

# Picturing Ways Out of Violence

*Now I see what I could do!*



Complexity



7-13 years



60 minutes



4-30



Violence



Peace

## Type of activity

Creating human statues, discussion

## Overview

Children illustrate a conflict or violent situation with a 'human statue' and then illustrate how it could be resolved without violence.

## Objectives

- To raise awareness of different types of violence
- To develop non-violent approaches to resolving conflict
- To explore why violence occurs

## Preparation

None

## Materials

None

## Instructions

1. Discuss the topic of violence with the group. Encourage the children to extend their understanding of violence beyond the physical to include verbal and psychological abuse and threats of abuse. You can use questions like the following:
  - What is violence? What hurts or harms people?
  - Does violence always need to be physical?
  - Is pain always visible?
  - Can a kind person also use violence?
2. Divide the children into groups of four to six. Explain that each group should spend 15 minutes discussing examples of violence that they have observed or experienced (e.g. at school, in the family, with friends). The group should choose one example of violence that they have discussed and then they should create a 'human statue' to show this example to others in the group. The 'human statue' should include all the people in the small group and should be still, without any sound or movement. The children's pose and facial expression should express their role in the statue (e.g. as a victim, perpetrator or witness). Ask each small group to present their 'human statue'. The rest of the children should comment on what they think is going on in the statue. The group that is presenting should not comment at this stage.
3. After all the groups have presented their 'statue', explain that now they should return to their small groups and discuss how the violence or conflict in their presentation could be resolved peacefully. They should then create another human statue to show how the situation was resolved.

4. Ask each group to present their 'conflict resolution statue' to the rest of the group. This time there should be a short discussion after each presentation, during which the rest of the group can first comment on what they have seen, and then the presenting group can explain what the situation was and how it was resolved. Ask the group to suggest other possible resolutions, then ask the children to assess these resolutions in terms of their real-life experience. Remind them that there is usually more than one way to resolve violence.

## Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
  - How did you find the activity? Was it difficult to think of an example and portray this in a 'statue'? Why?
  - How did you come up with your peaceful solution?
  - Did you feel better presenting the first statue or the second one? Why?
  - Why do people act violently?
  - What are some of the ways that *you* could help to reduce or avoid violence in difficult situations?
2. Relate the activity to human rights by asking questions such as these:
  - Is there a human right to non-violence? Which human rights are related to non-violence?
  - Why are the human rights protecting us against violence so important?
  - How can we make sure these human rights are respected?
  - The CRC obliges governments to ensure that children are properly cared for and protected from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. Do you know of situations in your environment when this right is violated?
  - What can you do if you witness violence against children?

## Suggestions for follow-up

This activity provides opportunities for discussing violence within the group. The activity 'A Constitution for Our Group' invites children to set standards for behaviour within their group and to co-operate in their enforcement. The activity 'From Bystander to Helper' also addresses the many roles involved in abusive behaviour. 'Words that Wound' deals with verbal violence (including on the Internet).

Arrange a training session on violence prevention or anti-aggression techniques.

Check if any campaigns or activities against violence are going on in your region.

## Ideas for action

Create stickers or posters related to violence and anti-violence and put them in public places. Indicate a number or address where people experiencing violence can turn to.

Organise a theatrical performance or make a short movie based on the stories presented by the children.

Take real photographs of the groups presenting their human statues and organise a small exhibition or post the photos onto a blog or social media page if you have permission to do so.

## Tips for the facilitator

Be very sensitive towards children who have already experienced violence. As you may not be aware of the violence some children have experienced, you should watch out for any unusual reactions during the activity itself.

The children can also choose a 'typical' situation; they do not have to talk about themselves if they do not want to.

When you introduce the activity, you may want to demonstrate a 'human statue' with one small group.

The children may have difficulty developing realistic solutions to violent situations, especially those involving adults. Be prepared to suggest possible sources of support and protection, including local child protection agencies. Ensure that you have relevant phone numbers to support services to give out to children.

Younger children may find it difficult to pose as human statues for a long time. Taking a (real) photograph of the groups as they present can motivate and support them to stay still without moving. It also provides a good record of the activity and can be used for actions afterwards.