

Angry and Violent Teens

TEACHER'S GUIDE

What teachers need to know:

There are many types of youth violence—bullying, hitting, fighting and verbal abuse are the most common. Youth violence (crimes committed *by* and *against* young people) crosses all geographic and socioeconomic boundaries. Consider the following statistics cited by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control...

- In 2002, more than 875,000 young people ages 10-24 were injured in violent acts. Approximately one in 13 of these injuries required hospitalization.
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24. It is the leading cause of death for African-Americans in this age group.
- In a nationwide survey, 17 percent of students reported carrying a weapon on one or more days in the last 30 days.
- One-third of students in the United States report participating in a physical fight one or more times in the past year.

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Create and interpret body language/expressions of emotions
- Identify underlying causes of body language

Materials:

- Emotion cards (write emotions written on 3 X 5 cards)
- Paper and pens/pencils

Project and Purpose:

Students know that *words* express how we feel, but they may not be aware of what their *non-verbal* language says to others. This lesson explores the messages we send with our *body language*.

1. Write a variety of emotions on 3 X 5 cards (e.g., misunderstood, afraid, hurt, rejected, happy, enthusiastic, embarrassed, frustrated, etc.). Have each student take out a piece of paper and something to write with.
2. Begin the lesson by talking to students about the “tools” actors use: body language, voice, gestures, facial expressions. Explain that in this lesson, students will use their bodies and imaginations to create a series of emotional poses.
3. Have a volunteer select one emotion card; he/shewill use his body to “pose”—expressing that emotion. Remind the student that he/she must be able to “freeze” in that position and hold it without moving for the next two steps (about two minutes).
4. Within 30 seconds, ask students to silently write the emotion that they believe the volunteer is expressing in the pose. Quickly share the students’ guesses out loud while the volunteer remains in the frozen pose. Ask why students selected those words.
5. Now ask the volunteer to show the emotion card. Did anyone in the class guess correctly?
6. Repeat the exercise three more times with three different volunteers and emotion cards.
7. Repeat the exercise a fourth time, but this time, instead of asking students to write their guesses of the emotion, give the class one minute to use their imagination and write what happened to the person to make him/her have this emotion and body language.
8. Ask the students to share. Did anyone have the same ideas?
9. Ask the volunteer what he/she had in mind for the cause of the emotion he/she was expressing. Did anyone guess correctly?

Class Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think the media is playing a role in the increase of youth violence? Why or why not? If you said yes, what do you think should be done?
2. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "The limitation of riots ... is that they cannot win and their participants know it. Hence, rioting is not revolutionary but reactionary because it invites defeat." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Do you think the same can be said for violence in general? Why or why not?

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. Do you consider yourself to be a violent or a non-violent person? Would your friends agree? Why? How do your actions support your statement?
2. How does it make you feel when someone yells at you or gets angry with you? Most people get angry in return. Why do you think this is? How can you find a healthy balance between standing up for yourself and being non-violent?

Evaluation:

- Did all students participate in the exercise and class discussions?
- Did students learn how body language expresses emotion?
- Were students able to accurately interpret the signs of body language?