

Children's Connection Curriculum

Session Topic: Abuse (We know that we did not cause this disease and that we can let go of the guilt)

Developmental Level: Elementary and Middle School

Purpose: To teach children that the alcoholism is not their fault.

Materials Needed: Picture of father and his son (included)

Description of Session: Talk with the students that there are some families where substances are being abused, children often feel there is something they are doing that is causing the use of the substance. Share that some of the children feel responsible or guilty. Ask to make sure students understand what these words mean. We are going to talk today about self talk, which is a way to let go of those negative thoughts and feelings that you may be having. Show the students the included picture of the father and his son. Have the students share what they see and read what the boy is thinking. Ask student if they have ever blamed themselves or talked to themselves like the boy in the picture. Encourage them to be specific with the sharing and how they felt. Remind each student that if someone in their family is abusing drugs or alcohol, it is not their fault. The child did not cause this substance abuse. Tell them that the abuser will use the alcohol or drug regardless of what is said or done, because they have a disease. You did not cause this disease. Also share that alcoholics or drug users may blame their drinking problem on others, because then they don't have to deal with the problem as being theirs. This is a form of denial. Teach students about what self talk is and how it can be used within this setting. Have the students share what the boy could say to himself in the picture to know that his father's drinking is not his fault. Ask students to give their own examples of times they have used self talk or should have used self talk. Talk with students about the different between positive and negative thought by telling them that negative thoughts lead to negative self talk which leads to negative behavior. On the other hand, positive or good thoughts lead to positive or good self talk and then to positive behavior. When you are behaving in a positive manner, you are happier and feel better. As students to share about what type of thoughts a substance abuser may have and discuss.

Discussion Questions: See Above.

Reference: 12 Stepping Stones by Suzanna Diou & Lois Caldwell, p. 78-80