

Activity 1: Exploring Power Differences and Individual Responsibility

Notes for Educators and Community Leaders

This activity aims to demonstrate how gender, status and peer pressure influence youths' actions, beliefs and perceptions. The result of this activity may be unexpected and may lead the youth into a discussion that is un-anticipated.

The level of safety that youth feel will determine their level of participation. It is imperative that ground rules be well established. Some suggested ground rules appear in the opening notes of this resource.

In an effort to be culturally sensitive and accountable to youth, we suggest as an alternative to playing cards, that you use hand-numbered cards made from bristol board.

Invite youth to visit www.whiteribbon.ca, youth section, so they can post their comments and see what youth across Canada have to say about gender stereotyping and violence against women. We have provided a package of small buttons for youth. Please distribute these at the end of the exercise.

We also suggest that you distribute copies of the tip sheets for parents to your parent community and tip sheets for boys and tip sheets for girls to youth.

Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Linkages

Healthy Living: Grade 5

Growth and Development

- identify strategies to deal positively with stress and pressures that result from relationships with family and friends;
- identify factors (e.g., trust, honesty, caring) that enhance healthy equal relationships with friends, family, and peers;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- explain how people's actions (e.g., bullying, excluding others) can affect the feelings and reactions of others;
- apply strategies (e.g., anger management, assertiveness, conflict resolution) to deal with personal-safety and injury-prevention situations (e.g., swarming, threatening, harassment);

Healthy Living: Grade 6

Growth and Development

- apply a problem-solving/decision-making process to address issues related to friends, peers, and family relationships;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- identify the responsibilities associated with caring for themselves and others (e.g., while babysitting);
- describe and respond appropriately to potentially violent situations relevant to themselves (e.g., threats, harassment, violence in the media);

Healthy Living: Grade 7

Overall Expectations

By the end of Grade 7, youth will:

- explain how harassment relates to personal safety;

Growth and Development

- use effective communication skills (e.g., refusal skills, active listening) to deal with various relationships and situations;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- describe harassment and identify ways of dealing with it (e.g., by communicating feelings and reporting incidents of harassment);
- identify people and resources that can support someone experiencing harassment;

Healthy Living: Grade 8

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- analyse situations (e.g., hitchhiking, gang violence, violence in relationships) that are potentially dangerous to personal safety;

You will need:

- An old deck of playing cards (2 through 10, jack, queen, king and ace, with 2 the lowest card and ace the highest). Black cards (spades and clubs) are boys and red cards (hearts and diamonds) are girls. (And see above for alternative to cards.)
- Stick pins, safety pins or velcro (one for each student)
- What's your card? Worksheet (one for each youth)
- Photocopies of the journal, one for each youth

Activity (30 minutes)

1. Recall ground rules for all classroom discussions. Remind youth that you are counting on them to enable each student to respond as an individual and also as a responsible member of a community who is owed respect, is not measured against a stereotype and who will not participate in stereotyping.

2. Instruct youth to walk around as if they are at a party, greeting people and carrying on light conversation. They are, however, supposed to treat people according to the value of the card they have on their backs. "Low" cards are not cool and the people wearing them get ignored or snubbed. People wearing "high" cards are important and are treated nicely. Black cards are boys and red cards are girls.

3. After this has gone on long enough and the youth have been able to guess where they "stand," have them sit and write down their reactions to the game, using the What's Your Card? Worksheet, and how they felt during the game (depending on their status). It's important that you are listening attentively so that you can reflect on what you heard youth say.

4. Discuss their reactions and then go on to make parallels with society.

Ask questions such as:

- Who do they know who is treated as a low-status person? Who is treated as high?
- Why is it sometimes hard to know a person's status?
- What are the characteristics of a high-card male?
- What are the characteristics of a high-card female?
- How do the characteristics of a high-card male and female perpetuate stereotypes of what we are told a girl or boy are supposed to be?
- Do you agree or disagree with how status is assigned in society? Who does it benefit and who is disadvantaged?
- Is everyone's voice heard under this kind of system of preference?
- What examples can you think of that do not use a status system?
- What choices can you make that will help those who are treated poorly?

Wrap-Up (15 Minutes)

This exercise should lead to a group discussion about how people are treated differently. This exercise is also about how 'value' is assigned and who gets a high or low 'value'. We suggest that you highlight examples of behaviour that support difference and highlight personal responsibility. Please leave five minutes of time to introduce the youth journal.

Hand Outs (5 Minutes)

If you have not done so already, please hand out a button to each youth who participated in the activity so they can visit www.whiteribbon.ca. Youth can come and see what others are saying about having healthy equal relationships and the problem of men's violence against women. Please encourage your youth to share what they think. Please distribute copies of Tip Sheets for parents, boys, girls, and coaches as necessary. The tip sheets are located at the back of this resource under Appendix 2.

Hand out copies of the journal to each youth in your group or class and explain how the journals will be used.

- Your journal is a private space where you can reflect on healthy equal relationships.
- Think of a safe place to keep your journal at home.
- Your journal is a place to both write and draw your thoughts.
- No one will see what you write or draw unless you choose to share it with someone.
- At the end of every week, you will have some questions related to what we just learned together.
- At the start of every Campaign in a Box lesson/group, you will have the choice to share what you have been thinking about drawing and writing. Sharing is your choice, you don't have to share unless you want to.

This Week's Journal Questions

1. Think about a time when you saw someone being treated badly because of their 'status'?
2. What could you have done to help the situation?
3. What can you do when you see it happening again?

What's Your Card? Worksheet

1. Where do you "stand"? (circle one) HIGH MEDIUM LOW

2. Were you a male or a female? FEMALE MALE

2. How did people treat you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. How did it feel to be treated that way?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. How did you treat people with a high card? Was it different for a boy or girl?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. How did you treat people with a low card? Was it different for a boy or girl?

.....

.....

.....

.....