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## **Violence, Problem Solving Methods and Teaching**

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Violence is the result of a combination of biological, social, and psychological factors, especially those that increase exposure to vulnerability, shame and humiliation. Preventing violence must involve the opposite making sure people feel safe, cared about and connected, while ensuring they have a healthy and realistic, sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

So how can we prevent children from becoming violent? And how can we treat people who've already demonstrated violent tendencies? Here are some of the Do's of stopping violence among children, adolescents, and adults. This list is addressed to parents, but it truly applies to any influential figure in child's life.

- **Developing a Conscience.**

Help your children develop a conscience by A) Being attuned to them, B) Not being violent toward or in front of them, C) Providing a secure, safe base for them, and D) Repairing when you slip up. We all make mistakes as parents, but openly admitting and apologizing for these mistakes shows your kids that you are human, that they are not to blame, and that they too, should demonstrate care and concern.

- **Developing Empathy.**

Help your child develop empathy. Imagine the scene of your child hitting another child in the park. In that moment, you'd probably insist they say "sorry", but what do you do to make them feel empathetic? Saying sorry can be meaningless if a child doesn't mean it. At these times ask your child to describe how he/she would feel from being hit. This help the child to feel compassion and sympathy, while understanding what it really means to hurt someone.

- **Building Self-Esteem.**

Help your child find something they are good at and offer real praise for those achievements. False praise and build up inflates a person's vanity but does little to enhance their real sense of self-worth or self-esteem. Yet, acknowledging children for honest accomplishments and true abilities helps them to know their value.

Vanity has actually been found to contribute to violence. Conversely, prisoners given the opportunity to gain a sense of value by helping other people has highly positive results. In the Restorative Justice model, prisoners are given this opportunity, with many people who run the program having previously been participants in the program.

- **Avoiding Harsh Punishment.**

Don't punish a child harshly. When we are violent, abusive, or insensitive to our children, we lead by example. We teach them to be unsympathetic, out of control, and at the whim of their

anger. We must be attuned in how we discipline our children. Make sure our punishment comes out of care and concern for how they feel and behave, and not from our own emotional issues.

On a societal and political level, we must not overlook those struggling and work harder to provide services to help educate this population. We know that in the case of prisoners who've been jailed for violent crimes, the factors proven to reduce recidivism include therapy, education, the building of job skills, and substance abuse treatment. On a personal level, whether we are aiming to prevent a child from becoming violent or to steer a person away from a life already touched by violence, we must foster our own compassion and faith in a human being's goodness and potential.

The solution to the problem of violence is never to turn our backs, but to keep our hearts and minds open to how we can individually affect change. And that change starts with how we raise our children from the day they are born.

- Teachers must be committed to intervene immediately if violence occurs.

When violence is an issue in a school, communities must prioritise immediate and careful attention to the situation and develop a planned response. Without commitment, project fail, people become discouraged and violence remains an accepted means of solving problems.

The way adults use language often has an impact on the creation of a positive climate in the school, as well. Adults/teachers should pay attention to their words and body language in front of pupils. Encouraging children to use pro-social speech can be done by teachers through personal example, guiding the children through the process of problem solving.

- Use speech as an alternative in resolving violent situations.

Violence can appear in many ways and the tongue can be a subtle knife, cutting deep into the memory of a pupil. Words are crucial to the development of the thought constructs required to solve problem and, combined with body language, can model emotional control to pupil.

In situations of conflicts between the children, the children will see the teacher's approach and learn various models of dealing with situations. Guidance through the process of emotional control, providing emotional first aid in the conflict, encouraging children to address the problem themselves, are teacher's strategies that teach behavioural, social and emotional skills.

- Always focus on the "solution" when solving a problem.

In encouraging children to resolve conflict situations it is not always necessary for teachers to understand the cause of the problem, nor is there any particular benefits if they did.

Talking about a problem could often have the opposite effect. Thus, let's not talk directly about the problem; rather, let's emphasize the change we could make.

- When intervening, think about whether you have the right values, attitude and skills to deal with the situation.

When working with pupils who have been violent or aggressive, teachers need to guide them through a set of predictable and known consequences while ensuring opportunities for problem solving, goal setting, skills development and restitution are provided.

A school can decide to give this role of crises intervention to executive or nominated teacher in the school can learn these valuable strategies.

- Always be prepared with a response plan so that your approach is consistent.

Having a response plan ensures consistency in your response and fairness for the pupils. When violence happens, consistent urgent measures need to be undertaken, and these must be known to the teachers, pupils and parents. Children should be immediately removed from the conflict zone, interviewed by a teacher and referred to the appropriate programs.

- Help children correct their wrongs.

Incidents and conflicts can be frequent occurrences in schools. When damage or harm has been inflicted, the child who caused it should be given a chance to correct his/her wrong.

Resolving a situation using the principles of restorative justice is an effective way to deal with disagreements in relationships. The aim of the restorative approach is to repair the harm caused by the conflicts by finding a mutually acceptable way to do so. It can be done formally or informally and entails repairing the partnership through making joint decisions about the future of the relationship.

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