

ABUSE

THEME: Abusive Behavior in American Society

OPENERS:

1. Abuse is defined as “to do wrong, to injure, violate, defile.” -Dictionary
2. “Six million women each year are abused by their husbands or boyfriends.” -Time
3. Many Americans are addicted to a daily supply of violent images through T.V., movies, video tapes and cartoon story magazines.
4. Violence directed at teachers, especially in big cities, has increased appreciably throughout the United States.
5. “I prevented a boy from cutting into the lunch line and directed him to the end of the line. When he passed me as the line moved along, he punched me and slammed his elbow into my stomach.” (Bronx H.S. teacher)
6. The recent increase of horror stories about children being sexually molested at day-care centers and elsewhere would lead one to believe that the nation is facing a near crisis.
7. There is an increasing public demand for shelter centers for battered wives and neglected children in our society.

DISCUSSION PROBES:

1. List examples of abusive behavior.
2. How do you think disrespect for your parents, teacher or neighbor could lead to actual physical assault?
3. How do you think abusive language, threats, and obscene gestures contribute to an atmosphere of violence?
4. Would you suggest that a student guilty of violent acts be expelled indefinitely? Discuss.
5. How would you feel about striking a member of the opposite sex?
6. Why do victims of abuse tend to hide it from others?
7. How do you think movies, T.V. programs, video tapes, and magazines featuring violence contribute to the problem of abuse?
8. Alcohol abuse and family abuse often intensify one another. How would you react, if caught in the middle of such a family situation?
9. “A man’s home is his castle -.” Do public officials have a right to intervene in a family, when abuse is suspected?

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Society in general has tolerated (family) violence.
2. Abusers tend to learn their violent behavior by observing their parents.
3. There are many forms of abuse: verbal, sexual, physical, mental and neglect.
4. If abusers were hit as children, they learned that parenting equals hitting.
5. Some bully personalities yearn to be adults to have the increase in size and strength to hit.
6. Abusers learn to drink and to strike to resolve problems and to reassert control.

7. Universally, all abusers project blame onto others “It’s not my fault that -.” “She deserved that -.”
8. With the growing public awareness of abuse in society more efforts are being made to deal with the problem.

BRINGING IT HOME

1. Help a physically abused person by insisting he/she seek a counselor and/or physician.
2. Know those agencies, both public and private, which offer help and shelter to abused persons.
3. Support legislation to increase public awareness and sharpen official response to problems of abused children and others.
4. Incorporate self-control and tenderness into your own behavior.
5. Reject the notion that brute force is a valid method of solving problems.
6. Understand that frequent images of violence and portrayals of abuse in movies and T.V. can numb one’s sensitivity to suffering.
7. Become familiar with the problem of abuse in our society by reading and discussion.