

What is Violence?

Age	16+
Duration	3 hours
Group size	10-30

Overview

This activity aims to introduce the topic of violence

Objectives

- To explore what violence is and what it means to different people
- To reflect on the role of violence in different communities
- To share experiences about violence affecting children and young people and its effects on their development

Materials

- Prepared situation cards for five groups
- Markers
- Flipchart paper
- Small cards, paper and coloured pencils

Preparation

- Write the 'violence cards' (appendix) on different pieces of paper

Step by step instructions

1. The participants form small groups of five and each group gets a set of cards describing different situations. Give around 5 cards to each group. They should read through the cards and for each decide if they consider this to be a situation of violence. They should discuss in their groups:
 - If they personally think this is violence
 - If their society and their legal system would consider this to be violence
 - If this is something that happens in their community
2. After 30 minutes, all groups come back together for a short debrief:
 - Was it easy or difficult to decide whether something was violence or not?
 - How did you decide?
 - What were the main differences between your realities? What were similarities?
3. In pairs, the participants should now write down the key words that define violence for them (each key word on one card). After five minutes, they stand up to meet another pair and compare their key words. They need to decide on four or five words that define violence for their group of four. Then the groups of four meet another group of four and once again have to decide on four to five words between them.
4. We come back together in a circle and the three groups of eight present their key words by putting the cards on a wall.
5. In plenary, discuss if there are disagreements about words or if individuals feel very strongly about other words they would like to add.
6. In small groups, the participants then draw 'problem trees' to show how their communities are affected by violence. They should draw a big tree on a flipchart paper, with the word 'violence' written in the trunk of the tree. The roots of the tree should describe the causes of violence in their community and the branches should describe how young people are affected by violence. The posters are then put on a

wall so that the participants can go around and look at the other posters during the week.

Debriefing

- How do you feel now?
- What are the main reasons for people being violent?
- Why do you think that is?
- How are our organisations affected by violence?

This activity can only be a starting point to get deeper into the topic and explore what we can do against violence.

Appendix: Situations cards

- War against terror: A house in a Pakistani village is destroyed by an American drone because it gave refuge to an Islamist terrorist.
- 5-year old Tom wants to see what his mother cooks for lunch. He reaches out to touch the pot that is standing on the stove. His mother slaps his hand and shouts out: 'Be careful Tom, you will burn your hand. Don't touch that!'
- Susan, 16, wants to meet her friends. Her mother thinks she should finish her homework before she leaves the house. She closes Susan's room by key and tells her she will only open it once the homework is done.
- Kim is alone at home and reads an e-mail from his ex which makes him furious. He feels the urge to let his anger out, and throws the empty glass he holds in his hand against a wall in his kitchen. Then, feeling calmer, he cleans up the mess.
- Paul is at home, waiting for his boyfriend to come back from a party. After hours, he finally arrives. Paul shouts at him: "You bitch, what did you do for so long, meeting other men? I won't allow you to go to parties without me anymore!"
- Two girls hold hands while they are waiting in a supermarket queue. Behind them stands a group of women, looking disapprovingly at them and making comments such as: "uhhh look, two lesbians, can't they keep their love life at home? That's so unnatural!"
- A group of good friends, all going to the same school, like playing pranks at each other. Tom just switched Tim's mobile phone settings to Chinese, Tim put salt in Paul's sugar bowl last week while Paul changed all the clocks in Tom's house to one hour later.
- A group of good friends likes to play pranks. There is this one weird girl in their class, always wearing really old-fashioned clothes and not smelling very well. So the group decides to have a go at her. They start with putting a good old whoopee cushion on her seat, then send her pictures of naked people to see her face go red during class and finally write her anonymous love letters.
- For the same work, the wage of women is lower although they have the same qualifications as their male colleagues.
- Carla and Sergey are married and both work. Sergey would prefer Carla to stay at home, but they need the money. When Carla gets her salary, she has to give it all to Sergey who decides about financial decisions of the family.

- Sandra has depression and does not see any sense in life. One day, after her children left for school, she feels so miserable and desperate that she takes all pills that she finds in her cabinet, drinks half a bottle of vodka and hopes she will never wake up again.
- Liza has two children from two different fathers to whom she has no contact anymore. She is stressed and fed-up by all the noise her children (1 and 3 years old) make all day long. One day, she just leaves the house on her own, goes for a walk and decides not to come back until the evening to finally have a day on her own. The children are meanwhile at home, hungry and dirty, until she finally comes back home at night.