

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with
Program 6

HANDLING EMOTIONS

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



EDUCATIONAL GOALS

YOUNG ADOLESCENTS LEARN:

- That it's healthy and normal to experience a wide range of feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.
- That it's important to identify and understand what we're feeling so we can maintain a healthy perspective and choose the best ways to cope.
- Some positive ways to express emotions and to deal with emotions.

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- ▶ **Trigger group discussion**
- ▶ **Stimulate critical thinking**
- ▶ **Boost self-esteem**

Big Changes, Big Choices helps young teens work their way through the turmoil of early adolescence while making positive, healthful life choices. In each program TV cameras follow comedian / youth counselor Michael Pritchard to middle schools around the country, as he thrills young audiences with warm humor about growing up and engages them in problem solving sessions about serious issues that affect their lives.



The purpose of this video program is to shape young people's attitudes by appealing to their minds and their hearts. By watching and discussing these videos, kids will come to a deeper understanding of the issues presented in the tapes, think more critically about their own choices and behaviors, and gain confidence in their own better instincts.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.

You can greatly enhance the effectiveness of this video by following it up with group discussions, writing assignments, and learning activities. This guide is intended to help you in your efforts.

We recommend that, before showing the tape, you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some useful questions on page 6. Also, you can expect your students to have a lot to talk about after viewing the tape, so it's a good idea to allow ample time.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this video program.

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

This program explores the emotional ups and downs of early adolescence. Viewers will see that kids their age commonly experience mood swings and strong emotions, including conflicting feelings. The program looks at positive, healthful ways of expressing feelings including anger, of coping with unpleasant feelings such as sadness, depression, and loneliness, and it encourages kids to deal with problems before they escalate into crises.

PROGRAM CONTENT

PART I

Mike Pritchard on stage in a middle school auditorium entertains the kids with a comedy introduction to the topic of emotions. He says it's important that we learn to sort things out and understand our feelings.

MOODS AND MOOD SWINGS

Teentalk: Pritchard leads a group of middle school students in a discussion about the many moods they can go through in a single day. They say they all experience mood swings. Sudden anger is especially common. When Pritchard asks why this happens, they say it's common at this age because of all the changes they're going through.

HIDING EMOTIONS

Pritchard asks if they ever hide their emotions. The boys say it's not okay for guys to cry because it's a sign of weakness. The girls disagree. They think a guy is more of a man if he let's himself cry instead of worrying about looking silly. They say it's stupid that guys deny their feelings thinking that they have to uphold an image of toughness. It's not healthy. When Pritchard asks what happens when we keep our emotions bottled up, they reply that eventually you blow out and do something crazy. And you mistreat people.

PART II

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE FEEL

Pritchard on stage performs a comedy bit about a kid in school going on an emotional roller coaster.

Teentalk: Discussion about being overwhelmed by emotion and feeling confused. Several kids give personal stories. A girl tells about an episode when good friends accused her of stealing. She's still angry. Pritchard asks if it's okay to feel anger. The kids respond that it's normal. They say their lives are complex enough that

there are always going to be things that make them angry.

REACTING WITH ANGER

Discussion about saying things we later regret. Two girls tell about saying "I hate you" to their younger siblings. Pritchard asks if it's always okay to express emotions just as we're feeling them. The kids say it's not okay because that often makes us say things we don't really mean, and we can hurt someone else's feelings.

Pritchard asks how to decide whether it's okay to express your feelings. Recommendations include: use common sense; don't say something when you're out of control; say it in your head before you say it to anybody else.

Pritchard on stage does a comedy bit about what happens when we let our anger get out of control.

PART III

DEALING WITH EMOTIONS

Teentalk: Pritchard asks the group for positive ways to deal with anger. Suggestions include: think of why you're angry; yell in an empty room; do some physical exercise; do something you enjoy; talk; listen to music.

Other ways to deal with emotions include: tell a friend what's going on; take a walk to think things over; don't take your emotions out on someone else, which is something we often do to the people we care about most.

The discussion ends with the kids talking about the special places they like to go when they're feeling down or angry.

Pritchard on stage says that having a safe place where you can express your feelings to people you trust is a big part of learning to handle your emotions. It's a good choice to make, and it's up to you to make the right choices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask **before** showing the tape.

1. Do you agree or disagree:
It's never okay to feel angry!
2. Do you agree or disagree:
If you feel sad, there is something wrong with you!
3. Do you ever have big mood swings?
Describe what they're like.

Questions to ask **after** showing the tape.

4. Did anybody in this video say anything you disagree with? What would you say to that person?
5. The kids in this video said that mood swings are common at this age because of all the changes you're going through. What are some of these changes? Why do you suppose these changes affect your moods?
6. Have you ever been confused about your feelings -like you knew you were feeling a strong emotion, but you didn't know what?
7. Have you ever thought you were feeling one thing when, really, you were feeling something else?
8. Do you think it's important to understand what it is you are feeling? Why? What can happen if you don't?
9. Do you think there's something wrong with you if you don't always feel wonderful? Is it okay to sometimes feel blue? Why, or why not?
10. Are some emotions more difficult to express than others? Which are they? Why are they hard to express?

11. Are there times when we ought to stop and think about how we want to express our emotions? What are they?

12. How do we decide when and how it is appropriate to express our feelings?

13. In this video, the kids suggested several positive ways to deal with anger. Can you remember what they were? What suggestions do you have for dealing with anger in a positive (non-harmful) way?

14. In this video, the girls disagreed with the boys about whether it's okay for boys to cry. What's your opinion?

15. Have you ever been unable to ask for help when you were hurting? Why?

16. When you are really down and confused or angry, what do you do?

17. Do you think your moods sometimes affect the way you make choices? In what way?

18. What are some things you shouldn't do when you are feeling very emotional?
-(make an big important decision)

19. What was most meaningful to you in this video? Why?

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR EMOTIONS

All of us experience a wide range of emotions in our lives. Usually, that's a good thing. But sometimes we have difficulty controlling our emotions, even to the point of letting our emotions control our behavior. Usually, that's not such a good thing. Here are some helpful suggestions for handling your emotions.

- 🍏 Be honest with yourself.
- 🍏 Talk to somebody about your feelings.
- 🍏 Don't ignore your emotions, they are telling you something.
- 🍏 If you are having an unpleasant feeling, think of something you can do that will help, and then do it.
- 🍏 Find positive ways to express anger that are not hurtful to others.
- 🍏 Remember, whatever you are feeling, you're not alone.
- 🍏 Try not to get overwhelmed, things usually improve.
- 🍏 If you do get overwhelmed - ask for help.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write about a time when you felt like you had to hide your emotions. Have you ever tried to hide them even from yourself?
2. Describe one or two times when you had big emotional mood swings.
3. Describe a time when you felt like you were mad at the world. Were you really mad at the whole world, or just one or two things? Did you figure it out?
4. Who do you talk to when you are feeling down? What does this person do that helps? Do you ever do the same for others?
5. Have you ever felt like you are totally alone and no one else could possibly understand what you're feeling? Do you think other people sometimes feel that way too?
6. Watch a television program and write about one of the characters. What were the major emotions that motivated that character's behavior? How did the character deal with those emotions? Did this character handle his/her emotions in a positive or negative (helpful or harmful) way? Can you think of a better way?
7. Imagine that some day you will have a child. Write a letter of advice for that child to read when he or she reaches the age you are right now. Tell the child about the moods and emotions you experienced at this age, and how you hope he/she will deal with his/her own moods and emotions at this age.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

For each of the situations given below, ask the following three questions:

1. Name the feeling.
 2. What's a helpful way to deal with it?
 3. What's a harmful way to deal with it?
-
- a. What do you feel when you're blamed for something you didn't do?
 - b. What do you feel when someone keeps fouling you on the basketball court?
 - c. What do you feel if you are expecting to see a friend, and he or she backs out at the last moment for no good reason?
 - d. How does you feel when you work really hard for something and you succeed?
 - e. What do you feel when your team keeps losing?
 - f. What do you feel when a teacher praises your work?
 - g. What do you feel when you do poorly on an exam because you didn't study?
 - h. What do you feel when your parent hasn't understood you?

ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian / youth counselor / public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then moved to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, "the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh." Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is
a good laugh."

Big Changes, Big Choices®
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