



Chapter Nine: Understanding the Influence of the Media

I. Lesson Plan

- A. Purpose: Understand the effect of the media on children and youth.
- B. Objectives:
 - 1. Understand the influence of the media on children and youth.
 - 2. Understand how to talk with children about terrorism and war and the images from the media.
- C. Time: 20 minutes
- D. Preparation/Materials Needed:
 - ✦ Easel, Flip chart, markers, Laptop computer, LCD projector, and PowerPoint slides

II. Training Session Content

- A. PowerPoint Slides
 - Slide 9-1: Chapter 9 Understanding the Influence of the Media
 - Slide 9-2: Today's Media Presence
 - Slide 9-3: What They Understand About War and Violence
 - Slide 9-4: How Much News Should Children Watch?
 - Slide 9-5: Talking to Children/Youth About Terrorism and War
 - Slide 9-6: Adult Opinions and Views
 - Slide 9-7: What Do I Say?
 - Slide 9-8: Media Role Play Activity
- B. Activity and Directions
 - 1. Review slides with participants.
 - 2. Large or small group brainstorm and sharing (depending on time available) of following questions:
 - What forms of media influence our culture in the U.S.?
 - What influence do you think the media have on today's youth?
 - In what ways might children/youth experiencing the deployment of a parent or loved one be impacted by the media?
 - How can we support these youth?

III. Additional Resources on the Flash Drive

- A. Talking to Children about Terrorism and War
- B. Children and TV Violence
- C. Talking with Kids about Violent Images of War

IV. Evaluation

- A. Reflection Questions
 - 1. What was something new that you learned about the media and children?
 - 2. How has the media influenced you? As a youth? As an adult?
- B. Application Questions
 - 1. How can you work with youth to help them understand the media?
 - 2. What are some things you can do to help youth understand the media through OMK?

Chapter 9: Understanding the Influence of the Media

Operation: Military Kids Ready, Set, Go! Training

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 9-1: Chapter 9 Introduction

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

- Do:**
- Review slide content with participants.
 - Share purpose and objectives of this chapter.

Say: *This chapter of the notebook will help us understand the effect of the media on children and youth. We will look at the influence of the media on children and youth. We will also look at ways to talk with children about terrorism and war and images from the media.*

Today's Media Presence

- Media presence is prevalent in our lives today.
- We have easy, ready access to volumes of information which have potential positive and negative influences.
- Terrorism, conflict, and war occur in front of our eyes each day on television programs and news.
- Extensive media coverage of ongoing military operations creates daily anxiety for children/youth impacted by the deployment of a parent/loved one.



Ready, Set, Go!

Slide 9-2: Today's Media Presence

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: Easel, flip chart, markers

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

Do: • Review slide content with participants.

Say: *The media presence is prevalent in our lives today. We have easy, ready access to volumes of information that can be positive or negative, accurate or inaccurate. The television as well as the internet bring war and terrorism into our homes. All of this can create additional anxiety for a youth with a deployed loved one.*

Do: • Brainstorm questions as large or small groups.

Say: *What do you think about the media in the world today?*

What forms of media influence our culture in the U.S.?

Say: What influence do you think the media have on today's youth?

In what ways might the media impact children/youth experiencing the deployment of a parent or loved one?

How can we support these youth?

What They Understand About War and Violence

Ages 5–6

- Begin to understand events in context...
- But often one piece at a time
- Intellect not integrated with emotional response

Ages 7 and up

- Think more logically and understand more complex ideas
- Start to look at causes for events
- May see contradictions between war and what they have been told

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 9-3: What They Understand About War and Violence

Content of this slide adapted from: PBS Parents Guide to... Talking With Kids about War & Violence.

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

Do: • Review slide content with participants.

Say: *Children experience a shift in thinking about current events. They not only have questions about “What is happening in MY world” but also begin to ask “What is happening in THE world.” Children in kindergarten and early elementary school are beginning to understand the events in context, but often just one piece at a time. They cannot always distinguish that events happening elsewhere are not going to affect them directly. This is because their intellectual awareness is not integrated with their emotional response—they still feel scared.*

Say: *As a child gets older they are able to think more logically about world*

How Much News Should Children Watch?

- Depends on age and maturity
- Parent/Caregiver should watch with them
- Talk about what was watched
- Limit exposure to graphic images (especially young children)

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 9-4: How Much News Should Children Watch?

Content of this slide adapted from: *Talking with Children about War and Violence in the World*, Educators for Social Responsibility, www.esrnational.org

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

Do: • Review slide content with participants.

Say: *How much and what type of news coverage a child watches is dependent on their age and level of maturity. It is suggested that parents/caregivers decide on the appropriateness of shows and topics. Because it is not possible to know exactly what is going to be shown, watch with children so that you are able to discuss the images seen. There is ample research correlating the viewing of violent or tragic events with increased chances of post-traumatic stress symptoms, so it is important to limit the amount of television coverage children watch. It is especially important to limit young children's exposure to graphic images of violence.*

events. They are not able to think as abstractly as adults but they are able to understand some complex ideas. They like to examine issues and look for causes for events and ask more challenging questions. Once they are capable of logical thinking they will start to see the contradiction of war and what they have been taught—that it's not good to fight or hurt people.

Talking to Children/Youth About Terrorism and War

- Children/youth ask tough questions and these are the most difficult to answer.
- Age, individual personality, and temperament influence reactions/responses.
- Children/youth also tend to personalize the news they hear.
- It is not always possible to judge if/when they are scared or worried—they may be reluctant to show fears.
- It's important to look for behavioral/emotional clues.



Ready, Set, Go!

Slide 9-5: Talking to Children/Youth About Terrorism and War

Content of this slide adapted from: *Talking To Your Children About War and Terrorism*, by Robin F. Goodman, Ph.D.

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

Do: • Review slide content with participants.

Say: *Children/youth will ask adults tough questions about war and terrorism. These are the most difficult questions to answer. A child's age, individual personality, and temperament will influence the way they react and their response to war and terrorism. Often youth will personalize the news they hear. This can be especially problematic if a loved one is deployed. It is not always possible to judge whether or not a child is scared or worried, as they may be reluctant to show their fears. Watch for behavioral or emotional clues in the child.*

Adult Opinions and Views

- May burden youth with adult concerns
- May raise new questions and concerns
- May feel need to take care of adult
- May cut off child's expression

Be a good listener—youth need to be heard and understood.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 9-6: Adult Opinions and Views

Content of this slide adapted from: *Talking To Your Children About War and Terrorism*, by Robin F. Goodman, Ph.D.

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

Do: • Review slide content with participants.

Say: *There are several pitfalls to be avoided when an adult shares their feelings about war and terrorism with children. We may burden children with our concerns, raise new questions and fears in the child, or make them feel that they need to care of us. This defeats the purpose of allowing the child or youth to express their feelings and thoughts. It is important that as an adult we actively listen and understand the child or youth's emotions.*

As children grow they may have different opinions about war and terrorism. It is important to teach tolerance and have an understanding of all sides of an issue. Do not let differences of opinion ever spiral to violence.

What Do I Say?

- Use words and concepts your child/youth can understand to explain terrorism/war.
- Give them honest information and answers to questions.
- Be prepared to repeat explanations or have several conversations.
- Acknowledge and support child/youth's thoughts, feelings, and reactions.
- Be consistent, reassuring, and don't make unrealistic promises.
- Avoid stereotyping—teach tolerance and explain prejudice.
- Remember you are a role model and your reactions are being watched closely.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 9-7: What do I Say?

Content of this slide adapted from: *Talking To Your Children About War and Terrorism*, by Robin F. Goodman, Ph.D.

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to Do, What to Say:

Do: • Review slide content with participants.

Say: *When talking with children, use words and concepts they can understand to explain terrorism and war. Be sure to give them honest information and answers to their questions. Be prepared to repeat explanations and answers to questions several times. Be supportive of the child or youth and accepting of their feelings, thoughts, and reactions.*

Be consistent, reassuring, and don't make unrealistic promises like "I'm sure your parent will be just fine." It is important to avoid stereotyping, teach tolerance, and explain prejudice. You are a role model and you are being watched closely so don't let your own views cloud the picture for the child.



Media Role Play Activity

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 9-8: Media Role Play Activity

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: None

Trainer Tips: If you can get a video that all age groups would watch, use it to set up the role-play.

What to Do, What to Say:

Do:

- Assign each table an age group to focus on for the next activity: Preschool, Elementary, Middle School, or High School.

Say: *At your table, select two people to play youth in the assigned age group. Select two more people to be adults that work with these youth. The rest of the table will be observers.*

We are going to role play what children and youth who have a deployed loved one may ask after they see media that reflects war and violence.

The participants that are role-playing youth should get into the frame of mind of a youth that age.

- Do:**
- Show video clip of images of war. (This could be a news report or something from the Internet. Be sure to preview it so that you are sure it is appropriate for the audience.)

Say: After seeing that video, what kind of questions or concerns would a youth have? At your table, role-play youth responding to seeing that clip. They can ask the adults any questions they want and the adults need to respond. Observers remain quiet during this exercise. You'll have about 5 minutes to do this.

- Do:**
- Walk around the room and listen in to some of the conversations. See if there are recurring themes or good examples of how to respond to youth.
 - Debrief

Say: Times up! What happened during that activity? (Allow time for both "Youth" and "Adults" to respond.) What were the toughest questions for the adults to answer/explain? As youth, what were some good responses that you heard?

Closing: Review some of the basics from Slide 10-7 as a way to talk with children about war and violence.