



Social Issues

Media Violence



Definition:

This is violence that is portrayed in the media, either real life or fictional.

Examples:

Magazines portraying violence and war
Television programmes depicting war and conflict
Films about killing - historical (Vietnam War) or fictional (Dracula)

Why the situation occurs?

There have always been conflicts and wars in society, but with the advances in modern technology there are more ways to actually see this violence first hand, for example on the television, in newspapers, on the internet.

Every day on the news there are images shown of conflicts around the world and their consequences - death, injury and misery. Films for adults and children alike are often full of violence - wars, fighting, terrorism, abuse, murder, etc. Books and magazines also portray a great deal of conflict, often using very graphic imagery, and with the advances made on the internet it is possible to see violent acts as they take place.

Children are very susceptible to this violence and have ample opportunities to see it at a very young age. Often violence is condoned and those involved are portrayed as heroes. This approach to violence can affect how people, both children and adults, behave and how they interact with their peers and community.

How you can make a difference:

Tackle the issue - learn about the different types of violence in the media and how easy it is to have access to this. Discuss whether we need to see this or not - we want to be informed, but to what extent? Should children be exposed to these levels of violence? How can we protect very young children from violence portrayed in the media?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Developing Awareness and Empathy
3. Taking action
4. Measuring the change

Resources and Links:

Workshop 10: "Violence on the screen" from the booklet "Building Peace Together" (A World Organization of the Scout Movement publication)

http://www.scout.org/wsrc/peaceworkshops/workshop10_e.pdf (English)

http://www.scout.org/wsrc/peaceworkshops/workshop10_f.pdf (French)

The United Nations Children's Fund website MAGIC - "Media Activities and Good Ideas by, with and for Children". This site (English, French and Spanish) includes a great deal of information on how to use the media for good with children, and also contains documents on child protection and the internet:

<http://www.unicef.org/magic>