

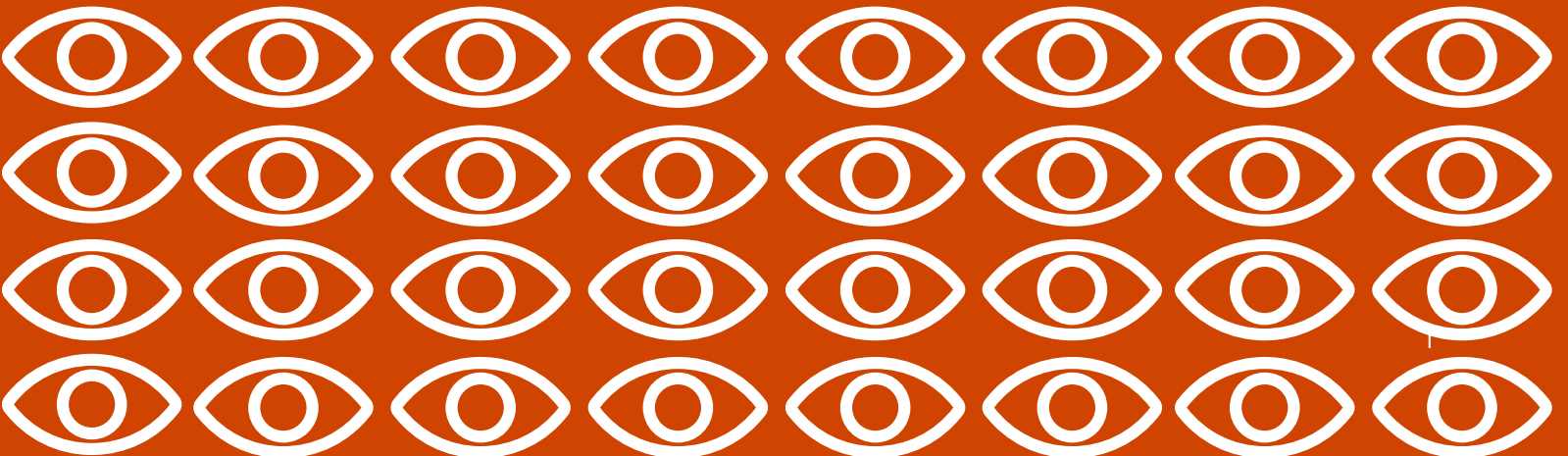
~~1984~~

2061

MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE

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Synopsis

In the gleaming, corporate-controlled superstate of the Free West, where the skies are clear and the streets are surveilled, Winston Smith knows something isn't right. The war is over. Peace has been declared. But the truth? It's been buried, rewritten, or deleted entirely. When Winston meets Julia, a bold, sharp-witted colleague, the two begin a dangerous journey through forbidden love, underground resistance, and the fractured memories of a world that once was. Together, they challenge a system powered by AI surveillance, media manipulation, and emotional control—risking everything to reclaim the freedom to think, to feel, and to love. 2061 is a darkly funny, gripping reimaging of Orwell's classic that feels chillingly close to home. Set in a tech-saturated future shaped by climate collapse and government-controlled information, this play asks urgent questions about truth, autonomy, and the cost of comfort in a screen-bound world.

Prompts for Conversations with Students

1

“Everywhere. In every room, on almost every street corner. Telescreens. They can't be turned off, they play news, ads & entertainment all day. They can listen and watch everything we do, use facial recognition...the Free West is not free.” — Winston

In describing the world, he lives in now, Winston talks of being constantly overwhelmed by the images and words of Big Brother and the Party, as well as being constantly under surveillance. He states that this is not freedom.

What does it mean to you to be free? What emotions or thoughts come up when you are feeling controlled or when you do not feel free?

Prompts for Conversations with Students

2

“Someone has to keep a record, a physical record, old documents from before the war, so that we can know what was good in the world before and what could be again.” — Winston

Winston’s act of defiance against Big Brother and the Party is not violence or protest or even publicly speaking out against them. His defiance is the written word; his journal allows him to keep a record of the past so that it can not be deleted. This relatively small or innocuous act leads to a revolution that changes the world.

**Why do you think Winston chose this act as his defiance?
What would you have done in his place?**

3

In the play both Winston and Julia do things that harm others. Winston has made people disappear through his work re-writing documents, Julia has created content meant to further control women’s bodies and promote the Party’s views, and both of them betray each other to the Party in the end.

**While it can be tempting to focus on these acts and place blame on the individuals, who or what is actually to blame?
Where does the power actually lie?**

Prompts for Conversations with Students

4

“Look: when you’re in love you’re using up energy the Party wants you to give to them – so no love! They want us living alone & frustrated all the time in our comfy little apartment, pent up...because if you’re in love & happy you don’t care about the Party.” — Julia

One of the ways Big Brother controls the population and maintains power is by keeping them disconnected from each other. Julia and Winston are pulled to each other by a yearning for connection with another person, out of a desire to experience love.

What can disconnection do to a person and how can it be used to control a whole population? Why do Julia and Winston yearn for connection and for love? What does it bring them, and how does it empower them?

5

“When you change the language, you change how people think.” — Winston

Do you resonate with this statement? How is language changing now, and how does it impact how you think?

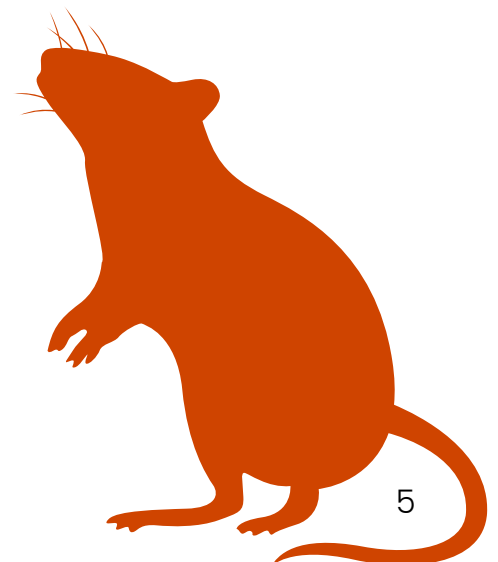
Prompts for Conversations with Students

6

“Orthodoxy is the enemy...the orthodox blindly obey the rules, never question them – in the end orthodoxy means not thinking: to be orthodox is to be unconscious” – Winston

Part of adolescent and young adult development is about forming an independent sense of self by exploring and refining what your values and core beliefs are. This process involves thinking! It involves needing to question the rules so as to know what you truly believe in, what your values and morals are, and who you want to be as an individual.

Do you resonate with this statement? How are you exploring your identity? Your values and core beliefs? Have you noticed any changes in your beliefs from when you were a child to where you are now as an adolescent/young adult?



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