

Activity 11: Issues

Our personal value systems make up who we are. Therefore, they also play a large role in the decisions we make and the sides we take involving different issues. By examining controversial issues, we can determine what values we find important and compare our values to those of others.

OBJECTIVES:

For youth to:

- identify their values and use them to make a decisions.
- explain and defend their beliefs.
- compare their values with those of other group members.

LIFE SKILLS:

- Relating to others.

MATERIALS:

- ISSUE STATEMENTS
- Paper
- Markers
- Tape

TIME:

30 minutes

SETTING:

Comfortable room with open space next to a wall suitable for standing.

Advanced Preparation: Using the paper and the markers, make a sign saying "STRONGLY AGREE" and another sign saying "STRONGLY DISAGREE". Hang STRONGLY AGREE sign on one side of a wall and the STRONGLY DISAGREE sign on the other side of the wall

DO

- Read the first issue statement and have the youth stand against the wall at a point that best represents their opinion (Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree, or in between).
- Ask at least three persons standing in different areas why they are standing where they are standing. Allow anyone to contribute their feelings and opinions.
- Repeat with each statement.

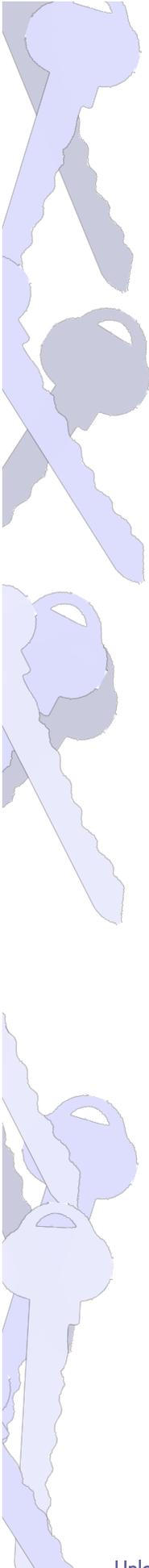
REFLECT

- How did you come to your decisions?
- Did other participants' locations affect where you stood? Why or why not?
- Did anyone change their mind after the issues were discussed? Why or why not?
- What causes different opinions regarding issues?

APPLY

- What are some situations that you will face in the future where you will have to "take a stand"?
- How do your values affect decisions you make regarding controversial issues?





ISSUE STATEMENTS

Situation: Angie is 22 years old, old enough to drink legally. During dinner at her boyfriend Greg's house, she drinks some wine. Greg offers to drive Angie home in his car and let her leave her car at his place, but she refuses, saying, "No, I need my car early in the morning, and plus, I've driven plenty of times with no problem after drinking this much." She decides to drive home.

Statement #1: Angie made the right decision.

Situation: Alicia is 15 years old and has an older sister, Jamie, in college. One weekend while Jamie is visiting, Alicia discovers her sister has begun smoking cigarettes. Alicia hates to see her sister hurting her health, so she looks through Jamie's purse and bags without her knowledge, finds two packs of cigarettes, and throws them away.

Statement #2: Alicia made the right decision.

Situation: Chris is 17 years old and has just graduated from high school. He received a very nice stereo system as graduation gift from his cousin Shoana. She laughingly tells him how she "lifted" it from the department store where she works. He doesn't think it's right to keep the gift, but he really does like the stereo. He decides to keep it because he wouldn't want to hurt Shoana's feelings.

Statement #3: Chris made the right decision.

ISSUE STATEMENTS (continued)

Situation: Researchers at a medical company have discovered an ingredient from a certain tree is successful in treating cancer patients. However, a rare species of bird lives in these trees, and it takes thousands of trees to get the amount of the ingredient needed. If the company harvests the trees, the bird may become endangered. Because of the danger to this species of bird, the government decides not to let the company harvest the trees.

Statement #4: The government made the right decision.

Situation: Tony is a pharmacist. His mother is very, very ill with an incurable disease and wants to die. She begs Tony for medication that will allow her to commit suicide so that she will not have to suffer any longer. Tony does not give her the medicine.

Statement #5: Tony made the right decision.