

High School: Violence (Multi-Grade Pilot Unit)



Attention Educator: The lessons in the Violence Unit are grade level pilot lessons for 9th -12th grade students. We need your professional feedback to determine the appropriate grade-level for each lesson. Please send feedback and any suggestions you may have to kelly@thriveway.com. We appreciate your assistance, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Lesson 1 – The Value of Human Life



Lesson Time:

30 Minutes

Materials Provided:

- Handout: “Plane Crash” (one per 4-6 person group)
- Video: “The Butterfly Effect: How Your Life Matters” (2:35) [Watch](#)
- Parent Letter (shared electronically or printed one per student) [Download](#)

Materials Needed:

- Writing utensils (one per student)

Essential Question:
How much value do you place on human life?

Objectives:

Students will be able to....

- Evaluate their own respect for human life.
- Recognize that violence toward a human life does not solve problems.
- Identify the impact and ripple effect of small acts of kindness.

Did You Know:

- In 2011, 20% of high school students were bullied at school, and 33% reported being involved in a physical fight in the last year.^[1]
- In one month, nearly 6% of high schoolers stayed home because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to school.^[1]
- More than 50% of children who have been bullied online do not report the behavior to their parents, leaving their parents with no idea regarding this behavior. Being picked on or bullied is just one form of violence we see among students.
- Some of the signs of school violence include 1) physical marks, such as cuts or bruises, 2) fear of riding the bus to school, 3) depression, anxiety, or moodiness lasting more than a couple of weeks, and 4) sudden loss of friends.

Educator Tip:

As you teach this lesson, understand that various students experience different levels of violence either at school or even at home. Many families promote violence to resolve interpersonal conflict. We must balance teaching peace without appearing critical of family beliefs. We will focus mainly on how violence affects schools and how people can have a positive impact. In this introduction, we have included statistical information for your preparation for this lesson. Many excessively violent events have occurred in schools across the country; furthermore, the U.S. has more gun owners than other



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countries have. Gun ownership is not necessarily the problem; instead, the root of the problem is more likely people's inclination toward violent behavior. In a recent study conducted by Children's Institute International, three out of four teenagers said that they believed that violent behavior is learned. Of those, 43% think that violence is learned from parents. Another 20% say it is learned from television. Approximately 15% say it is learned from friends or others in the neighborhood. Additionally, young people who have carried a knife or gun in the past year are significantly more likely to believe that violence is learned. This overwhelming majority of learned violent behavior means we can work to reprogram those thoughts and behaviors. Since this lesson addresses the severity of violence and the many different types of violence, you may notice that some students respond to this in ways that indicate potential problems. Some may sit quietly, or some may act out. Be mindful of those students, as this could be a sign that they may need to speak with a counselor after the lesson.

Core Lesson: (2 minutes)

Today's lesson and our upcoming P.A.T.H. lessons address the many different types of violence we may witness in our lifetime. School violence has become so common in the U.S. that most schools have changed their entire way of handling violence and have implemented new protocols to increase safety. Did you know that in a recent study conducted by Children's Institute International, three out of four teenagers said that they believed that violent behavior is learned? Of those, 43% think that violence is learned from parents. Another 20% say it is learned from television. Approximately 15% say it is learned from friends or others in the neighborhood.^[1] This means that most of our violent beliefs and behaviors are learned. We are in a school, so this is the perfect place to adjust what we learn about violence and how we behave in response.

To begin this process, we will look at statistics on school violence, hear from some real-life victims of these types of violence, and identify appropriate ways to handle yourself and help others in situations that might arise in your school or community. The first step in violence prevention is focusing on the root of the matter: the value of life.

Activity 1: "Valuing Human Life"

Small Group Activity/Handout (20 minutes)

School violence is a problem that can be prevented. To make a difference, we must first recognize that violence is a problem; then each person must learn how to practice personal self-control, and finally, we must speak up! There are many ways to advocate for peace and safety. The responsibility for making a change rests with each one of us. How can you help? You can model self-control in public, support your friends when they're struggling, talk to our administrators when you feel unsafe, be open with your parents about what is happening at our school, and most importantly, report anything that you know is an unlawful or potentially dangerous situation. Some people think that reporting is tattling or snitching, but these days violence can quickly escalate and suddenly have a dangerous impact on you and other innocent victims.

So why do you think violence is such a common response to conflict? (*Allow for discussion.*) What exactly does violence help? (*Allow for honest discussion, as some will have "reasons" for resorting to*



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violence.) Violence may seem like a solution, but it truly does not make a problem go away. Society seems to be promoting unrest and negativity. Most fundamentally, the problem begins with people not fully valuing human life. Today's lesson will focus on the truth that one must value all life and treat people with respect. Your first task is going to be a group challenge. *(Divide the class into small groups of 4-6 students each and distribute the handout.)*

Distribute the "Plane Crash" Handout

Now that you are in your group, let's read the directions on the handout. This plane has 20 passengers but, in this scenario, only half of the passengers can survive the trip. Your job will be to determine who the survivors should be. Look at this passenger manifest and descriptions.

Your group must determine which 10 will survive AND explain the reason for your group's choices. Be prepared to justify your choices for the class in a discussion. In the next 10 minutes, place a checkmark in the column for the 10 survivors your group chooses and explain in the far-right column why those people should survive as opposed to others. I encourage you to have a positive yet fair discussion about which people should survive and which should not. For everyone to benefit from this, please be kind and open as you have this discussion. *(Allow students 10 minutes to create their list of survivors.)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Plane Crash: Value of Life

Directions: This plane has 20 passengers on it. In this scenario, only half of the passengers will survive. You will have to select 10 of the passengers, give a personal explanation as to why you selected them, and make the rest for your group's choice. Be prepared to justify your choices for the class in a group discussion.

Passenger Description	Survived?	Justification for this survivor
1. Pilot		
2. Mother on vacation		
3. Person with cancer		
4. Scientist		
5. Teenage student		
6. Person on business		
7. Person on vacation		
8. Person with a dog		
9. Person with a pet		
10. Person with a pet		
11. Person with a pet		
12. Person with a pet		
13. Person with a pet		
14. Person with a pet		
15. Person with a pet		
16. Person with a pet		
17. Person with a pet		
18. Person with a pet		
19. Person with a pet		
20. Person with a pet		

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Plane Crash Handout

Post Activity Discussion: Now it's time for someone from your group to share your results. Remember as we discuss that there are no right answers to this scenario. Obviously, we would like to have all passengers survive this trip. I just want to hear your group's justification. *(Guide students in positive interactions, allowing time for their explanations.)* The point of this activity was to challenge you to see that every life has value. Hopefully, in your discussion, you had a difficult time making choices because everyone made arguments to keep various people. Selecting only ten people was an impossible task that should have revealed that all life has value. Since this is an absolute fact, we must treat everyone equally and accordingly. The more you value all life, the better you will treat the people you encounter, and the harder you will work to seek peaceful resolutions to your conflicts. There are ways to respond to problems without violence: mediation, negotiation, counseling, recreation activities, promoting teamwork, community activities, and more.^[2]

When you are broken, you look for the bad in others, but an emotionally strong person is more understanding. As people learn to appreciate others, they will naturally be more patient and more selfless. Our society promotes a great deal of selfishness and negativity - much of this is on social media, but we can flip the script, spread positivity, and make a change right here in our school and community.

Activity 2: "The Butterfly Effect" - Video (7 minutes)

Does anyone know what the "butterfly effect" is? It was proposed in various texts, including a meteorology project, in which one imagines the effect of wind from a seagull's or a butterfly's wings having the ability to cause a typhoon. Although the movement of air from one butterfly's wings cannot generate the wind to create a typhoon, we are to envision how the slightest movement or action



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creates a ripple effect. Let's watch a short inspirational video. As you watch and read the words that scroll across the screen, be thinking about how much value you place on your own life and how much your life truly matters.^[3] "The Butterfly Effect: How Your Life Matters" (2:35)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PggnK1FC3o>

As you reflect on what we just watched, what are your initial thoughts? (*Allow for discussion.*) Did you notice that everything you do makes a huge impact on your life and others around you? (*Allow for discussion.*) One significant line from the video said, "There are generations yet unborn whose very lives will be shifted by the moves you make and actions you take today, tomorrow, and the next day." Do you believe that? Why or why not? I want you to take one minute to silently think of something that someone did once - something they probably thought was small, but actually had an impact on you. Let's share. (*Allow for discussion.*)

Closing: (1 minute)

Humans are deeply interconnected. You and I probably underestimate the effect our actions have on other people. Smiling at or speaking to someone - not knowing they're having a bad day - would be nothing to you but mean everything to the other person. Donating one dollar in a fundraiser is just one dollar to you, but collectively becomes so much more. Standing up for someone who's being victimized in person or on social media has deep, lasting power. It's what you would want someone to do for you. There are so many moments in any given day in which you have the choice and the power to begin a ripple effect. That's how we are going to turn the tide of negativity and violence - one positive action at a time, showing tremendous respect for each human life.

References

1. 11 Facts About School Violence. (n.d.). DoSomething.org. Retrieved August 30, 2022, from <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-school-violence>
2. Constitutional Rights Foundation. (n.d.). Constitutional Rights Foundation. Retrieved September 6, 2022, from <https://www.crf-usa.org/school-violence/alternatives-to-violence.html>
3. The Butterfly Effect: How Your Life Matters. (2009, November 6). YouTube. Retrieved October 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PggnK1FC3o>

[Click Here to Provide Feedback on this Lesson](#)



Name _____

Date _____

Plane Crash: Value of Life

Directions: This plane has 20 passengers but, in this scenario, only half of the passengers will survive the trip. If this were a list of real passengers, your group must determine which 10 should survive AND explain the reason for your group's choices. Be prepared to justify your choices for the class in a group discussion.

Passenger Description		Survivor? Check if this person is chosen	Justification for this survivor
1	priest		
2	mother on welfare		
3	person with special needs		
4	teenager		
5	college student		
6	prisoner on transport		
7	young baby		
8	elderly woman		
9	surgeon		
10	attorney		
11	middle-aged business owner		
12	unemployed man		
13	professional athlete		
14	NASA engineer		
15	surfing instructor		
16	lifeguard		
17	Army sergeant		
18	person with terminal illness		
19	wealthy charity donor		
20	politician		