

Violence in my life

“Follow the three Rs: Respect for self / Respect for others and / Responsibility for all your actions.” The Dalai Lama

THEMES



PEACE AND VIOLENCE



HUMAN SECURITY



GEN. HUMAN RIGHTS

COMPLEXITY



LEVEL 3

GROUP SIZE



ANY

TIME



60 MINUTES

Themes	Peace and Violence, Human security, General human rights
Complexity	Level 3
Group size	Any
Time	60 minutes
Overview	This is a discussion activity in which people explore their experiences of inter-personal violence.
Related rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right to life, liberty and security of person ▪ The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be able to identify oneself not only as an object of violence but also as someone who could be a source of violence ▪ To encourage the development of skills to deal with violence in positive ways ▪ To develop values of tolerance and responsibility.

Instructions

1. Explain that this is an opportunity for the participants to share thoughts and feelings about personal experiences of inter-personal violence, both when people were violent to them and when they were violent to others.
2. Make sure that everyone knows and understands the rules for participatory group work: that everyone should be treated with respect, that what anyone says is held in confidence and that no one is to feel under pressure to say anything which makes them feel uncomfortable.
3. Conduct a brainstorm of the word “violence” and ask them to give examples of everyday violence, for instance, verbal abuse, insults, sarcasm, queue-jumping, barging in front of someone, smacking a child or hitting/being hit, burglary, petty theft or pickpocketing, vandalism, etc.
4. Ask everyone to take five minutes to reflect about personal incidents when:
 - a) someone acted violently towards them
 - b) when they acted violently towards someone else
 - c) when they saw someone else being violent but did not intervene.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start with a short discussion about the activity itself and whether or not it was difficult, and, if so, why. Then go on to analyse the causes and effects of the different situations a), b), and c) above. Ask for volunteers to offer their experiences for general discussion. Let them say what happened and how they feel about it and then open the discussion to everyone.

1. Why did the violent situation happen?
2. How would other members of the group have behaved in similar circumstances?
3. Why did you behave the way you did?
4. How could you have behaved differently? Has the rest of the group any suggestions?
5. What could anyone have done to prevent the incident from happening?
6. In the case of c), why didn't they intervene?
7. What were the causes of the incident?
8. How many incidents were the result of misunderstandings, how many the result of bitterness, spite or jealousy and how many the result of differences of culture and custom, opinion or belief?
9. What do people understand by the word "tolerance"? How would they define it?
10. Is it right that people should be completely tolerant of everything other people do or say?
11. Why is tolerance a key value for the promotion of human rights?

Key dates

16 November
International Day for
Tolerance

Tips for facilitators

Be prepared for surprises and to support anyone who find this activity difficult or upsetting. You cannot know everyone's background nor what is happening or what has happened in their families. It might be that some participants have had bad experiences with violence of different forms. Stress that the purpose of this activity is to develop skills for dealing with violence, by recognising the causes, acknowledging feelings and emotions, and developing skills for acting assertively in order to control the situation and to find non-violent means of responding to violent situations. Tell people to remember Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". If we expect others to follow this Article, then we too have to follow it. If you have more than ten people in the group you could divide them up into small groups to share their stories.

Variations

This makes a good drama activity. Ask two, three or four people to develop a short role-play of an incident. The rest of the group observe. You can then stop the role-play at intervals and ask the audience to comment or to make suggestions as to how the role-play should continue. Alternatively, members of the audience can intervene directly to take over from the actors and develop alternative outcomes.

Suggestions for follow-up

Find out about organisations that provide support for victims of violence, for example, telephone help-lines or victims' support networks. Find out about other organisations that promote understanding and tolerance in the community. If you would like to continue working with the theme of peace and violence you could look at the activity "Living in a perfect world", on page 160. Find the answers to the clues to complete a peace mandala!

Ideas for action

Get in touch with an organisation that works to promote peace and non-violence in the community and find out how you can get involved.