

10-PART VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERIES

LEADER'S GUIDE

*PeaceTalks*TM



PROGRAM #4
DEALING WITH BULLIES,
TROUBLEMAKERS AND
DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

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PeaceTalks: Series Overview

Violence is a choice, and each and every one of us can reduce violence and make our lives safer by choosing peace. Choosing peace means understanding that violence is not random, universal, or inevitable. We can prevent and reduce violence by choosing to avoid or deescalate conflicts and avoid risk factors for violence such as alcohol, drugs, guns, and gang membership. This is the underlying message of the 10-part *PeaceTalks* video series featuring humorist and youth counselor Michael Pritchard.

Filmed across America, in real schools with real students, each *PeaceTalks* video program turns its attention to one aspect of the spectrum of violence that young people face in their everyday lives: managing anger, resolving conflicts, dealing with bullies and troublemakers, the issue of respect, sexual harassment and dating pressures, racial conflicts, peer pressure, gangs, and triggers to violence such as drugs, alcohol and guns.

In these programs, Michael and the young people take a long and honest look at kids' lives today and how the violence in our society affects them. Michael uses his special talents of humor, warmth, empathy and understanding to help the teens discover for themselves the choices they have and the answers to living together peacefully. Together, they look at the basic changes teens need to make in their attitudes and beliefs, and the skills they must learn in order to step up to peace.

PeaceTalks offers a three step program for choosing peace which is the unifying theme for all ten programs. These steps are:

1. Predict Consequences
2. Cool Down
3. Walk Away

Throughout the videos, Michael encourages young people to have the maturity, confidence, and composure to walk away from insults and confrontations, and channel peer pressure into a positive force for peace in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities.

How To Use This Video

This video is designed for use in classrooms, community centers, youth organizations, camps, teen groups, libraries, or for children at home. Although teenagers are the target audience, parents, teachers, school administrators, school support staff, counselors, social workers, youth workers, peer counseling trainers, and anyone else who has regular contact with and a commitment to young people would benefit from the video as well. This Leader 's Guide is aimed at the classroom teacher, but it can be used by any group leader or parent who wants to get the most out of DEALING WITH BULLIES, TROUBLEMAKERS AND DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.

As with the other videos in the *PeaceTalks* series, DEALING WITH BULLIES, TROUBLEMAKERS AND DANGEROUS SITUATIONS is intended to be used as part of a learning experience that begins before viewing the program, and ends beyond the classroom walls. The discussion questions, activities, projects and events suggested in the guide are intended to focus and enhance this learning experience.

Before showing DEALING WITH BULLIES, TROUBLEMAKERS AND DANGEROUS

SITUATIONS to your students, the following steps would be useful preparation:

- Screen the video at least once, and note areas where you might want to stop the tape to probe an issue more fully.
- Read this guide to get a sense of how the video might be used, what discussion questions would work best with your students, and what follow-up activities or projects would be most appropriate and beneficial.
- Ask the students questions to get them thinking about some of the key issues presented in this program. You might want to distribute copies of the discussion questions on page 6 of this guide. Be sure to go over these questions in advance to make sure they are understood and that they are appropriate to your students. They can be used to spark discussion after the screening.

The teaching technique underlying the entire *PeaceTalks* series is peer education. Because we believe that teen viewers will more easily learn the skills and attitudinal changes proposed if they are taught by their peers, the programs are structured around discussions where real kids grapple with tough situations and model positive solutions and attitudes.

Dealing With Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations: Objectives

- To identify the methods bullies use to intimidate others
- To offer solutions for coping with bullies
- To learn to recognize dangerous situations and how to avoid them
- To review “street smarts” that will help keep us safe

Dealing With Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations: Synopsis

Michael Pritchard says that when he was young, bullies were easy to spot. But today, bullies have changed. They are causing more trouble and making life more dangerous for all of us.

“Are there places at school where you wouldn’t walk?” Michael asks a group of teens.

“There are certain areas at school, especially around lunch time, where certain people hang out,” answers one girl.

“If they see you alone, you’re a target. And if they know that you’re not someone who fights back really quick ...” another girl adds.

In another school, teens say that the bullies there bump into you, pick on you, push you out of the way, and keep you on guard if you have to pass them.

One boy tells about a younger friend who was attacked and hurt by twelve older teenagers.

Although some of the girls think that the younger boy must have done something to provoke the attack, the boys say that you don't have to do anything to be picked as a target by bullies. A bully usually picks on someone for no reason, someone who can't fight back.

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. They aren't necessarily bigger, older, stronger or tougher. A bully is simply someone who pushes people around with threats and violence.

One of the saddest things about growing up is that certain kids get marked by bullies and their lives are often made miserable. These kids may be smaller, not know how to fight, or just not care to fight.

The favorite victim of a bully is someone who is different, because bullies like to isolate their victims in the hope that no one will step up to defend them.

Michael asks one group if there are kids they know who get hassled a lot. The teens say that they do. They describe the characteristics that seem to cause certain kids to become targets for bullies and how those kids must feel as a result.

When asked if the teens feel isolated or depressed as a result of their dangerous environment, one girl says that when she gets upset about this, she goes to her parents for advice and support.

Another girl talks about a group she is in called Encounter. The members meet and talk about their feelings. Belonging to the group lets members know that they're not the only ones with those feelings. Being in the group makes members feel safer because everyone cares about one another.

"What are some ways to stop bullies in the community or at school?" Michael asks a group.

One boy says that you used to be able to stop a bully by standing up to him. Now, if you stand up to a bully, he'll just get his friends and you'll really get stomped.

"How does that make you feel that the rules have changed?" asks Michael.

The teens agree that this isn't the way things should be in high school, but it's the way things are.

"Maybe later when we become the community, we can help certain things, but not now," says a boy.

"We can help things now, and we are the community now," responds Michael. "We have a high school community and you have to start believing that we can make a difference right here, right now -- right here in this group."

Michael says that bullies use fear to intimidate, isolate and divide us. Because it can be dangerous to confront a bully alone, the way to fight bullies is to work together.

Michael gives this advice to the teens, "When a group is picking on someone, don't join in. This kind of razzing makes it seem like it's okay to bully people."

And if certain kids always get isolated and picked on, reach out and find ways to include them in things that you do. If someone in your group bullies people, let them know how you feel about it and why you feel it is wrong. And if you see a bully pushing someone around or if you're the victim, report it. If we can identify the bullies, we can isolate them and make it harder for them to bully others. And every day we can do things to keep ourselves safer and less vulnerable to bullies. By learning to recognize dangerous situations, we can avoid putting ourselves at risk for bullying and violence. And if we get caught in a dangerous situation, there are things we can do then to make it less likely we will get hurt."

Michael shares this hypothetical situation: "You're walking home from school alone, and you pass a group of tough kids. They start making insulting remarks and comments. What do you do?"

The teens answer that you keep walking, you ignore them, and depending on your age, you might run.

And Michael asks another group, "You're all by yourself walking down the street. You come up to a street corner and a tough looking group asks you for money. What are you going to do?"

One boy says he would tell them that he doesn't have any money. And if he's asked to empty out his pockets, and his attacker pulls out a gun?

"Well, I'd say I was only playing then," the boy responds.

"What if he pulls a knife?" challenges Michael. "Is it worth the few bucks to get hurt or lose your life?"

Michael asks the group to share street smart tips for walking home safely. Their ideas include:

- minding your own business
- avoiding poorly lit places
- avoiding alleys
- avoiding empty streets
- knowing the area and what's around you
- avoiding groups of kids you don't know
- taking a different route even if it takes you a little out of your way

"How do you identify a dangerous situation?" Michael asks.

The kids agree that it is something you sense by paying attention to what's around you. And if someone wants your money or something from you, give it up. Your life and safety aren't worth it.

Michael's advice is that if you are confronted by a bully or a thug, stay calm and give them what they want. Don't provoke them and, whenever possible, walk away. To avoid these situations, always be aware of your surroundings and try to travel with friends. Dealing with bullies, troublemakers and dangerous situations isn't always easy, but it's important to remember that there are choices we can make which will keep us free from danger and make it less likely we'll become a victim.

Dealing With Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations: Discussion Questions

1. As the video begins, students share personal experiences in which fear influenced their behavior. Does fear affect your lifestyle or your choices? How?
2. Many of the young people in this video have witnessed or experienced bullying behavior. Have you ever been bullied? What happened? What do you believe motivated the bully's behavior? What were the consequences of the confrontation?
3. What characteristics do you think bullies look for when selecting a target? How can you avoid becoming a target?
4. In the video, Michael and the teens agree that bullying behavior has changed over time. Do you agree?
5. Michael stresses that if you are involved in a confrontation, you should reach out to others for help. What resources are available to help you deal with a bully?
6. One group of teens in the video started their own group called "Encounter" to provide a forum to address teen concerns. What things can you do to give each other support and an opportunity to express feelings and concerns?
7. Michael presents a hypothetical situation in which you are walking down the street and a group of people stop you and demand your money. What would you do in this situation? Why?

Dealing With Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations: Classroom Activities, Projects, and Events

1. Assign a class project to write a "Street Smarts" safety pamphlet. It might include street smart tips, resources to contact for assistance, and guidelines for coping with potentially dangerous situations. Reproduce the completed pamphlet and distribute it throughout your school.
2. Ask students to introduce a safety program at an upcoming school assembly. Arrange for speakers from the Police Department, neighborhood watch groups, and the school administration. Organize a panel of experts who will be available to address specific concerns of students and work with school and local enforcement agencies to prevent violence in and around your school.
3. Ask students to keep a log describing bullying behavior they see during a one week period. At the end of the week, students will be asked to share their observations. Discuss the motives of such behavior and brainstorm ways such behavior can be stopped or reduced.
4. On index cards, create role plays for groups of four students. One person will be the bully, one the victim, and the other two will be bystanders who may or may not become involved in the conflict. Have students act out the situation for the class. Then ask the class to offer input regarding the effect of each individual on the situation.
5. Ask students to write an essay about an experience they've had or witnessed that involved

a bully.

6. Students in the video agree that certain body language encourages bullies to select individuals as victims. Make a list on the board of victim and non-victim body language. Ask students to act out these behaviors for the class and use this as a focal point for discussing nonverbal communication and ways we can stay safe.

A Few Words About Michael Pritchard

Michael is a humorist, actor, youth activist, former probation officer and PBS host who is known to audiences across the United States for his ability to help young people gain insight into themselves and the choices they make. He gained national attention when *The Power of Choice*, his popular PBS series for teens on values and choices, first aired in 1987. His fans have grown with the release of his two subsequent series, *You Can Choose!* and *Big Changes, Big Choices*. Mr. Pritchard serves on the boards of directors for Special Olympics, The California Association of Peer Programs, and the Chinese-American Educational Institute. He also acts as a consultant to the California Consortium on Child Abuse and the Department of Pediatrics at San Francisco General Hospital.



PeaceTalks Program Titles

- Program #1 Preventing Violence
- Program #2 Resolving Conflicts
- Program #3 Managing Your Anger
- Program #4 Dealing with Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations
- Program #5 Respecting Yourself and Others
- Program #6 Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment
- Program #7 Bridging Racial Divisions
- Program #8 Handling Peer Pressure and Gangs
- Program #9 Drugs, Alcohol and Guns: Triggers to Violence
- Program #10 Stepping Up to Peace

Each program is approximately 30 minutes long.