

Prevention Action Change

Building Skills to End Violence

Abuse Continuum Exercise

Materials: clothes line, clothes pins, 3 large slips titled (Healthy, Bothersome, Dangerous, Life-Threatening), small slips each representing a different situation.

Set Up:

- Set up clothes lines so that it is stretched and hangs within reach of the students.
- Hang the continuum indicators (Healthy, Bothersome, Dangerous, Life Threatening)
- Place the slips in a pile and the clothes pins in a bag near the clothes lines
- Break the class into groups (dividing by gender may offer interesting insights into each side's perspectives on the continuum...)

Instructions:

1. Everyone in the group, go up and take a slip of paper (**all simultaneously w/o discussion**). Look at the situation on the slip and think about, if this were happening in the context of a relationships would you think it was healthy, bothersome, dangerous, or life threatening. Attach it to the clothes line where you think it should go. Go back and get another, etc. until all the slips are plotted.
2. Now, pick someone in the group to **read** the slips off in order from Healthy to Life Threatening and decide as a group if they are in the right place, should be moved and why. Note: there is not an exact order – just cluster under the headings. Most are purposefully situational. (*Allow the group to do steps 1 and 2 w/o facilitation – unless really large group*)
3. If 2 or more groups, when done sorting, each group briefly visits another's clothes line to look at how they plotted the slips – notice differences.

Discussion:

1. Did you notice differences between where each group plotted the slips? (explore why)
2. What are different types of violence you see up here? physical, mental, emotional, sexual...
3. Which of these might be a sign that someone is abusive? See what they get and then add in the rest, discuss perception of greater seriously when abuse is physical, impact on reporting...
 - patterns of behavior rather than single incidents
 - talk about how bothersome ones can become more serious and how put downs and being made to feel stupid or fearful can make it harder to leave an abusive relationship...
 - alcohol and sexual violence – in 75%of sexual assaults alcohol or drugs were involved...
 - gender and race of victims and perpetrators (get at myths stranger vs. known etc.)
 - Definitions of SA, RV and Stalking.

Point Out: When we take action on the bothersome ones (sexist jokes, etc.) we can prevent some of the dangerous or life threatening situations for ourselves and for others.