

Everyday Violent Language Exercise

Target Age: Grade 9-12,

Source: Ohio Network Against Domestic Violence & Mid Valley Women's Crisis Services, Oregon

Overview:

Language is an extremely powerful tool that can be used to empower or oppress. Our language is full of commonplace violent phrases that people rarely think about when using them, like "give it a shot" or "when push comes to shove". Participants in this activity are asked to write down and share all of the commonly used violent phrases they can think of. After sharing the phrases, participants discuss the implications behind these phrases, especially in reference to prevention efforts.

Objectives:

- Gain insight into the pervasiveness and acceptability of violence in US culture
- Question personal use of violent language as prevention strategy

Materials needed:

- Handout of [List of violent language and phrases in English/US culture](http://www.mvwcs.com/violentlanguage.html) – <http://www.mvwcs.com/violentlanguage.html>

Timing: 15 minutes

Activity Steps:

- 1) Divide group into small teams of up to 8 people each.
- 2) Ask each team to generate a list of all commonly used violent phrases they can think of in 4 minutes
- 3) Give a couple of examples from the handout or ask participants for a few
- 4) Each group should assign a scribe to record their answers. "GO"
- 5) Call time and ask the groups to shout out how many they generated.
- 6) Ask one member from the group with the most to read out their answers
- 7) Ask the next highest group to add any additional. Follow this step until all answers are out.
- 8) Give out "prizes" as the teams share – chocolate and other inexpensive items are great!

Process Questions (feel free to add your own depending on your specific objectives):

- 1) What's your overall impressions of what you heard?
- 2) How did you find yourself reacting?
- 3) What lessons can be learned from this exercise?
- 4) Given that our daily language is filled with violence, what does this mean as we try to prevent violence against women and girls?
- 5) What does this mean to you as someone interested in prevention?