

## Program Summary

Through narration, interviews, reenactment, animation, and documentary segments, *ENDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE* explores the realities of youth violence, the consequences of choices, and the capacity of empathy and forgiveness to break the cycle of violence. This multifaceted program focuses on the powerful story of Tariq Khamisa, Tony Hicks, and their families to provide an astonishing, real-life example of the ripple effects of violence, and the nonviolent choices one can make to end the cycle of violence. The series includes six videos:

***From Murder to Forgiveness*** tells the story of 20-year-old Tariq Khamisa's murder by a 14-year-old, Tony Hicks; Tony's subsequent incarceration; and their families' extraordinary response to the devastating losses. Tariq's father, Azim Khamisa, reached out in forgiveness to Ples Felix, the grandfather and guardian of his son's assailant. The two men formed a foundation, pledging together to "stop kids from killing kids."

The video explores the psychological and emotional factors impacting Tony Hicks and the choices he made that led to the shooting. It demonstrates how one senseless act of violence can change so many lives, forever. The video introduces the primary concepts that have inspired the next five videos in the series. The video includes interviews with Tariq's and Tony's families, and with Tony Hicks, who was interviewed in Pelican Bay State Prison for this project.

***Violence Is Real and Hurts Everyone*** explores the realities of violence and its devastating impact on all those involved. It illustrates various forms violence may take, its ripple effects, and the emotional pain created by even a single violent act.

***Everyone Deserves to Be Loved and Treated Well*** introduces the principles of respect and empathy as tools to facilitate understanding between people and as necessary steps towards forgiving. The video looks at the "back-story" of Tony Hicks, who suffered abuse and exposure to violence and neglect, and explores how our experiences impact who we are and the choices that we make. It also exhibits the importance of and strength in asking for help in times of need.

***Actions Have Consequences*** explores in detail the series of choices Tony Hicks made and raises awareness of the power we have to control our own choices. It looks at actions with both positive and negative consequences and encourages youth to be the "authors of their own scripts."

***Choosing Forgiveness Instead of Revenge*** illuminates the process of forgiveness, for others and one's self. It acknowledges the difficulty of forgiveness, and emphasizes the difference between *wanting* revenge and *acting* on that impulse. Forgiveness is offered as a viable solution to release anger and facilitate personal healing.

***Making the Nonviolent Choice*** uses examples of youth who are working together to promote peace as an inspiration for other young people to "make the nonviolent choice." This video explores the concept of nonviolence as a proactive choice and shows

that young people can have a powerful voice as peacemakers. It also provides real-life examples of youth programs dedicated to positive activities and community service.

### **Brain Development**

The final five videos also include sections on the brain, including the impact of certain behaviors on brain development, as well as the role the brain plays in violent behavior, making choices, and forgiveness. Interviews with juvenile forensic psychologist, Dr. Jeffrey Rowe, explain how the brain grows and develops in response to exposure to violence in childhood. Animated sequences vividly illustrate the brain's plasticity and how making different choices can also influence brain development.

### **Program Goals**

After viewing the program and participating in the lesson plans, viewers/participants should be able to:

- Define and identify different forms of violence and its ripple effects.
- Understand the emotional effects of violence on perpetrators, victims, families and communities.
- Raise awareness of the prevalence of youth violence.
- Describe the "cycle of violence."
- Understand the role revenge plays in the cycle of violence.
- Define empathy and understand the role it plays in stopping the cycle of violence.
- Identify support networks and community resources.
- Understand that both positive and negative actions are a choice.
- Illustrate the connection between choices and consequences, both positive and negative.
- Understand the role emotions play in influencing choice making.
- Explain the physiology of emotions and making choices.
- Identify the major parts of the brain and how they communicate.
- Understand the role that choices play in brain development.
- Define strategies to manage anger.
- Define and discuss the process of forgiveness.
- Define nonviolence and identify associated values.
- Understand the role young people can play as peacemakers.
- Identify dreams for the future.

### **Intended Audience**

*ENDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE* is designed for use by educators, counselors, and professionals working with youth in 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade. However, it is also appropriate for older youth, and for use in:

- counseling groups
- after-school programs
- programs working with at-risk youth
- youth leadership programs
- parent/community involvement programs

## **Instructional Notes**

*ENDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE* deals with highly charged and potentially unsettling material. Before presenting these lessons to your students, it is strongly recommended that you preview the program and review the guide and the accompanying TKF Workbook activities in order to familiarize yourself with their content. An informed awareness and sensitivity to the many issues involved will enable you to be of greater assistance to the children with whom you are concerned.

As you review the materials presented in this guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, additions, or deletions to meet the specific needs of your class. We encourage you to do so; for only by tailoring this program to your class will they obtain the maximum instructional benefits afforded by the materials.

Some viewers may have experienced, or may currently be experiencing, violence in their lives. You may want to bring in other qualified support staff to help facilitate discussion and/or activities. Please be prepared to provide local referrals to those who may need help. Appendices with resources on youth violence, abuse, and grief resources for help in supporting students impacted by violence are included in this guide.

*ENDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE* offers a unique opportunity for educators to walk in students' shoes, create a deeper connection, and provide students with a space of safety and caring. We view this curriculum as a journey for you and your students to take together. We encourage students to keep individual program folders to collect their handouts, journal entries, and other materials generated through this program. At the end of the program, you may ask students to present these as portfolios, or you may draw examples from each student's portfolio into a class publication based on aspects of the program.

This program lends itself well to cross-disciplinary partnerships, with teachers and counselors adapting different activities based on their area of expertise. For example, a school counselor, humanities teacher, and science teacher may collaborate on program delivery, each handling various activities as part of the debriefing.

While each video may stand on its own, we highly recommend beginning the course with the video *From Murder to Forgiveness*, which stands as the centerpiece of the program and provides an enhanced experience for watching other videos in the series. We also recommend, if possible, watching the videos in the order they are presented in the guide.

## **Confidentiality**

Countless youth have been impacted by violence in one or more of its many forms. For many, it is something that is infrequently, if ever, discussed. You will want to stay alert to any signs of trauma or other issues that students may be dealing with and to be ready to seek assistance from counselors or other mental health professionals. In addition, in order to establish an environment of trust and security, it is important to establish rules of confidentiality with the group; what is said in the group, should stay in the group. Students should clearly understand your expectation that privacy will be protected.

We recommend that you clearly communicate your obligations in regards to confidentiality and reporting requirements. This is important to establish up front so students understand what you are required to report and do not feel 'deceived' if an issue arises later in the program that you are mandated to report. Please see the next section for ideas on communicating these requirements.

### **Classroom Assumptions**

In its work in school-based and after school programs, TKF has found it useful to be sure students are in agreement on what happens in a group based on respect. We recommend starting any long-term group work by creating a shared set of standards, which serve as a group philosophy to ensure an open and safe space for dialogue. It is also helpful to establish consequences in the case that rules are violated. In order to generate buy-in, it is important for students to be a part of the process to establish these standards. The class is much more likely to 'police' itself when they have a stake in the rules, understand their purpose, and believe they are fair.

The following is an activity you may use prior to the start of the program to establish this set of standards with your class.

### **Peacemaker's Agreement**

**Class time needed:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** White board & markers; poster-sized paper; colored markers.

**Objectives:** To establish a shared set of principles that will guide class behavior during the program.

**Step 1:** Write, "It's all up to us" on the white board and explain that this is one of the 'mottos' for this program. It's important to agree ahead of time on how the class will work together, especially because they are going to be discussing some sensitive and personal issues.

**Step 2:** Ask students how they would like to be treated in the class. What would need to happen so that they feel safe to speak and share openly? How should people speak to each other? What kind of behavior would work best? Is there any kind of behavior they do not want to see? Call on students and record ideas on the board.

**Step 3:** Pull student ideas together into an agreed-upon set of principles for working together on this program. You may want to use these as a guide:

#### Participation

- Try your best
- Keep an open mind
- Be honest
- Speak with teacher/counselor privately if strong feelings are preventing participation

### Respect

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated
- Listen to each other
- Respect differences

### Confidentiality

- Respect the privacy of your classmates
- What is shared in the class should stay in the class

**Step 4:** Be sure to discuss the concept of confidentiality with the class. There are two types of confidentiality that are important to understand:

1) Confidentiality among peers: It is important to inform students that there is an expectation that they will not share classmates' personal expressions with people who are not in their class. This may include stories people tell about themselves or people they know, or emotions that are displayed.

2) Confidentiality with adults: Emphasize that students can trust you with their personal stories and questions. As their teacher/counselor, you feel it is incredibly important that they be safe because they are all important people. Explain that there are three circumstances in which you will not keep the information confidential, because they are situations in which help is needed and you are required to follow-up by law:

1. If someone tells you that they are going to "hurt" themselves.
2. If someone tells you that they are going to "hurt" someone else.
3. If someone tells you that they have been, currently are being, or are afraid of being "hurt" by someone else.

You may explain here that you will be reading journal entries and you may want to offer students the opportunity to fold over any pages that they would like to keep private.

**Conclusion:** Write the agreed-upon principles on a piece of poster-board to hang in the class. Be sure that there is consensus on all the rules in order to generate buy-in for the procedure. Also review the class procedure for what to do in case any of these principles are broken.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning Standards:

<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>

## **Life Skills**

### **Self-Regulation**

#### Standard 3: Considers risks

*Benchmark 1:* Weighs risks in making decisions and solving problems

#### Standard 5: Maintains a healthy self-concept

*Benchmark 1:* Has confidence in one's own abilities, including the ability to succeed

*Benchmark 2:* Uses techniques to remind self of strength  
*Benchmark 5:* Uses positive affirmations and self-talk to improve sense of self, build confidence, and complete difficult tasks  
*Benchmark 8:* understands that everyone makes mistakes, and that mistakes are a natural consequence of living and of limited resources

Standard 6: Restrains impulsivity

*Benchmark 2:* Remains passive while assessing a situation

**Thinking and Reasoning**

Standard 5: Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques

*Benchmark 1:* Generates alternative courses of action and compares the possible consequences of each alternative

Standard 6: Applies decision-making techniques

*Benchmark 1:* Identifies situations in the community and in one's personal life in which a decision is required

*Benchmark 3:* Identifies the values underlying the alternatives that are considered and the criteria that will be used to make a selection among the alternatives

*Benchmark 7:* Analyzes personal decisions in terms of the options that were considered

**Working with Others**

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group

*Benchmark 4:* Demonstrates respect for others' rights, feelings, and points of view in a group

Standard 2: Uses conflict-resolution techniques

*Benchmark 6:* Determines the causes and potential sources of conflicts

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

*Benchmark 1:* Demonstrates appropriate behaviors for relating well with others (e.g., empathy, caring, respect, helping, friendliness, politeness)

**Language Arts**

Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

*Benchmark 6:* Writes expository compositions

*Benchmark 7:* Writes narrative accounts, such as short stories

*Benchmark 9:* Writes compositions about autobiographical incidents

*Benchmark 10:* Writes biographical sketches

*Benchmark 11:* Writes compositions that address problems/solutions

*Benchmark 12:* Writes in response to literature

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

*Benchmark 1:* Gathers data for research topics from interviews

*Benchmark 6:* Writes research papers

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

*Benchmark 6:* Reflects on what has been learned after reading and formulates ideas, ideas, opinions, and personal responses to texts

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

*Benchmark 3:* Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts

*Benchmark 4:* Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

*Benchmark 3:* Uses strategies to enhance listening comprehension

*Benchmark 4:* Listens in order to understand topic, purpose, and perspective in spoken texts

*Benchmark 6:* Makes oral presentations to the class

## Science

Standard 4: Understands the principles of heredity and related concepts

*Benchmark 5:* Knows that the characteristics of an organism can be described in terms of a combination of traits; some traits are inherited through the coding of genetic material and others result from environmental factors

Standard 5: Understands the structure and function of cells and organisms

*Benchmark 4:* Knows that multicellular organisms have a variety of specialized cells, tissues, organs, and organ systems that perform specialized functions

## Mathematics

Standard 2: Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concepts of numbers

*Benchmark 7:* Understand the concepts of ratio, proportion, and percent and the relationships among them

Standard 6: Understand and applies basic and advanced concepts of statistics and data analysis

*Benchmark 6:* Organizes and displays data using tables, graphs, frequency distributions, and plots

## Consultant on Brain Development

**Jeffrey Rowe, MD** is the recently appointed Clinical Director for the Health and Human Services (HHS) division of Mental Health Services (MHS) for the County of San Diego. Dr. Rowe is responsible for clinical oversight of all services operated by or contracted by MHS. In addition to these duties, he is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the UCSD School of Medicine and a private practitioner of child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry.