

10-PART VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERIES

LEADER'S GUIDE

# *PeaceTalks*™



**PROGRAM #6**

## **HANDLING DATING PRESSURES AND HARASSMENT**

Distributed by:



***Promoting Growth Through Knowledge***

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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 HANDLING DATING PRESSURES AND HARASSMENT.

As with the other videos in the *PeaceTalks* series, HANDLING DATING PRESSURES AND HARASSMENT 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 **HANDLING DATING PRESSURES AND HARASSMENT** 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 pages 5 and 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.

### **Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment: Objectives**

- To distinguish between flirting and sexual harassment
- To make students aware of the warning signs of potentially dangerous or abusive relationships
- To reaffirm that abusive behavior should never be present in dating or love relationships
- To emphasize the value of positive self-esteem as a guard against involvement in abusive relationships
- To identify the steps victims of harassment or abuse can take to stop these situations before they become harmful

### **Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment: Synopsis**

Michael Pritchard begins this video by talking about the battle of the sexes. “We see the dark side of the battle of the sexes every day in the media. Music lyrics portray relationships full of anger, resentment, and even abuse and rape. Movies are filled with scenes of sexual violence. Positive role models for relationships can often be hard to find...”

“What ticks you off about the girls or the guys?” Michael asks a group of teens.

“A girl won’t talk to me unless I have a car ... When girls feel a certain way, and expect the guy to know what they’re thinking ... When guys look at girls in a certain way,” are some of the answers yelled out.

“Is there a lot of disrespect between boys and girls in the teen years?” Michael asks.

One girl shares that boys make comments about her figure in a very disrespectful way which she doesn’t like. The girls say they hate when boys grab at them but sometimes they’re afraid to do or say much about it because they’re not sure what the boys will

do next.

The boys agree that many of them brag about their conquests with girls and use them as if they were statistics. And if a girl stands up for herself and tells the boy to leave her alone, the boy often responds in an angry way or insults her for acting as if she's too good for him.

"Most of the girls in our generation find this kind of behavior from boys a normal thing that happens every day. If she sees a group of guys, a girl knows that some of the guys will act disrespectfully toward her," shares one boy.

Figuring out what is okay to do when you're flirting can be confusing. We all make mistakes, and that's just part of the process of starting romantic relationships. But the line between flirting and sexual harassment is clear:

*Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome sexual attention whether it's physical or verbal. It includes grabbing, pinching, cornering, or lifting articles of clothing. Making obscene remarks, spreading sexual rumors, making obscene phone calls, or pressuring someone for sex are all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a threat. It's intended to control, humiliate, and intimidate victims.*

Michael asks if any of the young ladies have been harassed or bothered in school in a way that has made them uncomfortable. One girl tells about a boy that bothered her every day, calling her names and trying to touch her. She eventually reported him to a teacher and he got suspended from school. After he returned, he never bothered her again. She shares that the harassment made her feel as if she had done something wrong because she couldn't understand why he was behaving that way.

Another girl tells about a classmate who would try to look up her skirt, and be extremely disrespectful in other ways. One day when she was walking up the stairs and noticed him trying to look up her skirt, she kicked him and he fell down the stairs.

Michael says that he understands her anger but that violence is never the answer. She should have gone up the chain of command in her school until someone in authority helped her. A classmate adds that you can also make the person stop by bringing public attention to the harasser's behavior.

One girl says that she was also harassed by a boy. She didn't try to get help until the harassment had been going on for several months because she was too embarrassed to tell anyone. She realizes now that she should have gone to an adult right away for help. Her advice to other young women is not to wait until it's too late. It's important to tell someone and ask for help right away.

One of the reasons that someone sexually harasses or stalks is to make a victim feel powerless, frightened, ashamed, and alone. The only way to counter this is to report the incident immediately to someone who can help: teachers, the principal, your parents, or the police.

Michael asks if anyone knows someone who has been in an abusive relationship. One girl shares a personal story about a boy she met who seemed nice and attentive to her at first. As their relationship progressed, he started attacking the way she dressed and her other friendships. He began calling her names and acting abusively. He said the way she behaved made him so angry he couldn't help it.

At first, she said, he drew her in by acting so nice to her. When he asked her to dress differently or act differently, it seemed okay. But then it got worse until, finally, he hit her. Through her friends, her family, and her self-respect, she stopped seeing the boy. She understood that she was too valuable a person to put herself in that kind of situation.

Michael asks the group how we can help young people get out of these harmful relationships. One girl says a lot of friends helped her understand what kinds of behaviors she should avoid in a romantic relationship and what behaviors she should look for.

The students say that what they've learned is that you need to respect yourself before you can have a good relationship. If you don't feel good about yourself and someone treats you badly, you'll think that's the way things are supposed to be.

"To stop this abuse and harassment," Michael concludes, "we have to help each other. We need to remember that most romantic relationships are not filled with abuse and harassment, but are based on caring, respect, and love.

"If we care about ourselves and open our hearts to one another, we'll find strong, happy relationships. And we'll find people who appreciate us and understand the true meaning of love."

### **Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment: Discussion Questions**

1. How would you define sexual harassment? Do men and women sometimes have different ideas about what qualifies as harassment? Why do you think that is the case?
2. Invite students to discuss what they consider acceptable flirting behaviors. How does someone know if they have crossed over the line to harassment?
3. What role does the media play in stereotyping the sexes? How does this affect our perceptions of one another?
4. Michael mentions power and sex as motives for harassment. Why do you think one person sexually harasses another?
5. Invite students to share personal experiences of sexual harassment. Have you or anyone close to you ever been sexually harassed? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? What was the final result?
6. One girl in the discussion group shares her personal experience of coping with sexual harassment which resulted in her kicking the offender down a flight of stairs. Do you feel this was an appropriate response? What are some appropriate actions to take if you are being harassed?
7. What types of behavior are warning signs of an abusive relationship? Why do some people remain in a violent or otherwise abusive relationship? What can you do if you are involved in one?
8. The group agrees that victims of abuse suffer from fear and low self-esteem. As a friend, how can you help someone you know who is involved in a violent or abusive

relationship? How can you give support if it is not asked for?

9. Michael stresses the importance of seeking positive relationships. What character traits should you look for in a relationship? What do you believe are the building blocks of a healthy relationship?

## **Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment: Classroom Activities, Projects, and Events**

1. Initiate a class project to develop a resource guide for victims of sexual harassment and abusive relationships. List local agencies and support groups with phone numbers and addresses, contact names, meeting times, etc. Include a list of warning signs of abusive relationships, helpful steps to get you out of a destructive relationship, and any other information that might be beneficial to users. Distribute a final draft to the school library, guidance office, and any other appropriate school locations. You may also want to give your local library a copy so that the information is made available to others in the community.

2. Develop a romance advice column for your school newspaper. Break the class into several small groups. Ask each group to write a letter asking for advice on a situation related to the issues discussed in this video, such as disrespectful behaviors, dating violence, and communication issues between boys and girls. Have each group respond to another group's letter. Print the letters and their responses in the school paper to share this helpful advice with others.

3. Coordinate with your school's English department to run an essay competition focusing on issues such as sexual harassment, dating pressures, gender role stereotypes, communication between men and women, building healthy relationships, and so on. Invite students to work as contest coordinators or to help by publicizing the contest. A panel of judges comprised of school staff and representatives from local rape counseling centers, domestic violence shelters, or other organizations might be asked to participate as judges. Hold an Awards Ceremony to honor the winners and participants and to draw attention to these issues.

4. Assign students to keep a log for two weeks recording the way men and women are depicted on the television shows or movies they see. Have them specify how each gender is portrayed. At the end of the two weeks, ask each student to write a report on what he or she found, including an analysis of how the programs and their portrayals impact on our attitudes and behaviors.

5. There has been a lot of attention given to rap lyrics and how they portray relationships full of anger, resentment, disrespect, and abuse. Break the class into small groups and invite each group to write a rap that depicts men, women and relationships in positive, healthy ways. Have each group perform their assignment for the rest of the class.

## **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.