, please follow the links below:

<https://www.holstee.com/blogs/mindful-matter/self-reflection-101-what-is-self-reflection-why-is-reflection-important-and-how-to-reflect>

<https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/what-is-self-reflection.html>

If you wish to hear more about empathy and active listening, please follow the links below:

<https://newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-HYZv6HzAs>

CASE STUDY #15: Choosing a school against family expectations?



Laura is 14 and at the end of this school year, she will need to choose what course of studies she will follow until the age of 18. Her results in schools have always been very good and she particularly likes literature, history and foreign languages.

Her family owns a textile factory and are very wealthy. She helps out occasionally in the factory and with simple business admin work during the summer and sometimes at weekends. Family life is quiet with no conflict. Her parents have always seen her future in the family business. They believe that at the end of secondary school, at age 18, she will start working full time in the family business and these expectations have always been obvious in family conversations since she was a small child. Laura, however, likes studying and at age 14 she is not at all sure that she wants to work in the family business when she grows up. Instead, she wants to be a medical doctor and would like to choose a school focused on scientific studies (where main subjects include Chemistry, Physics, Biology).

Tension and discussions start coming up in family conversations and soon they turn into arguments, because the parents want Laura to give continuity to the family business, which is a secure option for her and would guarantee the continuation of their hard work in creating it and making it a success. Laura feels the pressure of her family's expectations and feels very conflicted. She doesn't know how to make a choice.

Incidence: This is quite a typical scenario where a student's chosen course of studies is in conflict with family's established expectations for the student's future.

Student's strategy



Laura initially feels very under pressure and struggles to make valid arguments because she quickly becomes emotional when her parents talk to her. She does not cope well with the pressure at home and feels that nobody understands her. She decides to talk about the situation at home with her maths teacher and this is very helpful to her. The teacher tells her about **assertiveness** and tells her that she needs to be more assertive and therefore become better able to express her opinions without her emotions getting in the way, and making her wishes sound childish and immature. Assertive communication is a characteristic for which a person is able to assert, or make a statement with the certainty that it is true, to maintain something as certain. ... Assertiveness means defending

one's rights, expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a direct, honest and appropriate way.

Assertive communication: this is the most important focus area for Laura.

Defining goals and planning to achieve them: Laura needs to clearly define her future goals in order to present them to her family in a coherent and mature way

Role models: Laura needs to focus the attention on who her role models are. N.B.: her parents may still be role models for her in certain areas (i.e.: strength and motivation to pursue their own career choice when they were younger).

Presenting her position to her parents in a more assertive way helps her talk to them more maturely and helps them understand her better, as well as being more empathic.

Parents' strategy



In this situation, Laura's parents don't feel the need to talk to Laura's teachers because they are aware that she's a good student and could potentially follow an ambitious academic course of studies.

Instead, they try to talk to her on multiple occasions. While initially they use the time to explain to Laura why it is important for the family that she eventually takes over the family business, over time they begin listening to her motivations also. **ACTIVE LISTENING** is a skill that is most useful when positions are distant and it involves the ability to focus on the person's words and body language to fully understand their point of view, as well as their feelings. Active listening refers to a pattern of listening that keeps you engaged with your conversation partner in a positive way. It is the process of listening attentively while someone else speaks, paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said, and withholding judgment and advice.

Active listening also allows **EMPATHY IN COMMUNICATION**, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide our actions. That makes it different from kindness or pity.

	Through this approach, dialogue between Laura and her parents can improve and they are able to have more constructive conversations.
Teachers' role: 	Teachers were involved in this case by Laura, who decided to talk about the situation with her maths teacher and asked the teacher not to involve her family. In this situation, the teacher offered Laura support by advising her to talk to her parents in a more assertive way. The teacher did not provide a "solution" to Laura or to her family, but supported Laura in developing a fundamental "life skill", to indirectly help her cope with the situation and find a solution that would be positive for everyone involved.

If you wish to hear more about assertiveness, please follow the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlwmfiCb-vc>

If you wish to hear more about empathy and active listening, please follow the links below:

<https://newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/>

<https://www.oscartrimboli.com/recommended-listening-resources/>

CASE STUDY #16: Choosing a school because of low self-confidence?



Viktor is 14 and likes mathematics. His mother is also a maths teacher in a high school. Viktor does his maths exercises alone, he doesn't need help at home. He has generally good results in school, yet he feels that his maths teacher doesn't reward him enough and he is beginning to lose some self-confidence about being good at maths. The teacher knows that Viktor's mother is also a maths teacher in another school. Although there is no particular concern, Viktor's mother attends a parent - teacher meeting, where she is greeted coolly by the maths teacher. She tells her that the boy works skillfully, but often doesn't use the line of thought she shows in class, doesn't understand why - and discreetly suggests that perhaps the mother is helping him at home and teaching him differently. Viktor is unable to talk directly and assertively to his teacher, even if he feels unjustly judged and simply wants to improve.

Viktor would like to continue his studies and enrol in a high school and then graduate in scientific subjects. He thinks he would like to become a maths teacher just like his mother. However, lately he has started thinking that perhaps he will not be able to achieve this, because it seems to him that his teacher is not satisfied with his results.

Incidence: It is common for students at this age to lose self-confidence if they don't feel sufficiently rewarded at school for their work and for their talents. This may negatively affect their choice of a future course of studies.

Student's strategy 	Life skills: learning as an experience, responsibility, responsible decision making, planning to reach the defined goals, autonomy, independent work-organisation, own life's organisation. Dialogue: Viktor should tell his family that something is making him insecure in relation to his relationship with a teacher. It is important for a student to be able not only to understand the subject curriculum, but also to understand the mood in interactions and emotional responses. Although still young, students need to strengthen their emotional intelligence skills.
Parents' strategy	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: In general, it is very important for parents to attend parent-teacher meetings at the beginning of the school year and get to know each teacher, mapping out the situation, and pay attention to any negative attitudes in order to understand them and clarify the situation for the sake of the student.



At this age, students are often unable to talk directly and assertively to teachers, even if they feel unjustly judged and simply want to improve. They need guidance and support from their families. Parents should pay close attention if the child reports that a teacher is “picking on” them. It is important that the parents use **ACTIVE LISTENING**: pay attention, give feedback and accurate response, try to rephrase and clarify with the person talking, give attention to non-verbal behaviour. Active listening also allows empathy in communication, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide our actions.

Through this approach, dialogue between ViKtor, his parents and the teachers, can improve and be able to have more constructive conversations and manage the conflicts that may arise.

Teachers' role:



It would be interesting to have a study that simultaneously examines the expectations of students and teachers! Exemption from prejudice is not only desirable for students, anticipated trust and positive expectations from the student can also make working together more effective. Working together with joy and satisfaction can lead to fulfilling experiences that are essential for maintaining mental health and creativity. Satisfaction with work is also a source of our positive self-esteem.

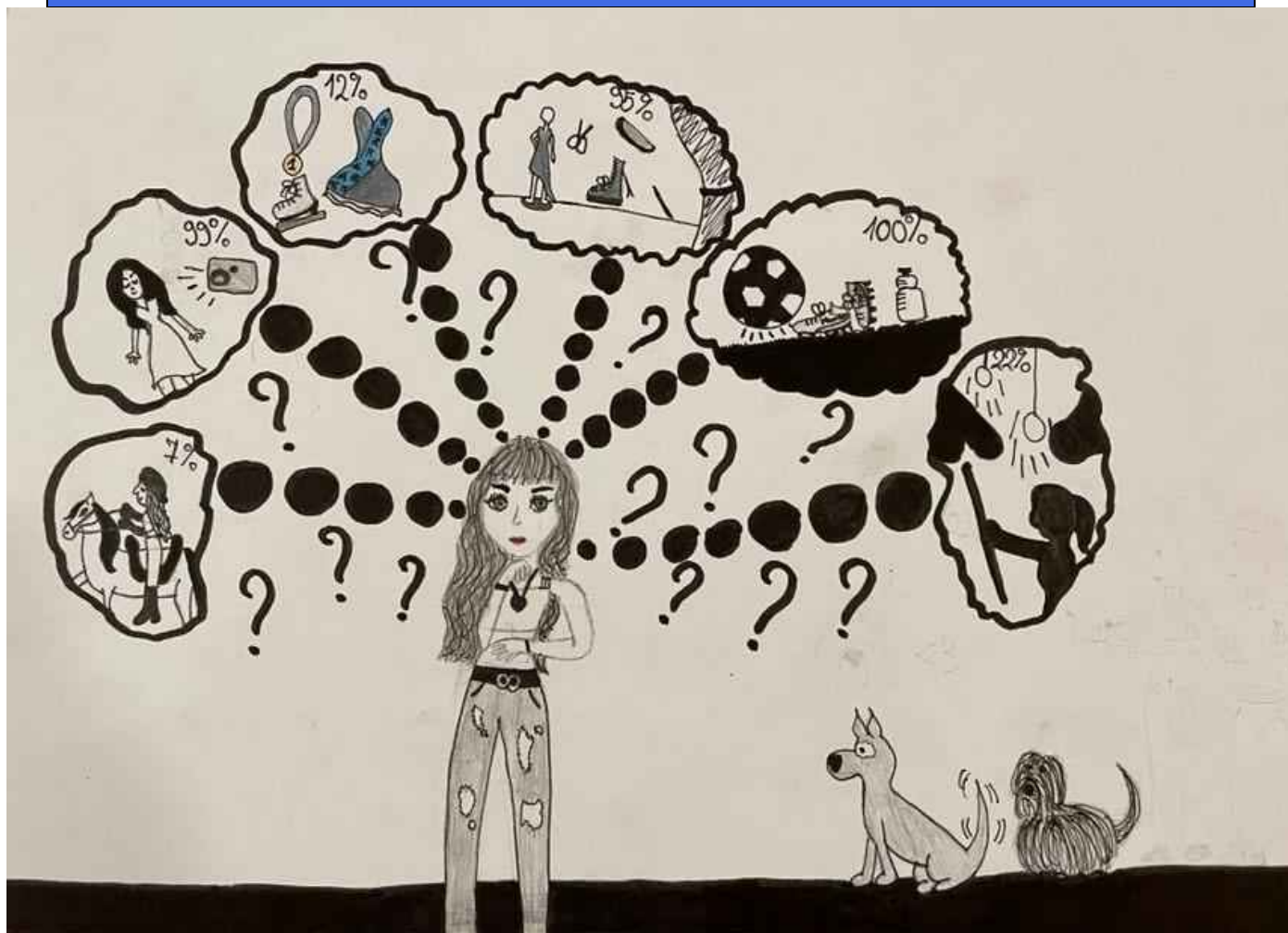
In this case the student would be supported by a comparison with peers, on attitudes, interests, desires that can become a key element for the decision.

If you wish to hear more about Emotional Intelligence:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01182/full>

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/tips-for-raising-an-emotionally-intelligent-child-4157946>

CASE STUDY #17: Choosing a school to follow a role model?



Gizella is a good student in every subject and has been thinking a lot about what kind of career she would choose as an adult, also by observing adults in her life, especially her teachers.

She highly values her maths teacher, who is young and inspiring to her. She enjoys maths classes, not only because she understands the subject quite well, but also because of the teacher's manners, appearance, speaking style and handwriting. Most of the students enjoy her classes and love her personality and way of teaching. Overtime, Gizella's maths teacher has become a role model to her, to the point that she's been trying to imitate her handwriting, and even imitate her dressing style. She thinks that she will follow her career choices. Her parents are aware of this. They also like the teacher and they are glad that she has chosen such a positive role model as an inspiration and want to support their daughter in realising her dreams, but feel that Gizella's trying too hard to "become" like her teacher and that, perhaps, she is changing too much and too quickly. Most of all, they are not sure that choosing a school to follow a role model is the correct way to make this important choice. They find it difficult to discuss this with Gizella, because after all, the teacher is a positive role model for their daughter.

Incidence

In both primary and secondary school, it can happen that a teacher inspires and motivates students to the point where they become very influenced.

Student's strategy 	Life skills: role models' importance, defining goals, planning to reach the defined goals Having a positive role model can be important in choosing a future school, however it is important that the student does not identify too much with an adult and maintains his/her own personality and way of approaching the world, particularly in relation to making important choices, when it is fundamental that goals are defined independently. Planning to achieve goals can be done with support from family as well as teachers and significant adults, including a role model if accessible and available.
Parents' strategy	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:



When somebody becomes a role model for a student, they may be influenced by the person, and this can turn into wanting to be like them, in every way.

As a parent, it should be noted that young people at this age may not consider their parents to be role models, and this can be disappointing in some circumstances. It is important for parents to be aware of their son/daughter's role models, or people they are inspired by, and ensure that these role models are positive ones. If that is the case, it is important to ensure that the situation is "managed" so that the young person maintains his/her own personality and way of approaching the world and, most of all, that he/she is able to make decisions independently.

Parents can develop the ability to understand, use and manage emotions in positive ways. The best outcome is if the parent and the teacher / role model can work together successfully.

Teachers' role:



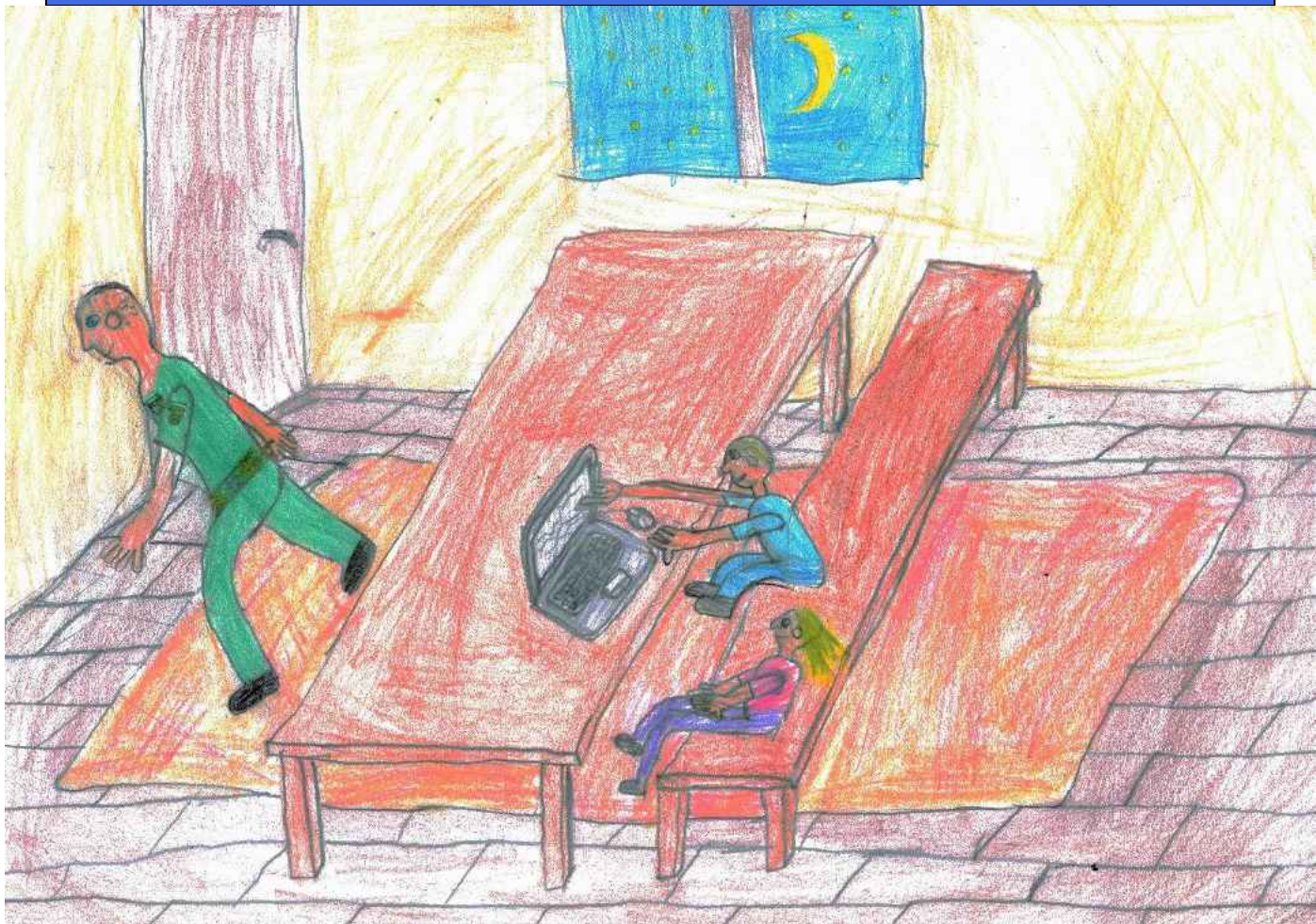
All teachers are pleased to see that students see them as role models. However, situations like this should be handled with care so that they do not try to imitate the teacher to the point where they lose their uniqueness. As a teacher, you can also contact the student's parents to complete the picture. If necessary, you can help you overcome the obstacles and pitfalls that arise.

If you wish to know more more about role models:

<https://schools.au.reachout.com/teacher-wellbeing>

<https://teach.com/what/teachers-are-role-models/>

CASE STUDY #18: Choosing a school because of digital addiction?



Erik is a 13-year-old bright, ambitious student who wants to study science at secondary school because he wants to become a dentist. Since the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent homeschooling online, he has started spending a lot of time online, chatting with classmates, watching TV series on his laptop, playing games and listening to music. He often turns off the camera during online lessons and ignores the teacher's explanations, playing games. He feels comfortable in the digital space, which is at the expense of his studies.

Parents are used to their child studying alone, self-consciously getting good results. They noticed that Erik spends a lot of time in his room with his laptop, hardly leaves his room, doesn't go out of the house, doesn't ride his bike as much as he used to, but they believe he is nevertheless studying for his secondary school exams, as he always had. For Erik, online learning is a formality and not a substitute for face-to-face learning. He is becoming increasingly comfortable in his own virtual world, talking less with his parents, not wanting to leave home, just sitting in front of the computer and enjoying the digital space. He often wakes up with red eyes, complaining of aches and pains, loss of appetite and moodiness, but these are still not enough to make him give up this lifestyle.

The class teacher informs the parents that Erik's school results have been deteriorating in the last period and that his levels of attention have decreased. In the teacher's opinion, he has become moody. Up to now, Erik's goal for high school was to get into a school focusing on scientific subjects. However, teachers tell his parents that they believe that Erik is no longer showing interest in his studies and, unless this is addressed, he may not be able to be successful in a school that's academically demanding and requires a high attention span.

The parents are very surprised to hear this and decide to question Erik, who eventually had to admit that he has been spending most of his time playing computer games, watching TV shows and chatting with his classmates.

Incidence:

Becoming addicted to online games and activities is frequent at this age and should be monitored. It can negatively impact school performance and attention span.

Student's strategy



Communication - Talking to parents more often about difficulties and problems
Planning to achieve goals - His goal is to get into a science class in high school. To achieve this goal, it would be important to set an agenda and stick to it so that he doesn't get caught up in time-draining factors that distract from his studies.
Role models - Erik's uncle is a successful dentist and he looks up to him as a role model

Parents' strategy



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT - Parents are responsible for managing conflicts that may arise in the family, including the ones arising out of imposing new rules. As a starting point, parents need to start with dialogue and active listening.
DIALOGUE AND ACTIVE LISTENING: Tell your child that you are worried about his or her changed behaviour: fatigue, lower grades, giving up hobbies... Don't use punishment to discipline, be consistent and your support will go a long way to helping your child understand expectations. Shouting, ignoring the child's needs or other punitive methods may have the desired effect in the short term, but they do not help the child to learn the skills needed to manage his or her emotions, so the problem may reoccur over time.
FINDING COMMON GROUND: Discuss and agree rules for device and internet use in the family, taking into account that parents are role models for online behaviour. Allow an hour on the computer after homework, allow a few extra hours at weekends. Stick to the rules, and remember that you are not simply trying to control him/her - you are working to overcome an addiction. Talk about how his peers may be influencing his behaviour, his fear of missing out and his online friendships.
 Parents can ask a computer specialist for help with filtering programs, restricted internet use, viewing history.

Teachers' role:

In addition to teaching the curriculum during the online learning period, the teacher should also take into account the age-specific needs of the students. Adolescence is a time of heightened social sensitivity, so physical isolation from peers and negative interactions during the online period can lead to poor self-



image and low self-esteem. Teachers can **support students' online learning** by providing concrete tasks that can be completed in a short time, not only in the online space. Sending the link of the digital lessons to the interface used so that they are not distracted by looking at advertisements and other sites.

If you wish to hear more about digital addiction, follow the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLxNaeKgWgl>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsWYxfVzX_U

<https://youtu.be/8rGZpR5T-WU>

<https://youtu.be/R-iQ5Y419kc>

<https://youtu.be/iOUsiXgtHGQ>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/securing-key-accounts-devices/parental-controls/>

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-020-01332-9>

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