

Experiential Teaching: Children & Violence



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One of the challenges in teaching students of all ages about violence is that much of the content is quite depressing and often has some personal application for students, either through first hand experience or students may be cognizant of a friend or family member who has been a victim of violence. The literature germane to violence can also be problematic to students who may feel overwhelmed about the myriad implications of violence. As health educators many of us recognize the importance of proving students with activities that “bring the content alive,” but feel challenged and often ambivalent about the appropriateness of learning activities when dealing with such a serious topic.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide participants with some activities to utilize in the classroom environs that can increase knowledge and understanding. From the authors’ experiences that utilizing such learning activities for students provides them with an opportunity to think about violence from many perspectives and often serves as a bridge to dialogue in the classroom environs. Please join us in making the world a safer place.

Sexual Harassment/Hurtful Behavior
Grade School

It is very important to create awareness in young children about inappropriate behaviors but not to scare them. This activity seeks to increase knowledge about safety in an interactive manner.

Materials:

- Paper stoplights: 3 for each student depicting a red light, a yellow light, and a green light. This can be made from clip art from the world wide web
- A list of statements for use by the teacher. Examples:
 - John hits David on the playground
 - Bethany says a bad word
 - Mrs. Pitt says hello to Liz
 - A man you don't know tells you your mommy told him to pick you up after school
 - Jeremy grabs Mary's shirt
 - Chrissy says "boys are dumb"
 - A lady at the park asks you to look at the puppy in her car
 - Tom and Margaret walk to school together everyday
 - When you are home alone it is ok to answer the door if someone knocks
 - Mark says girls can't play baseball
 - Sally pinched Gene on the school bus
 - A person on the phone asks if you are home alone
 - Someone pats you on the head

Procedure:

Distribute a copy of the 3 stoplights to students. Instruct the students as each statement is read they are to hold up the appropriately colored stoplight:

Red-stop- this is not a safe behavior

Yellow: be careful

Green: this behavior is ok

Allow for discussion as appropriate if there are conflicting opinions.

Created: Ruth Kershner

Mixed Messages: College Students

This activity is prefaced by discussion about communication techniques, gender differences in communication and mixed messages, as well as the effect of drugs and/or alcohol use and the impact of the aforementioned on relationships or dating.

Materials: 2 copies of the scenario below

Procedure: one male and one female student. Reinforce the need for 2 “brave” volunteers. Explain to these 2 students that they are to stand back to back or on opposite sides of the room and speak the roles as below

Becky: I met him at a frat party. He was a lot of fun and a great dancer. I was really excited when he came over and introduced himself to me. We danced a few dances and had a few drinks together. It was getting late and we were having such a great time. He invited me over to his apartment and I thought, “why not,” he’s one of the good guys.

Jeff : When I first saw her I thought, “wow, she is so hot.” She had on a really form-fitting dress and she had legs up to here! She was a great dancer and could pile away the liquor. We had some laughs and got pretty loose so when the party was over I asked her back to my apartment. She was kind of hanging all over me and I thought, hmmm, this could be my lucky night.

Becky: His apartment was really nice and homey for a guy’s place. We had a couple more drinks and danced a little bit before we started to kiss. He was a good kisser but things seemed to be going faster than I wanted. I told him to stop but he wouldn’t stop. He said, “ I know you really want it.” I kept saying no and tried to push him away but he just wouldn’t. The next thing I know he was ripping off my clothes and then he raped me.

Jeff: I knew I had it in the bag by the time we got back to my place. She was really snuggling up to me in the car and she downed a couple more drinks so she was hot and ready for it, I could just tell. We started kissing and then I made my move. She tried to come off like she didn’t want it but that’s pretty typical for girls. Lots of them act like they don’t want it but, hey, that’s so they don’t come off as being easy.

Becky: It was awful and he kept acting like I wanted it and it was no big deal. I was crying and he was just insensitive to how I was feeling. He told me he liked me and wanted to get together again. I never want to see him ever- I’m not sure how this happened.

Jeff: She started crying and flipping out, like she didn’t want sex. Come on- she was all over me and kissing me- I could tell she wanted me. Why so girls come on to guys like this and then they act like they weren’t into it? Girls want sex just like guys do.

Follow-up: Follow up this role-play by asking students to ascertain what type of messages were misinterpreted in this event. Was this rape? What makes it rape? What behaviors did Becky and Jeff engage in that were problematic. How might students protect themselves from being a victim and a perpetrator of sexual violence?

Scenario/Activity: created by Ruth Kershner

Dating Violence Scenario: High School

- Fold a piece of paper to make twelve sections or provide students with twelve rectangle slips approximately 1 inch x 2 inches
- On these stripes write the following:

3 Favorite possessions	1 each on 3 strips
3 favorite activities	1 each on 3 strips
3 favorite people	1 each on 3 strips
3 personal values or attributes	1 each on 3 strips
- Ask students to hold slips in hand like playing cards and listen to teacher as she/he reads scenario

Scenarios:

- You have met the significant other of your dreams. He/she enjoys spending time with you. He/she asks you to forego a party you have been looking forward to, to spend time with him/her. **Remove one possession from your hand.**
- This relationship is really taking off. Rather than taking the bus to school you now ride with your new love. After school activities take a backseat to this relationship. **Get rid of one activity and one person.**
- You are so excited...the class trip is this weekend. You have been looking forward to this for a month. Your new boy/girl friend is pouting and doesn't want you to go. You weigh your options and decide to forgo the trip. **Lose one value and one possession.**
- Dream lover now wants all of your time. You are so flattered by this...It must really be love. He/she tears down your friends who verbalize concern over you. You think they are jealous of your relationship. **Tear up one activity and one person.**
- You and dream lover are having an argument over something insignificant. His/her anger is out of control for the situation—You are stunned when out of the blue he/she slaps you. He/She promises you it will never happen again. You believe him/her. **Tear up one value and one activity.**
- It is 2:00 in the morning...your parents are worried sick. The phone ring—it's the ER. You are at the hospital. Dream lover, angry because you smiled at a male/female friend, has twisted your arm and broke it as well as blackened your eye. **Without talking, while the person next to you isn't looking, take two of their slips and tear them up.**

Scenario: Ruth Kershner. This is an adaptation of an activity published by: Linda Kolaya and Barb Grimes-Smith

Domestic Violence Scenario: College Students

- Fold a piece of paper to make twelve sections or provide students with twelve rectangle slips approximately 1 inch x 2 inches
- On these stripes write the following:

3 Favorite possessions	1 each on 3 strips
3 favorite activities	1 each on 3 strips
3 favorite people	1 each on 3 strips
3 personal values or attributes	1 each on 3 strips
- Ask students to hold slips in hand like playing cards and listen to teacher as she/he reads scenario
- You have recently married, and our spouse who early in the relationship treated you like royalty has recently begun losing their temper and yelling at you for minor reasons.
 - Tear up one possession
- It seems that the anger level in your home is escalating. Fights are now the norm not the exception. You are beginning to feel fearful of your spouse and work hard to keep things right.
 - Tear up one activity and 1 possession
- This past weekend things really got out of control. After a night out for dinner and a few drinks your spouse slapped you across the face when you got home. He/She swore that it would never happen again.
 - Tear up 1 person and 1 characteristic
- Well even though you were sure that slap was a one-time event, your spouse has been becoming more agitated and has begun keeping tabs on you. Who you were out with, etc. and becoming very jealous. Additionally the violence in your home continues to grow.
 - Tear up 1 characteristic and 1 activity
- Last weekend you went to the ER as you were pushed to the floor and punched several times. The ER doctor asked you if you were beaten and you denied it.
 - Tear up 1 person and 1 activity
- The worst has happened...your spouse came to your work place and beat you. Fortunately the police were called and your spouse was taken off to jail. You are seeking legal and emotional council.
 - Tear up two of your neighbors slips without looking or talking

Scenario: Ruth Kershner, adaptation of an activity published by: Linda Kolaya and Barb Grimes-Smith

Differentiating between Sexually Harassing Behaviors: Middle or High School

The purpose of this activity is to compare and contrast sexual behaviors that may be of concern to young people.

Materials: 8 by 11 sheets of paper, tape or tacky putty

Procedure:

Create definition sheets and behaviors sheets, one statement each on the 8 by 11 sheets of paper. Use statements as below or create your own to suit class needs.

- Statement Sheets
 - Chad asks Rayna to sleep with him and he will help her with her homework
 - Lester calls Robbie a faggot
 - Angelas's locker has the word "skank: written on it
 - Janelle pinches Chris on the buttocks
 - Seth says to Megan, "I'd like to get me some of that!"
 - The football coach says, "you throw like a girl"
 - A group of guys says, "check out her chest," when Cynthia walks by them
 - Mrs. Smith gets an obscene phone call.
 - The bathroom wall in the girl's bathroom has "Maria is so gay" written on the mirror
 - Courtney's boss says he'll give her a raise if she gives him a kiss
 - James gives Josh a wedgie in the school cafeteria
 - Jesse snaps Debbie's bra strap
 - Somebody wrote "for a good time call Olivia" on her book
 - Taylor tells the girls in math class and in social studies that Anika sleeps around
 - Bobbie wears a t-shirt to school with "big Johnson" on it
 - Mr. Masters says that girls aren't as good in math as boys are
 - There's a picture of the girls in the sports Illustrated swimsuit magazine in the boy's locker room
- Definition Sheets
 - Verbal Sexual Harassment: unwanted sexual comments
 - Physical Sexual Harassment: unwanted physical touch
 - Sexual Favors: offering favors, help, job advances in exchange for sexual acts

Hang the definition sheets on the wall in 3 separate places in the classroom. Explain the terms to students. Distribute the statement sheets to students and instruct them to tape the statements under the appropriate definition. Students can then write their own statements and distribute them to students to again place accordingly. Discuss with students the issues of sexual harassment in school and the workplace.

Erotica vs Pornography: College Students

This activity is designed to compare and contrast erotica vs pornography. Students are often unable to differentiate between the two or one student considers erotica, another considers pornographic and vice versa.

Materials: large poster paper, markers

Procedure: divide students into equal groups of 5-6. Give them poster paper and markers. Assign ½ of the groups to create a list of what the groups considers to be erotica and the other half of the groups are to create a list of behaviors or actions they consider to be pornographic. After the groups are finished, bring them back together and have them present the results of their groupwork.

Discuss with students the “official” definitions of both erotica and pornography and discuss the implications of both as they pertain to violence and women.

Erotica, from the Greek *eros*, "love", refers to works of art, including literature, photography, and painting, that deal substantively with erotically stimulating or arousing descriptions. It is rather a modern word used to describe the portrayal of human sensuality and sexuality with high-art aspirations, differentiating such work from commercial pornography
(definition from Wikipedia)

Pornography: Sexually explicit pictures, writing, or other material whose primary purpose is to cause sexual arousal. (Wikipedia)

Types of pornography

Violent - material featuring actual or unmistakably simulated or unmistakably threatened violence presented in a sexually explicit fashion
(sadomasochistic, rape, women begging for sex).

Nonviolent but degrading - degradation of people, usually women, features domination, humiliation, sexually subordinate.

Nonviolent - Non degrading - participants occupy substantially equal roles in a setting devoid of apparent violence or pain. These activities take place outside of marriage, love, commitment or even affection.

Personal Experiences and Violence: College Students

In my classes I do not ask students to share personal experiences of violence, though many will do so through journaling or class discussion. This activity is used in the first class to give students an idea of how prevalent violence or acts that can be considered hurtful to men and women, either directly, or through sociocultural expectations integrated in our society.

Materials: small piece of paper, pencil, list of statements

Procedure: Ask students to get out a small piece of paper. I usually ask a few students to take out paper and tear it into small pieces. I like to encourage environmentally health behavior ☺ Ask the students to indicate on the paper their gender using either the male or female symbol. Tell students you will be reading a series of statements one group for men and one group for women. The men are to sit quietly while the statements pertaining to women are being read and the same holds true for the women, while the statements pertaining to females are read. As the statements are read students are to keep a tally in their head of how many of the read statements apply to them personally. At the end of readings student write down on their slip of paper the number of statements that apply to them and fold their paper. We then do what we call the “Kershner anonymous pass” in which students pass the papers until I say stop. They then unfold their papers. Instructor asks for a show of hands of how many (specific to gender have a number under 8 on your paper, 9-15-, and so on. This activity helps students to understand the implications of social and cultural effects and victimization, which serves as a pathway to discussion about these issues.

Women

- Ever had plastic surgery
- Felt fat
- Exercise to excess
- Said mean things about another woman
- Dieted more than five times
- Bullied other women
- Gossiped about women
- Manipulated your sexuality to get what you want
- Ever called a woman a lesbian
- Been a victim of childhood abuse
- Been hit by a man
- Been a victim of domestic violence
- Been raped
- Hit a woman
- Hit a man

- Had sex without really wanting to
- Fought with a woman over a man
- Dressed in a way others perceived inappropriate
- Harassed specifically because of your sexual orientation
- Use drugs or alcohol to “get wasted”

Men

- Ever been told to be a man
- Ever been called a sissy
- Ever been hit by a family member
- Ever lifted weights to get stronger
- Ever viewed pornographic movies
- Looked at sexually explicit magazines
- Lied about how far you got with a girl
- Ever made sexual comments to a woman
- Ever been a victim of harassment
- Ever been abused by a man
- Ever pushed a woman to have sex with you
- Ever used drugs or alcohol to get a woman to have sex with you
- Ever been a victim of sexual violence as a child
- Ever raped a woman
- Ever said something you didn't mean in order to have sex
- Ever been picked on by other guys
- Engaged in an illegal act
- Ever been raped
- Ever fought with a man over a woman

What Do You Know?

This can be a pre or post class activity to determine knowledge needed or gained by students. Distribute sheets to students. Each student needs to get their sheet filled out by other students who then initial the “box” with the answer.

Can differentiate between: pedophilia child molesting incest.	List two legal types of sexual harassment.	Differentiate between abuse and neglect of a child.	Can describe the Cycle of Violence.
Can describe the risk factors for elder victims of abuse.	Knows the age range of the most at-risk for rape.	Three behaviors of an abused child.	Define stalking.
Can list three characteristics of an abuser.	Know the name of local rape crisis center.	List two services of a rape crisis center.	Can list five ways to help a victim of violence.
Knows what SANE means.	Knows two risk factors for date rape.	Can list three types of violence experienced women of other cultures.	Can differentiate between sexual abuse and sexual assault.