

THE POWER OF CHOICE

TEACHING GUIDE

For Use With
Program 7

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Discussion Questions

Group Activities

Writing Assignments

Program Background

**Licensing Agreement
including
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The number one cause of death for people in their late teens and early twenties is drunk driving. Yet, close to 44 percent of high school sophomores admit that within the past month they knowingly rode with a driver who was using drugs or alcohol.

In this program, comedian/teen counselor Michael Pritchard visits with teenagers in Los Angeles, Nashville, and Madison, Wisconsin, to talk about *how to stay out of (or get out of) drinking/driving predicaments and still be cool*. As one boy so honestly put it, "It's hard for guys like me who aren't very popular. Friendships I have with guys who brag about dope, drinking, and wild parties are important. A lot of times you just go along with it and tell yourself next time you won't do it. But then you go along with them anyway."

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

_ To build young people's awareness of the issue of drunk driving.

_ To show them that driving drunk, or going along with others who do, is always a matter of choice. And that they always have the power to make that choice for themselves.

_ To encourage them to anticipate when a drinking/driving situation may arise and plan alternatives.

_ To help them to see themselves as having the power to prevent drunk driving.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth service agencies, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.

THE POWER OF CHOICE[®] is an entertaining and thought provoking video series designed to help you empower your young people to make good choices in their lives. You can greatly enhance the effectiveness of this video by following it up with group discussions, writing assignments, and learning activities. This guide is intended to help you in your efforts.

We recommend that, before showing the video, you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some useful questions on page 6. Also, you should expect that your students will have a lot to talk about after viewing the video, so it's a good idea to allow ample time.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this video program.

PROGRAM CONTENT

INTRODUCTION: No matter what the circumstances, there are always ways to get out of drinking and driving situations.

PRITCHARD asks how you know when you've had too much to drink to drive safely. A variety of responses ends with a girl in Los Angeles saying that when you start feeling any effects of your drinking, you're impaired. A boy in Madison says that he has an ironclad rule not to drive when he drinks.

PRITCHARD asks, how can you tell when someone else is too impaired to drive? One boy argues that he can tell, but then admits that he has unknowingly gotten into a car with a drunk driver. Another boy asserts that as soon as anybody starts drinking, he or she can be impaired. The boy in Madison says that he once rode with a girl who seemed fine until she smashed into a parked car. It turned out she was high on psychedelics.

DISCUSSION: A lanky boy in Nashville says he's not afraid to risk his life drinking and driving. He even drove home drunk from the funeral of a friend who had died in a drunk driving car wreck. A redheaded girl says that her boyfriend was killed by a drunk driver and that she stopped drinking, even though it was hard to turn down her friends' invitations.

PRITCHARD asks how you can get out of it when the friends you're with want to get into the car after drinking. One boy says that he goes along with what his friends want to do because he feels

unpopular and is afraid to risk losing the few friends he has. Another boy remarks that he goes along with his friends but stays sober so he can do the driving.

DISCUSSION about how to tell drunk friends that you won't get in the car with them. Some make up excuses. One fellow says that if you care about a person enough, you're going to find a way to make them safe. A girl who babysits speaks of her dilemma when a drunk adult wants to drive her home.

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION: You're at a party, your date is drunk, and you have to get home immediately. A boy says that you can avoid that situation by thinking about it ahead of time. The babysitter says that she would call safe-rides, call home or call a friend. Another girl says that if she has also been drinking she can't make that decision. Once she drove herself home, swerving as she went, and her friends didn't have the sense to stop her. The girl in Los Angeles says that if her boyfriend gives her a hard time she'll not only find a way to get herself home, she'll disable his car so that he won't be able to risk his life driving home.

The lanky boy says he will get in a car with anybody, but he won't let others drive with him if he's too drunk; he risks his own life only. Pritchard rebuts that half the people who die in car wrecks every year are killed by drunk drivers. And he won't feel that his family is safe as long as people who drink and drive are on the road. "If you're going to drink, don't drive," Pritchard concludes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask before showing the video.

1. How do you know when you've done too much drinking to drive?
2. How do you know if somebody else is too drunk to drive?

Questions to ask after showing the video.

3. Since almost all high school kids are under the legal drinking age, why are we even talking about drunk driving?
4. Does a person have to be drunk to be too impaired to drive?
5. Do you think you can reliably tell if a person is too impaired to drive? How?
6. Have you ever gotten into a car with a driver you thought was ok, but then discovered he/she was too impaired to drive? What does that teach you?
7. How much would you have to drink before you'd figure you shouldn't drive?
8. Have you ever driven while intoxicated and realized later you should not have been driving? What did you learn from that? How will you prevent it from happening again?
9. Do any of you have rules or guidelines for yourself designed to keep you out of drinking/ driving situations?
10. You're at a party and a friend of yours is about to drive home drunk. Do you have the right to try to stop him? How would you go about it?

11. How do you deal with a situation in which you are driving with a parent who is drunk . . .
 - a) when you're alone with one of your parents?
 - b) when you're with a friend's parent?
 - c) when you're driving with an adult you don't know well, as babysitters often do?

12. You're at a party and your drunken date insists on driving you home. What are your options?

13. Is there a way to drive with friends who drink without risking either your life or your popularity?

14. Why do some people drive when drunk even though they know they're risking their lives?

15. When you're drunk, is there anything you can do to get sober faster?

Tip: No, there isn't. Drinking coffee, taking a cold shower, or walking around outdoors will do nothing to make you sober.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Describe the drinking and driving situations that you are most likely to get into, then write a strategy for getting out of each one.
2. What happens to a person in your state when he or she is either arrested for drunk driving, or is the cause of a drunk driving accident? Do a research paper on the legal proceedings, sentencing, insurance penalties, and other consequences.
3. Write a dramatic scene in which a teenager is stopped by the police for driving under the influence. To complicate the situation, add the teen's parents at some point.
4. Write and design a flyer informing people about "safe rides" and "designated driver." Make copies and post these for others to see.
5. Imagine that you are a peer educator, and you have to give a speech to a junior high school class sensitizing them to the issue of drinking and driving. Write a strongly persuasive speech. You might want to include audio-visual materials.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Brainstorm solutions to this hypothetical situation: You've just moved to a new city and it's the start of your senior year. You're the new kid and you want to be accepted. The "in" crowd has invited you to go to the beach with them Saturday morning. When they come to pick you up, they've all been drinking and their van is cluttered with beer cans. How can you avoid getting into this drinking/driving situation and still be cool?
2. Divide into small groups. Anticipate the circumstances in which the next drunk-driving fatality involving a teenager might occur in your community. Then work out a strategy to prevent it from happening. Compare your ideas with those of the other groups.
3. Organize an anti-drunk-driving campaign for your school. If your school does not already have a chapter of SADD (Students Against Drinking and Driving) consider organizing one. Likewise for a Safe-Rides program.
4. Design and conduct an anti-drinking/ driving poster contest for the schools in your community. Try to involve local television, newspapers, and merchants.
5. Role play: Your date is too drunk to drive you home. Role play your options in this situation. Replay this scene several times until you feel like you have reached a satisfactory and safe conclusion to this difficult situation.

ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian/youth counselor/public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then relocated to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, ***"the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh."*** Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is a good laugh."

HOW THIS PROGRAM WAS PRODUCED

THE POWER OF CHOICE began as a one-hour TV special for PBS. Our aim was to create a show for teenagers that would be both entertaining and educationally useful. With this goal in mind, we took San Francisco comedian/ youth counselor Michael Pritchard and a TV production crew to four high schools across the U.S. to talk with kids about how they make choices in life.

At each school Mike entertained a student assembly with comedy about growing up. Then, he led small groups of students in highly productive problem-solving sessions. These groups were selected by the schools before we arrived (we asked for a representative mix of students). The kids we got were amazingly candid. They revealed deeply personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and shared useful solutions and insights. We captured all this on videotape using three cameras, and edited the material down to a one-hour show.

When the program aired on PBS, educators and broadcasters expressed enthusiasm for having it made into a series. So, we immediately began work on eleven new half-hour programs exploring a whole range of issues important to teens. To develop the content, we spent one full semester at schools around the San Francisco Bay Area meeting with students and teachers. Following that, we took Mike and our production crew on a nine-week, 21 state tour of high schools throughout the U.S. (see list).

We returned with more than 100 hours of material, and spent five months editing the eleven new programs. The series was televised on PBS and is used in classrooms, libraries, and youth groups throughout the U.S. and other countries.

LOCATIONS

THE POWER OF CHOICE was shot at the following high schools:

San Francisco, Calif.

Lowell H.S.

Denver, Colorado

West H.S.

Biloxi, Mississippi

Biloxi H.S.

New York City

Murry Bergtraum H.S.
for Business Careers

San Rafael, Calif.

San Rafael H.S.

Los Angeles, Calif.

Venice H.S.

Phoenix, Arizona

Washington H.S.

Albuquerque, N.M.

West Mesa H.S.

Dallas, Texas

Woodrow Wilson H.S.

Wichita, Kansas

Southeast H.S.

St. Louis, Missouri

St. Thomas Aquinas/ Mercy
H.S.

Nashville, Tennessee

McGavock H.S.

Atlanta, Georgia

Northside H.S.

Gainesville, Florida

Buchholz H.S.

Columbia, S.C

Dreher H.S.

Washington, D.C.

School Without Walls

Philadelphia, Penn.

George Washington Carver
H.S. for Engineering &
Science

Wayne, New Jersey

Wayne Hills Senior H.S.

Brooklyn, New York

Edward. R. Murrow H.S.

Boston, Mass.

Newton North H.S.

Cleveland, Ohio

Glenville H.S.

Detroit, Michigan

Cass Technical H.S.

South Bend, Indiana

La Salle H.S.

Chicago, Illinois

Senn Metro Academy

Madison, Wisconsin

West H.S.

Bloomington, Minn.

Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Fremont, Calif.

Irvington H.S.

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Program Titles

- 1: THE POWER OF CHOICE
- 2: ACTING ON YOUR VALUES
- 3: SELF-ESTEEM
- 4: COPING WITH PRESSURES
- 5: DRUGS & ALCOHOL - Part 1
- 6: DRUGS & ALCOHOL - Part 2
- 7: DRINKING & DRIVING
- 8: SEX
- 9: FRIENDSHIP & DATING
- 10: DEPRESSION & SUICIDE
- 11: COMMUNICATING with PARENTS
- 12: RAISING YOUR PARENTS