

Only little boys drink lemonade!

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Part 1: Practical Guidance and Didactical Approach

Background and keywords:

On the basis of his research findings, Finnish child psychologist Sinkkonen (2007) states that the majority of children and youth who suffer from behavioural disorders are males; likewise the majority of persons who behave in anti-social ways are men. When mention is made of deviant behaviour, this primarily refers to criminal offences, drug addiction, alcoholism etc.

It is general knowledge that boys tend to experience more difficulties in school than girls, on account of their behaviour. Statistics thus show the number of boys who drop out of school without any qualifications is on the rise.

These difficulties, at this stage at least, do not necessarily involve extreme cases, as acting loudly and unruly in public as well as acting defiantly towards family members etc. are also considered to be deviant behaviour for children and young people. However, alcohol consumption of children and youth is increasing. The findings from a comparative study undertaken in Estonia of school children aged 11 to 15 years of age provided evidence for the growing trend for alcohol consumption. During the period of 1993 to 1994, four percent of teenagers surveyed over 13 years of age consumed alcohol on a weekly basis compared to 10% in 2001/2002 who reported that every week they drank alcohol at least once a week. What is most disturbing is the fact that 10 percent of the youth surveyed between 14 to 15 years of age, reported getting drunk once a week or more.

In order to prevent deviant behaviour, children should be taught, among other things, to make the right decisions and to learn to say "no" in certain situations. Learning to say no, especially plays a crucial role at that age, when children are starting to detach themselves from their families and identifying more with friends, peers and the group. One of the main reasons for alcohol consumption at this age has been shown to be peer pressure and the desire to be accepted by others.

Keywords: Deviant behaviour, alcoholism, making decisions, learning to say 'no'

Similar topics:

Puberty, group influence

Materials:

- Different subject material for the individual groups
- worksheets
- pens

Duration:

2 teaching sessions of 45 minutes each

Number of participants:

- 20 to 25 boys (and girls)
- 4 to 5 boys (and girls) in small groups for group work

Age:

9 to 12 year old boys (and girls)

Aims:

- To identify different problems children of the same age have to cope with
- To express problems orally
- To offer solutions for the problems
- To identify the advantages and the disadvantages of the solutions offered
- To be able to adequately justify the suggested solutions to the problems

(Short) explanation:

The pupils are to be divided into groups. Each group member receives a case description. The pupils first read the case description alone and take notes (about 5 to 7 minutes).

Then the children work together in the group to formulate a common problem (or several problems). Then different solutions for the problem(s) are sought (about 15 to 20 minutes).

All groups have a maximum of two minutes time to formulate and to justify their solution.

Reflection:

With the help of the teacher to moderate discussions, during the last part of this teaching session, the pupils should reflect together on the following points:

- Do you think that Klaus's case is an isolated one or does something like that often happen?
- Who can describe a similar situation?
- In your opinion, XXX would have been the best solution in this case. What would have been the consequences, if Klaus had decided to act differently than the suggestion, how would he have acted and what would have been the consequences for his behaviour?

Variations (Continuation):

Each group works on a different case description. As all of the cases would also need to be presented before the entire class, two sessions of about 45 minutes each would be required.