

I HAVE TOURETTE'S BUT TOURETTE'S DOESN'T HAVE ME

Teacher's Guide

I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me is a documentary about several very special children with Tourette Syndrome who live in a world that very rarely understands them. TS is a neurological disorder characterized by uncontrollable movements and vocalizations referred to as motor and vocal "tics." In the film, these children talk openly about the conflicts they face each day as they struggle, like all children, to fit in. There is a wonderful moral and social message to be learned from this documentary for all students as they meet and begin to view the lives of these young people.

The Tourette Syndrome Association has developed the following Lesson Plans to encourage schools to include this documentary as a part of their curriculum in Health, Character Education, Language Arts, Science, Diversity, anti-bullying lessons or any of the many other areas where it would be appropriate. It is suitable for children of all ages. It is designed first and foremost to educate students about the neurological disorder, Tourette Syndrome, but it goes way beyond that objective. It is rich in character education lessons for all students as it teaches students that every person is different in some way and that differences should be accepted and celebrated.

When parents of children with TS or the children themselves are asked about the most difficult part of having TS, the most frequent answer is dealing with peers. Social interactions are potentially very difficult for children with TS. One of the most important things you can do for children with TS is to educate their peers about the disorder. This is admittedly not easy, but it's one of the most successful ways of reducing social problems. The following peer in service model can be used by a teacher, guidance counselor, social worker, school psychologist or other appropriate school personnel.

The level of information given will depend on the age of the children who participate in the in-service. We suggest that you can show the HBO documentary after the following peer discussion.

SIX STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL PEER TRAINING

1. BEGIN A DISCUSSION ABOUT DIFFERENCES IN PEOPLE

Do not begin your in-service by talking immediately about TS. Talk first about other obvious differences that people have. You may even want to ask two students who are very different in physical appearance to come to the front of the room. You could then ask the rest of the class to pick out the differences between these two students (e.g. – hair color, eye color, curly vs. straight hair, tall vs. short, etc.). This could lead into a discussion about hereditary traits and what we inherit from our parents. Everyone inherits things from their parents that they don't necessarily like, but there is very little that can be done about it. Then begin a discussion on medical conditions that the students might already know about. Begin your in-service by asking questions such as:

- Does anyone know anything about asthma?
- Tell me what you know.
- What part of your body does asthma affect?

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- Does anyone have asthma or know someone with asthma?
- Have you ever seen anyone use an inhaler for an asthma attack?
- Would you think of making fun of someone that you saw using an inhaler?
- What about diabetes?
- Continue with the same questions about diabetes.
- What would be bad about having asthma or diabetes?

2. **INTRODUCE TOURETTE SYNDROME**

Ask if any of the students know what Tourette Syndrome is – this is an opportunity to create a discussion and dispel rumors, myths or stereotypes the children may have. If you have the disorder, you can ask students if they have noticed things that you have been doing that seem a little different. If you don't have TS, you could begin by asking if anyone knows of any disorders that affect the brain. An example could be someone who has had a head injury from an accident and can no longer walk or someone who has Cerebral Palsy. You can ask questions such as:

- What does your brain control? (speech, movement, etc.)
- Does anyone know a brain disorder that affects movement?

This discussion will help lead the group to Tourette Syndrome. The following explanation of TS may help:

With TS your brain is lacking stop signs. The average person only moves when they want to move. When you have TS, your body moves when you don't want it to. We call these movements tics. Take time to use the following explanation of what a tic is. A tic is a rapid, involuntary, repetitive movement of any muscular group in your body. A tic can be a shoulder shrug, an eye blink, a facial twitch, an arm or leg jerk, a finger tapping, etc. Try to use examples of tics that the child in question may have. Talk about vocal tics. A tic could also be a noise that a person makes or a word that is said over and over again. A vocal tic could be a sniffing, a throat clearing, a squeak, a grunt or simply a word or phrase that is repeated. Some people with TS may even use bad language that they don't want to use.

3. **EXPLORE WHAT CAUSES TOURETTE SYNDROME**

Explain that the cause of TS is not known, but we do know that it's hereditary. With younger children, ask if they know what "hereditary" means.

Ask questions such as:

- Name something that you inherited from your parents, e.g. your hair color, etc.
- How many of you have ever been told that you look like your mom or dad? This is called hereditary.
- How much control do we have over what we inherit from our parents?
- Is it nice to make fun of things people have no control over?
- Everybody has something about himself or herself that they are embarrassed about. "Some people with freckles hate their freckles. What can you do about freckles? Not much. "

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4. **DISCUSS PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO TOURETTE SYNDROME**

Be sure to explain that TS is not contagious, does not reflect intelligence level, does not mean someone is “crazy,” nor will you, or someone with TS, die from it.

You might then ask the following question:

If it's not contagious and you won't die from it, what is so bad about having TS?

Try to elicit the following three responses:

- People make fun of you and imitate you because they don't understand.
- Tics can interfere with what you're trying to accomplish. For example, what if you had a tic where you constantly were blinking your eyes. It would make it hard to read, copy things from the blackboard, or watch TV. If you had a finger tic, it would be hard to write.
- Tics hurt. Your body is not supposed to constantly move like that. Head jerking tics cause neck pain. Eye blinking tics can cause eyestrain and headaches.

5. **DISCUSS WHAT IT IS LIKE TO HAVE TOURETTE SYNDROME**

[If the child in question has obvious signs of OCD and/or ADHD, you might also explore these two disorders.]

Stick with symptoms that are obvious. This is a good place to ask the following questions:

- Has anyone ever made fun of you for something you can't help or control?
- How did that feel?
- Encourage a discussion of feelings.
- Has anyone ever had a sneeze that they were trying to hold in? “That's what a tic feels like. You try and try to suppress it but eventually it has to come out.”

6. **DISCUSS TEASING AND BULLYING vs. EMPATHY AND RESPECT**

DISCUSS EMPATHY (Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives).

Ask students:

What is empathy? If they don't know, give definition.

Why is it important to understand someone else?

What is respect?

Who deserves respect?

Ask the students to raise their hands – who would like respect?

Have them look around the room and make a conclusion....(Most likely, everyone wants it and their hands are in the air).

What happens without it?

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Sample Lesson Plans and Classroom Activities to Accompany the Viewing of *I Have Tourette's, but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me*

Goals:

1. Students will build awareness and understanding of the symptoms of Tourette Syndrome and other neurological disorders.
2. Students will develop a tolerance for all people's differences whether it is race, skin color, religion, physical or academic abilities and disabilities.
3. Students will understand the many forms of bullying and will appreciate the impact of bullying on their peers.

Activity 1

Administer the following bullying survey to the class.

After you have had a chance to read the surveys, you could invite students to guess the results.

- Read some samples from the students' responses.
- Ask a volunteer to help tally the survey results on the chalkboard; then ask students to add the responses to each question. Help students determine the fractions or percentages for each answer.
- Discuss the survey results, and brainstorm with students about what they can do to reduce bullying at school.

A follow up discussion could include the following:

1. Why do people bully?

Most bullies are bullies because:

- It makes them feel better that they have power over others.
- They're being bullied by others.
- They are stressed out and they don't know any other way to let out their anger.
- They are exposed to violence.
- They don't feel good about themselves.
- They aren't used to compromising and/or sharing.

2. How do people bully?

There are many types of bullying.:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Exclusion
- Property

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Physical bullying includes you using your body. Examples of physical bullying are kicking, pinching, and hitting. It can also include damaging and stealing items.

Verbal bullying includes saying something about someone behind his or her back. It could be name-calling, teasing, threats, spreading rumors, and blackmail. This can make people scared, upset, and wonder why they are not treated as they should be. Just calling people names can break up friendships. Words can hurt, and sometimes do more harm to a person than physical bullying.

Exclusion bullying includes leaving someone out, ignoring them, or making them feel unwelcome. It is mostly when people do not allow someone else to play with them, sit with them at lunch, etc. How would you feel if someone would never let you play with him or her at recess? You would probably be pretty upset probably. You may not even think of that as bullying.

Damaging or taking someone else's property is another form of bullying. It shows a lack of respect for them and their belongings.

All types of bullying are very hurtful and should be prevented.

For additional information on bullying and ways to prevent it, visit this website created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/>

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DIRECTIONS: Please circle or underline the best answers to the following questions. You may have more than one best answer for some questions. You do not have to put your name on the paper.

Name (optional) _____

1. Have you ever been bullied?

Yes No

2. If you answered yes, how often did someone bully you?

Once in a while Often Every day

3. Where did it happen?

School Park Home Neighborhood Somewhere else

4. If it happened at school, where at school did it happen?

Hallway Classroom Playground Cafeteria

Bathroom Somewhere else

5. Have you seen other students being bullied at school?

Yes No

6. If you answered yes, how often did it happen?

Once in a while Often Every day

7. Was the person being bullied a friend of yours?

8. How did you feel and what did you do?

9. Where have you seen other students bullied?

Hallway Classroom Playground Cafeteria Bathroom Somewhere else

10. What kinds of things have bullies done to you or to someone you know?

Called names Threatened Stole or damaged something

Shoved, kicked, or hit Ignored

11. How much of a problem is bullying for you?

Very much Not much None

12. On the back of the paper, tell what you think parents, teachers, and other adults could do to stop bullying.

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Activity 2

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 students. Give them the following instructions:

You and your team members are a staff of writers and producers at a local television station. Your station is devoting an entire series to Teasing and Bullying In Schools (you may choose a better title). Part of the series will involve Public Service Announcements/Commercials. The audience for these PSA's/Commercials are kids ages 8 - 17. Your team's job is to create a PSA that examines teasing and bullying and its effect on children. Remember: Your PSA's should be informative and should encourage the viewer to take action against bullying. Your PSA should be at least two minutes in length, no more than five minutes.

You can use any form that your group wants.

Suggestions:

- newscast
- documentary
- play
- puppet show
- interview
- testimonial
- music video.

Here is a list of issues that could be talked about during your PSA:

- What is teasing, bullying?
- How severe is teasing - what is the extent of the problem?
- Why is the person being teased or bullied?
- Why do you think those who do the teasing or bullying are doing it?
- Consequences and effects of teasing and bullying
- Ways to seek help - intervention programs

Guidelines:

- All team members must have a part in the PSA
- All team members must contribute to the writing of the PSA script

The teacher could video record the PSA's. It would also be a good idea to encourage the students to select someone who has TS since that was the topic of the documentary.

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Activity 3

This may be a two-day activity.

1. Have the students write on paper (web) at least six character traits that they have. Explain that these are things about themselves that make them unique individuals. Model this part of the lesson by doing a web of yourself. Require at least eight responses for this initial activity. (Four of these responses must be traits that cannot be visibly seen by others. e.g. kind, creative, artistic, etc.)
2. When they have finished, ask them to put a red line under any response they have that cannot be SEEN by another person. Model on your web. For example, "blonde hair", can be seen, so it would not be underlined. However, "creative" cannot be seen, so it will be underlined. Point out that the underlined items are character traits, and the ones not underlined are physical traits.
3. Give each student an index card on which to list the character traits they have written about themselves. Tell them to write their names on the card. If some students had not written any traits that would be characterized as character traits, give them a minute or two to think of some. Take the card up to use on the following day.
4. Make a master list of the traits the students wrote on the index cards, keeping each student's responses separate and assigning each list with a different letter instead of the name.
5. Give each group a list of the students' character traits. Have the students make a web like the one done in class the day before, connecting the students in the same manner. Instead of names, they will write the identifying letter that is on each list.
6. When the groups have completed the webs, discuss the fact that this circle web shows how students in the class have certain traits in common. Then give them the student names to replace with the identifying letters. They may be surprised to see whom they share common traits with.
7. Use this as an opportunity to discuss what are the most important of the traits, the physical traits or the character traits. Ask them if there is much we can do to change our physical traits. The discussion may also include having them decide which traits they would prefer to have in a friend?
8. *Daily Journal Prompts:* What have you learned about Tourette Syndrome by seeing this video? Can you think of other physical traits that cause people to stick out in the crowd and possibly be teased? What have you learned from this video?