



&

NO name-calling week
JAN 23-27
2012

Overview:

This lesson focuses on the put-down mentality in the media. In this lesson, students and families become aware of the types and amounts of put-downs, name calling, insults, bullying and rude behavior in the media, specifically TV programming. Students and families will gain a greater understanding of how put-downs affect one's self-esteem as well as social & emotional well-being. Students and families should spend time together discussing, watching, and analyzing the various types of put downs in the media.

We are aware that not all families watch TV and so please feel free to use the outline of this activity with magazines, advertisements, radio, music/songs, film, fashion, pop culture, etc. This activity is more about raising awareness regarding the put-down culture our youth (and adults) are subjected to and making a commitment to recognize, reflect, and not be a part of the negativity.

Two "Media Logs" are attached to this document—while it's not necessary to use them, they may assist you in keeping track and staying on task.

Steps:

1. Discussion

A. The activity should begin with a discussion about put-downs.
"What is a put-down?"

B. You might want to ask the following questions:

- Have you ever been put down by insults or name-calling?
- How did it make you feel? / How does it make you feel?
- Why do you think people put down other people?

C. Then move on to discuss the different forms of put-downs and the types that are regularly featured on TV (or in other media sources). Brainstorm together to get an idea of what sort of language and interactions you'll be looking for as you watch your TV show.

Some things you might come up with are:

- Name calling (ie: "you're a jerk" or "he's so stupid")
- Hurtful statements (ie: "I hate you," or "I can't stand her")
- Statements or actions that silence: (ie: "shut up" or eyerolling)
- Swearing
- Sarcasm
- Self put downs (ie: "I'm ugly" or "I'll never learn this")



- D. Consider both physical and emotional acts of put-downs. How many kinds of put-downs can you come up with?

Emotional: yelling, put-downs, name-calling, dumping [transferring unrelated anger to another person], etc.

Physical: threatening/bullying, pushing/shoving, hitting/punching/kicking, shooting, stabbing, vandalism, dangerous behavior, etc.

- E. Choose a TV show. Give your child a chance to choose a show they watch regularly (it could be a show you may have not seen before), or a show they know is popular. While watching the show together you can do a number of things to recognize a put-down. Each time a put-down happens you may choose to:

- Record it on the Media Log attached to this assignment. Each person can record on their own log & you can compare notes at the end of the show
- Raise a hand each time
- Ring a bell
- Pause the show
- Acknowledge it outloud
- Other creative options your family comes up with

- F. After you've watched the TV show (s) you should follow up with a conversation about what you saw. You may ask:

- Each person's reaction
- How it would have felt to be a specific character
- How does the media influence our use of put-downs in our day-to-day life?
- Is emotionally hurtful language just as bad as physically hurtful actions? What are long-term effects of emotionally hurtful language?
 - Do put-downs ever lead to physical fights? How come?
 - What are the common ways that kids put each other down at school? At home?
- What are ways our family can decrease their put-downs?
- Should TV shows have to rate/code their shows (the same way they do for adult content or violence) for viewers to know it's a show with put-downs & negative talk?
- What message do these shows send to younger kids?



You may choose to follow up throughout the week with various conversations about put-downs. Suggestions:

- Create a “no name calling week” jar & ask that all family members participate for the week. Each time a family member says a put-down, calls a name, etc that family member has to put a quarter (25 cents) in the jar. Keep track of the person who puts the least amount in & they win the jar's final amount. (You can reverse

this and have a reward jar with candy etc, & when someone has a day with no name calling in it they can be rewarded with a pick from the jar).

- A friendly family debate over dinner on "Put-downs should be banned from TV" or "Put-downs should be banned from school"
- You may choose to share an experience from your childhood when you were put down, or when you put someone else down and later noticed the negative impact it had on them.
- Does it make a difference if someone says "it's just a joke" after they make a put-down?
- Is it possible to actually ignore teasing or insults? Who should you go to if you're being teased? Discuss the impact of holding too much inside.
- Encourage your child to journal about their reactions
- Encourage your child to come to their guidance counselor to discuss any put-downs or name calling they have experienced.
- Encourage your child to share their own experiences with you about being teased or called name, or about them teasing or calling others names.



We appreciate your support of No Name Calling Week! Enjoy your family time & No Name Calling Week!

Media Logs: A:

Source:
Put Down or Insult:
Context:
Personal Reaction:

