

# Middle School: Violence (Multi-Grade Pilot Unit)



**Attention Educator:** The lessons in the Violence Unit are grade level pilot lessons for 7th and 8th 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](mailto: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: Rating Scale “Your Opinion on the Value of Life” (one per student)
- Video: “What Is The Value Of Your Life?...” (2:21)
- Parent Letter (shared electronically or printed one per student) [Download](#)

### Materials Needed:

- Projector with Video/Audio Capability
- Pens, Pencils or Colored Pencils

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

### Objectives:

Students will be able to....

- Evaluate their own respect for human life.
- Ponder contributing factors to increasing violence.
- Identify ways to show respect and value for others.

### Did You Know:

- More than 50% of children who have been bullied online do not report the behavior to their parents, leaving their parents with no idea of problem behavior. Being bullied is just one form of violence we see among students.
- Some of the signs indicating 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, keep in mind that, according to the CDC, youth violence is considered a serious public health problem. Violent attitudes and behaviors can be learned at an early age, and we must do our part as educators to provide strategies for peace and acceptance. Our goal is to create a safe environment for every child in our school.

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 percent think that violence is learned from parents. Another 20 percent say it is learned from television. Approximately 15 percent say it is learned from friends or others in the neighborhood. Additionally, young people who have carried a knife or gun



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in the past year are significantly more likely to believe that violence is learned.

Since this lesson talks about the severity of violence and the many different types of violence, you may notice that some students respond to this in various ways. Some may sit quietly, or some may be more vocal or even act out. Be mindful of those students, as this could be a sign that they could benefit from speaking with a counselor after the lesson.

## Lesson Introduction: (1 minute)

Today's lesson and our upcoming P.A.T.H. lessons are all about the many different types of violence we may witness in our lifetime. School violence has become so common in the U.S. that schools have entirely changed their procedures for handling violence. We will look at statistics on school violence, hear from some real-life victims, and identify appropriate ways to handle yourself and help others in situations that might arise in our school or community.

## Activity 1: Large & Small Group Discussion (11 minutes)

School violence is something that we can stop. We must speak up! Talk to your parents about what is happening at our school, talk to our administrators when you feel unsafe, and most importantly, always report something that you know is unlawful or could create a dangerous situation in our school.

I have 4 questions for us to address together in a large group:

*(Allow for discussion of each.)*

- Why do you think some people consider the killing of others as an appropriate solution to anger?
- What is producing all of this frustration that people have?
- Do you think the increased use of technology is part of the problem?
- What are ways we can deal with our anger besides violence?

Now in your assigned small groups, you are going to spend 4 minutes discussing the answer to one very critical question: What do you think it means to value another human's life? Remember that the word *value* means the amount of worth or importance of something. After talking with your group, be prepared to share in a large group discussion. *(Allow 4 minutes for sharing after small groups.)* Every single human life has value and worth. No one has the right to mistreat other people.

## Activity 2: "What is the Value of Life" Video (5 minutes)

I want us to think about how much value you place on your own life, how much value other people place on your life, and how much value you place on their lives. Let's begin by watching a short video. As you watch and listen to the words spoken, ask yourself, "Can a certain value be placed on a human life?". *Students will watch the Meir Kay video "What is the Value of Your Life?" (2:20)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwVfS7n3gghs>

As you reflect on what we just watched, what are your initial thoughts about the answers the young boy received when he tried to find out how much the gem was worth? *(Allow for discussion.)* Did you notice that he got 3 different answers from 3 different people? Why do you think the gemologist found more value in the stone than the other 2 people he asked? *(Allow for discussion.)* The gemologist recognized the value because he was more knowledgeable about stones.

When the young boy came home and discussed his findings with his mother, she explained to him that all people value you based on their personal point of view, level of information about you, and their belief in you. But she reminds him that he is priceless. That's the true worth of a human's life... that there is no measure of how much we should value all humans; therefore, nothing should ever push us



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to do things that devalue others. She concludes by saying that we value people by showing love, care, and affection. If we do not know a person, our respect demonstrates how we value them.

## Activity 3: Handout: Your Opinion on the Value of Lives (12 minutes)

I am going to give you a handout with a list of 17 different people. I want you to think about how much value you place on each of their lives and rate them on a scale of 1 – 10, BUT you may not give everyone a 10. I want you to be honest in your ratings to see whose lives you feel hold more

value. You will not be sharing all of these with the classroom, but I will ask you for some of your higher ratings. Be mindful of your responses and consider how this will steer the discussion in an appropriate and respectful way.

### Post Handout Discussion:

I am certain that you had some people that were easier to rate more highly than others. Let's talk about the people that you rated the highest. (*Allow for response.*) Why was it easier to rate some people well but give others a low rating? (*Allow for response.*) How would you feel if someone rated the principal very low and the principal was your mother or father? Do you think your level of information about each person affected your rating? Just because you give a person under a 10 does not mean that someone else feels the same way about that person. The truth is that every person on that list has value and worth - even if not to you, then to someone. A person's value is something to consider when someone makes you feel angry or disrespected. Responding with violence shows a complete lack of value for their situation and also shows a lack of self-respect. If each of us responds with honor, we can begin to reduce our exposure to violence.

### Closing: (1 minute)

Someone's value is sometimes a hard concept to process, thinking about each person's life having equal value from the people whom you don't like to the ones you do like. It's hard to think about those who have committed violence or crimes as being equal to those who have led peaceful, law-abiding lives; however, they are equal. All lives have value. YOU matter and so does each one of your classmates. This is an important lesson as it pertains to violence. People sometimes harm others when they don't value them. We don't have the right to harm anyone's life just because they are not an important person in our own life. It also doesn't give anyone else the right to harm you or another important person in your life.

### References

Constitutional Rights Foundation. (n.d.). Constitutional Rights Foundation. Retrieved September 6, 2022, from <https://www.crf-usa.org/school-violence/alternatives-to-violence.html>

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>

Urban, D. (2018, February 16). *Violence is the Problem – Not the Solution*. Real Matters. Retrieved September 6, 2022, from <https://real-matters.com/?p=233>

*What Is The Value Of Your Life?* (2018, May 30). YouTube. Retrieved September 6, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwVfS7n3gghs>

A handout form titled 'How Do You Value Lives?' with a grid for rating 17 different people. The grid has columns for 'Name', 'Date', and a rating scale from 1 to 10. Below the grid is a cartoon illustration of two children and the logo 'P.A.T.H.'.

Rating Scale Handout

Click Here to Provide Feedback on this Lesson



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## How Do You Value Lives?

Directions: On a scale of 1-10, rate each one of these on how much value you place on this person, BUT...you cannot give everyone a 10. You must be selective and give various ratings. A rating of 1 is the lowest, meaning their life has little value to you, and a score of 10 is the highest, most valuable.

A family member that you enjoy being around	
Your best friend	
Someone who has bullied you in the past	
A family member who has hurt you	
Yourself	
Doctors and nurses	
A homeless person on the street	
A new student in school that you have seen but not talked to yet	
Professional sports athlete	
Someone who commits a violent crime	
Someone who commits a non-violent crime	
The person who invented TikTok	
The person who invented Snapchat	
A fast-food restaurant employee who made a mistake on your order	
Someone you used to be friends with but no longer are	
A teacher that you like	
A principal who called you into their office to question you about something you got caught doing	

