

DRUG WARS

One Family's Battle



Discussion Guide

Compiled, edited and distributed by
Crime Prevention Resources

“Drug Wars - One Family's Battle”
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1-800-867-0016

ABOUT THIS GUIDE...

DRUG WARS - One Family's Battle is designed to be used by anyone who has the task of disseminating information about drug abuse. Some of you will be able to develop a discussion outline by simply watching the video. For the rest of you, what follows is a brief guide that you can use as a starting point to stimulate discussion.

COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT THIS PROGRAM:

Who is the target audience? Whoever you can get to sit down for 30 minutes. Parents, teachers, clergy, students, recovering users, police officers, counselors.

Is the video age specific? This video will probably be most effective with adults, and kids not younger than junior high age. (In other words, anyone from the age of 12 on up.)

How old is the video? Release date was 03-17-98

How do I incorporate this video into my program? In most learning environments it will be enough simply to show the video. In other programs or environments, the facilitator will have to supplement the video with discussion starters or questions like those included in this guide.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS VIDEO:

- Show it to that one person who says, "I'm only hurting myself."

Prevention Programs:

- Show it as part of a community watch, neighborhood watch, or block meeting.
- Show it at school assemblies and PTO meetings.
- Show it to civic, health care, and community organizations, and county health agencies.

Counseling/Treatment Centers:

- Show it to users and former users.
- Show it to parents and friends of those at risk.
- Use as part of on-going treatment / recovery curriculum.

PEOPLE LIKE ERIC...

The story of Eric is one that many of us are familiar with. Many of us have run into an 'Eric' on occasion. Sadly, we often didn't realize it at the time.

At an early age, Eric began his journey into the world of drug addiction, as many do, by opening the door that leads to the use of chemicals like alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. We call these chemicals 'Gateway Drugs.' The most common danger in walking down this well-trod path is that, because these drugs are often seen as socially acceptable, the user finds more and more reasons to use them, and frequently in greater amounts.

As was the case with Eric, the user often acquires friends who proceed to teach their new found 'buddy' how to use drugs to greater effect, and who will introduce him or her to substances with even greater potency, like cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. In short, these newly acquired 'friends' become the people who teach kids all about drugs. Point out to your viewers that this is often the normal progression in drug abuse cases.

There is a tendency to stereotype drug users as seedy looking, longhaired, dirty, uneducated etc. Eric, however, does not fit this stereotypical mold. He's clean cut, athletic, educated, motivated, and personable. He comes from a good family background. He's also someone's son, brother, father, or friend. He is anybody that draws breath. He's you. He's me. He's our kid.

Eric shows us that the statement, "I'm not hurting anyone but myself" is nothing but a lie (or excuse) that those using drugs want you to believe. More significantly, these same users desperately want to believe this lie themselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

QUESTION: How did Eric's drug use affect him?

- Encourage the viewers to speculate about Eric's level of self-esteem. Recall his guilt at having to roll his sleeves down to hide his arms.
- Point out the physical effects of heroin withdrawal, and the psychological problems that resulted from Eric not getting the kind of treatment he wanted (methadone, etc.).
- Relate that as Eric continued his drug use he became suicidal when going through withdrawal.

QUESTION: How did Eric's drug use affect those around him?

- Highlight that while some family members bailed out of helping him with his problem, at least one of them stayed and was dragged deeper into his cycle of destruction.
- Point out that because of his addiction, there is a little boy who already lost one father and now has to deal with the loss of another.
- Bring into focus the sister's duty to tell both parents about Eric's death and the anguish that it caused them.
- Put the viewer in the place of Eric's fiancée, Kathy, who traveled hundreds of miles only to find Eric too late.

QUESTION: How could Eric have avoided getting involved with drugs in the first place?

- A greater degree of parental involvement.
- Earlier, direct intervention.
- Having a mentor to lead him down the right path.
- 'Tough love' when called for.

QUESTION: Can you see the dangers of using Gateway Drugs?

- Point out that Eric started using gateway drugs at an early age.
- Alcohol and tobacco may not be illegal for an adult but at the time that Eric started using them *they were illegal for him.*
- Greater degrees of intensity in stronger drugs.
- Social acceptability.
- Peer pressure to expand his experience to 'better' drugs.

QUESTION: What caused Eric to use stronger drugs like Heroin?

- Point out that people usually don't intend to become addicted to stronger more dangerous drugs.
- Show them where the true danger lies (what may appear to be harmless usually isn't.)
- Eric always had an excuse (his girl friend dumping him, etc.).

OTHER DISCUSSION OPTIONS:

#1 Profile the drug user. (Stereotype V.S. reality.)

#2 Show the aftermath. Ask the question: Who's left to go on?

#3 Answer the question: What if...

...Someone had been there more often for him?

...Someone had gotten him the help that he needed?

...Someone had been closer to his problem?

WEB RESOURCE GUIDE:

The Life Education Network
<http://www.lec.org>

National Crime Prevention Council
<http://www.weprevent.org/>

National Sheriffs Association
<http://www.sheriffs.org/>

F.B.I.
<http://www.fbi.gov/>

Drug Enforcement Agency
<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

Crimestoppers International
<http://www.c-s-i.org/>

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)
<http://www.dare-america.com/>

National Association of Town Watch
<http://www.nationaltownwatch.org/>

United Against Crime
<http://www.unitedagainst.com/>

Crime Prevention Coalition
<http://www.crimepreventcoalition.org/>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information
<http://www.health.org>