



Julie's Journey 2



Overview

Students create a timeline of a fictional teen's life and discuss the repercussions of running away. They watch "Julie's Journey," then create a "Top 10" list of ways to help prevent a friend from running away and another to learn why running away isn't the solution to a problem.



Materials / Preparation

- Computer lab or computer connected to an LCD projector or television monitor
- Video - "Julie's Journey"
- Chalkboard, whiteboard, or wall
- 3 pre-cut strips of construction paper for each student
- A strip of masking tape or line on the board or wall 10 to 12 ft. long and labeled in 5-year increments from 0-75
- Attachment 1 - Copy of "Guide to Getting Help" for each student
- Attachment 2 - Copy of "Top 10 Reasons Why Running Away isn't a Good Idea"
- Attachment 3 - Copy of "Top 10 Ways to Help Prevent a Friend from Running Away"



35-45 minutes



Introduction

Today we're going to talk about running away. Why do you think teens run away from home? Possible answers may include: relationships, peer pressure, emotional problems, home problems, self-esteem issues, status symbol, adventure, grades, afraid of punishment for something, abuse, legal issues, pregnancy. What does a runaway face on the street? Sexual exploitation, injury, being lost, theft, prostitution, drugs, assault, illness, violence, disease, starvation, and possibly death. What are some signs that your friend or sibling may be thinking about running away? Behavior changes such as eating too much or too little, sleeping too much or too little, grades dropping, picking fights

or breaking rules, dropping hints or admitting to thinking about running away, withdrawing from friends or family, saving cash or withdrawing cash from their savings account, keeping a stash of clothes or money in a backpack or bag. *If you had a friend who felt this way, what are some ways you could help him/her?* Be a friend; listen; find an adult who can help; don't hide your friend; don't go along with him/her; and be sure to tell one of your trusted adults. *Who would you talk to if you had a problem that you didn't think you could handle on your own?* Friend, older sibling, teacher, parent/guardian, church leader, counselor, relative, a friend's parent, police.

Did you know that according to the National Runaway Switchboard 1.6 to 2.8 million youth run away each year? Of those, over 5,000 die each year on the streets. Youth who run away are 50% female and 50% male.



Note to educator: You could personalize this by finding your own state's statistics at http://www.nrscrisisline.org/media/call_stats.html



Activity

Give each student 3 strips of construction paper. Have the students write on the upper half of one strip a major life event they might experience in the future, such as getting married, graduating high school, having children. On the next strip, have them write something they would like to accomplish in their lifetime, such as going to college, writing a book, or owning a business. On the bottom of each strip, have them write the age they might be during this event.

Once the students finish this task, explain to them that the line you put up on the board or wall represents a lifespan. Have them place their strips on the timeline. As students are doing that, add a “problem” strip that you have written, such as “had an argument with parents” or “problem at home that seemed impossible to work out.” Place this strip somewhere between age 12 and 15 on the timeline.

Create a fictional character. Make the character real by naming him or her and going through the timeline on the board pointing out his or her accomplishments, in great detail, and life-learning experiences through the years. Then explain to the class that this person did not have the opportunity to experience the full life you just portrayed.

Point to the “problem” event that you inserted. Tell students that this character decided to run away

because he or she didn’t know how else to handle the situation. Put a strip that says “runs away” on the board next to the age it occurred. Explain that your character went to the city to find a job but couldn’t because he or she had no skills. This character was forced to steal and prostitute on the streets for food and shelter. Depending on how far you want to go, you could explain that this character has not been heard from since running away. Maybe your character died on the street from drugs or disease. While continuing the story, begin removing the positive strips the students placed earlier. Explain that the character never had the chance to do each of these things.

On the third strip of paper, have students write what choice they think this fictional character could have made to have his or her life turn out the way he/she wanted it to. Have students walk to the timeline and put these up at the “runs away” strip. Read the suggestions out loud. Discuss these positive solutions (talking to a trusted adult, talking to a counselor at school).

Tell students:

We are now going to view a video about Julie, a real teen, who tells us her experience. Watch “Julie’s Journey” and then discuss.



Discussion

- *Why did Julie say she ran away?* Retaliation against her parents.
- *What does Julie say at the end about her experience of running away?* It just makes problems worse; she wished she wouldn’t have done it.
- Julie was lucky because she was able to go home.
What could have happened to her based on our

previous discussion? Julie could have ended up like our fictional character on the board.

- *What does Julie say that she could have done instead of running away?* Julie says she could have talked to someone about her problems. Stress to the students that when they have a problem they believe is too hard to handle, it’s time to get help.

End the lesson by having students fill out the “Guide to Getting Help” worksheet (attachment 1) to learn who they can talk to and where they can go if they or someone they know is thinking about running away. Next have students fill out the “Top 10” List (attachment 2) about reasons why running away is not the solution for them or Julie.



Follow-Up

Assign the “Top 10 Ways to Help Prevent your Friend from Running Away” (attachment 3) form and discuss the next day if time permits.



Guide to Getting Help
Research and fill out form completely.

Agencies in my Community

Hotlines

Agency Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Shelters

Agency Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Counseling

Agency Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Trusted Adults

Family

Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Friends

Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Adults

Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Regional and National Organizations

Find one more source in your area.

Agency Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

National Runaway Switchboard:
 1-800-RUN-AWAY (1-800-786-2929)
 www.nrscrisisline.org

Covenant House:
 1-800-999-9999
 www.covenanthouse.org / www.nineline.org

* Please note that we provide this list as a public service. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children does not sponsor or endorse any organization listed.



Top 10 Reasons Why...

Julie shouldn't have run away

You shouldn't run away

Reason #10		
Reason #9		
Reason #8		
Reason #7		
Reason #6		
Reason #5		
Reason #4		
Reason #3		
Reason #2		
And the #1 reason why running away isn't a good idea is...		



Top 10 Ways to Help Prevent a Friend from Running Away

Reason #10

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Reason #9

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Reason #8

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Reason #7

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Reason #6

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Reason #5

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Reason #4

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Reason #3

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Reason #2

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And the #1 way to help keep a friend from running away is...

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