

SAVAGE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Solutions Game

“It takes an entire village to raise a child”

We enter into a school setting. Village High School. Split up the class into groups of five. There are five roles in each group. A teacher, a police officer, a parent, a principal, and a guidance counselor. As a group they are given problems that they must solve. Each group member has an objective that has to be achieved and together they must come up with solutions.

Objectives

The teacher – needs students to learn & feel safe in the classroom.

The principal – must work to make the school better and support the teachers

The guidance counselor – must support the students academically and otherwise

The community police officer – must maintain safety of students and staff

The parent - responsible for the students' safety and discipline

SAVAGE DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Problems

Scenario #1

A student has been arrested for bullying another student because she looks different than the rest of her peers. Words are exchanged in the incident and she is tripped, kicked and spit on. The police are called in by a neighbor. Both students attend Village High School.

Scenario #2

A video of the boys basketball team is posted on YouTube depicting the students calling the players of another team they are about to play in the playoffs gay, and making derogatory remarks about homosexuals. The video has been taken off but had been viewed by thousands of people. Some of the remarks on the site are positive about the post, and some are threatening. It was discovered when a teacher caught a student watching it over the lunch hour.

Scenario #3

A student has been caught stealing from the cafeteria. When he is confronted by police the student gets physical and has to be restrained. When pressed about the issue by police he breaks down and will only speak with his English teacher. When he is with his teacher he admits to stealing but also confesses that he hasn't eaten in two days and his father has been out of work for six months and that they can't afford to groceries until the end of the month.

Scenario#4

A teacher has been having problems with a particular student. He has been in and out of the principal's office all year for the way he talks to women. On this particular day an argument ensues in class about feminism. The student and the teacher end up in a verbal argument about the way in which the student engages about women. He maintains that women are not as smart as men. He feels that woman are only looking for guys with nice cars and lots of money to take them shopping. He also states that woman are gold diggers, pushy and manipulative. The teacher now refuses to teach the student until something is done about his behavior. The student feels that he is entitled to his opinion and has also become a bit of a celebrity from the incident. It is known by staff that the father is a single parent, the mother having left in the last year.

SAVAGE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sentencing Circles

What is a sentencing circle?

A sentencing circle is an attempt to rediscover the traditional Aboriginal method of dealing with members of the community who have broken the law. The circle is made up of the accused, the victim, the families of the accused and the victim, elders and other interested members of the community. A judge and a defense lawyer or prosecutor and/or policeman also sit in the circle.

Once someone sits in the circle, there are no special powers or privileges. Everyone in the circle has the same power, as the circle operates on the basis of consensus.

Everyone in the circle must agree as to what to do about the person who has broken the law. After the circle has reached consensus on sentencing the offender, the judge then steps back into his/her judicial role and may impose the sentence that the circle has recommended.

Who can have a sentencing circle?

Anyone who has broken the law can ask to have a sentencing circle. If the person has pleaded guilty or has been found guilty of a charge by a court, that person may ask the judge to refer him/her to a sentencing circle. The judge will then consider several factors: the accused must agree to be referred to the sentencing circle, the accused must have deep roots in the community in which the circle is held and from which the participants are drawn

- are there Elders or respected non-political community leaders willing to participate
- the victim is willing to participate and has not been subjected to coercion or pressure
- disputed facts have been resolved in advance
- the court is willing to depart from the usual range of sentencing.

What is the community's involvement?

It is absolutely necessary that the community that forms the sentencing circle be willing to assume not only the responsibility for sentencing the offender, but also for follow-up and for support. The community needs to regard this as a strong and long-term commitment.

END OF EXCERPT

