



5. Title: Myths about Violence

Short Description/Overview

Teen dating violence is for some young people part of their everyday interactions and social networks. Young people entering their first emotional/sexual relationships often lack skills and knowledge needed to establish quality and fulfilling relationship with a partner. Also, they are not equipped to recognize signs and patterns of violent behaviour or to act on it. This activity is adapted from CESI manual Better Safe than Sorry: Prevention of teen-dating violence (Cesar, S., Bijelić, N., Kobaš, V., Hodžić, A. (2006).Croatia: CESI

Themes: violence against women, sexual violence

Time: 40 minutes

Group size: 12 – 25 participants

Objectives:

To raise awareness and knowledge about myths around violence.

Materials Needed:

Worksheet for young people: "Beliefs about Violence"

Pens

Handout: Facts about violence

Step-by-step:

Distribute the worksheet "Beliefs about Violence" to each participant. Explain to them that this is a list of common beliefs about violence and each participant has to think about whether statements are myths (i.e. false belief) or facts. If they think that a particular statement is a myth then they have to write down the true fact. Answers should be written on the worksheet.

After the participants have filled-in the worksheets, discuss together each myth as a group and present them with the facts if they are not aware of them (for this use handout "Facts about Violence").

Debriefing and evaluation

Participants will become aware of the prejudices around violence and learn facts that lie behind the myths.

Tips for facilitators

After the discussion you can distribute handout "Facts about Violence" to the participants.



Handouts

Worksheet: Beliefs about Violence

1. Rapists are unknown maniacs in dark alleys.
2. Sometimes the victim is to blame for sexual violence.
3. Victims of rape are often young and attractive women.
4. Alcohol and drug abuse are causes of violence.
5. Women are as equally violent as men.
6. Men who are violent cannot help themselves.
7. Violence and love do not go together hand in hand.
8. If the victim leaves the abuser, the violence will stop.
9. When two people go out on a date, we cannot say that rape happened.
10. Men cannot be victims of sexual violence.

**Handout: Facts about Violence**

1. Often rapists are partners, friends, relatives, acquaintances or neighbors. Rape often happens in the home and it is planned earlier.
2. The victim is never to blame for the violence, regardless of her (his) type of clothing, behaviour, or going out at night. No one wants to be raped. Responsibility and guilt lie on the rapist.
3. Every woman can be a victim of rape regardless of her looks, age, type of clothes that she wears, or type of behaviour. Sexual violence is an act of power and control and has nothing to do with sexual attraction. Rapists choose victims that have less power compared to them.
4. These are not the causes of violence because violence happens when these factors are not present. Abusers can use violence without being drunk or on drugs. It is socially acceptable to blame alcohol and drugs for violent behaviour.
5. Men are more often perpetrators of violence. Men and women can both be aggressive, but women are less likely to be perpetrators of violence. Men will more often display physical aggression and are likely to inflict serious physical injuries.
6. Violent men cannot control their own behaviour and therefore they need professional help. Violent behaviour is an inappropriate way of dealing with stress, anger, fear and frustration.
7. A common belief is that love and violence are so different that they cannot be a part of the same relationship. But, reality looks rather differently, as from a very young age, some children learn that the grown-ups who love them are also the ones that physically punish them.
8. Violence does not stop when the victim leaves. This myth implies that a woman has control over the experienced violence and if she wants the violence to stop she can "just leave" the abuser. This also implies that she is responsible for the situation. Women do not have enough support from society when they want to end an abusive relationship.
9. Rape is rape, regardless of the nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Most perpetrators of violence are known to the victim. During adolescence, perpetrators of violence are in 70% of cases partners or ex-partners.
10. Men can be victims of sexual violence. According to some statistics, 1 out of 9 men experience an unwanted or coercive sexual act during his lifetime. In these cases perpetrators of violence are mostly men